



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

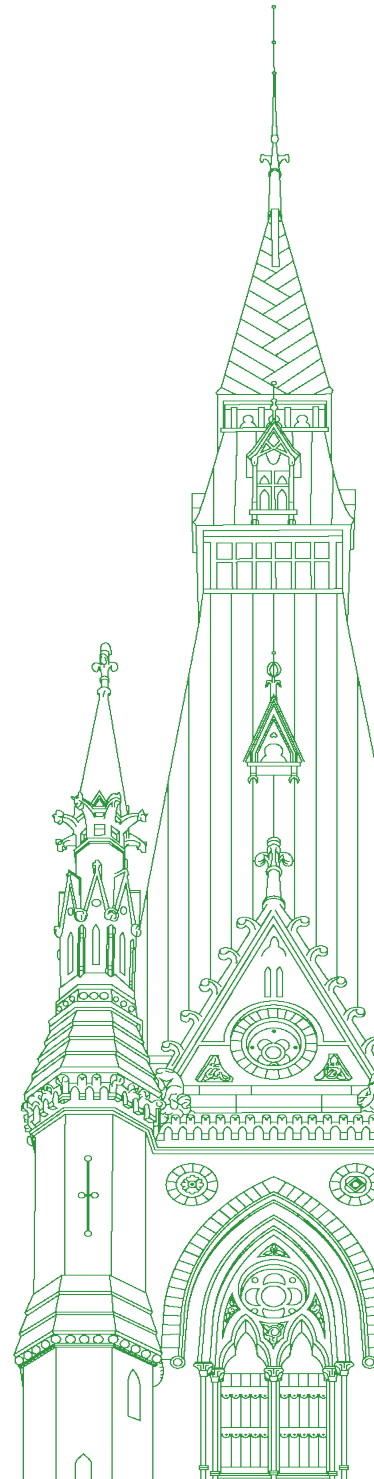
House of Commons Debates

Official Report
(Hansard)

Volume 151 No. 091

Friday, June 17, 2022

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, June 17, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ONLINE STREAMING ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

• (1000)

[*English*]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There are three motions in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-11. Motions Nos. 1 to 3 will be grouped for debate and voted upon according to the voting pattern available at the table.

[*Translation*]

I will now put Motions Nos. 1 to 3 to the House.

[*English*]

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC) moved:

That Bill C-11 be amended by deleting Clause 2.

Hon. Kamal Khara (for the Minister of Transport) moved:

That Bill C-11, in Clause 3, be amended by replacing lines 25 and 26 on page 8 with the following:

“limitation, closed captioning services and described video services available to assist persons living with a visual or auditory im-”

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC) moved:

That Bill C-11 be amended by deleting Clause 4.

She said: Madam Speaker, considering the current trend of the current government, I certainly do not take it for granted that I am able to stand in this place and freely deliver a speech in the House of Commons, particularly when I am critiquing government legislation.

Bill C-11 would put the CRTC in charge of regulating the Internet. That is what we are discussing today. Former CRTC commis-

sioners and other qualified critics have spoken to this legislation and have made it clear that it is an overreach and a violation of Canadians' right to freedom of expression.

From the beginning, I have been a vocal opponent of this bill and I have laid out my case for that. However, today I will remind Canadians and this House of the concerns I hold, shared by colleagues on this side of the House. Because of my outspoken nature on this bill, I have been ridiculed, criticized and even called names by those across the way. That has been hurtful and it has been harmful, but I have proceeded. The reason for this is that I am not elected to serve the government. I am not elected to make sure its legislation gets through. I was put here by Canadians for Canadians, and it is with them in mind that I stand in this place. It is with them in mind that I also fight against this incredibly draconian and regressive piece of legislation that attacks their charter rights as Canadians.

There are two things I wish to address today: one, the process that was followed with this legislation, and two, the content.

Let us start with the process. I would be remiss if I did not mention the travesty that took place this past Tuesday. While most Canadians were sleeping, the members of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage met and were forced to vote on amendments without them being read into the public record, which simply means that numbers were given and members were asked to vote. The public was unsure of what we were voting on and what it meant for them. There was zero transparency. There was no debate, no discussion and no questions. “Just shut up and vote” was the message given. The process was cloaked in secrecy and was an inexcusable assault on democracy. Having been forced through the committee, the bill is now before the House and will soon be forced on to the Senate.

Let me dive into the content of this bill. The heritage minister has been extremely misleading. He has told Canadians that more government control over Internet content will somehow promote Canadian culture and help artists. This could not be further from the truth.

My Conservative colleagues and I have met with industry experts and with digital-first creators, those who produce content for TikTok, YouTube, etc., and they have dispelled these myths. I would like to use their voices here today in order to defend their cause.

Oorbee Roy, known as Aunty Skates on TikTok, is a 47-year-old South Asian woman from Toronto. She made it clear that her success is based on freedom and not control. She said:

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That I'm not the right fit is a story I've been told my whole life. I'm too brown. I'm a nerd. I'm too old. I'm female. I'm not feminine enough. I'm not the right demographic, but I've never been the right demographic. My voice has been suppressed far too many times. That's not an easy thing to do, because I have a pretty loud voice.

Somehow along the way, I discovered a platform that allows me to tell my story as I see fit in my own voice. Other people are indeed interested in my story. Somehow this tall, brown, old and somewhat-out-of-shape mom who skateboards resonates with people all over the globe. Authentic, inspiring, genuine content—that's Canadian content.

Canadian YouTuber Lilly Singh explained it best when she said, “For Canadian creators who don't fit the mainstream mould, the openness of YouTube provides the opportunity to find their niche among billions of people.” Again, freedom is what leads to success.

Morghan Fortier, co-owner and CEO of Skyship Entertainment, said, “We've seen first-hand that, when barriers are removed and Canadians are given equal, free access to an open platform and a global audience, they can take on the world. For Canadian creators, YouTube is a level playing field on a world stage. It doesn't matter who you know or what you look like. Any Canadian with an idea and a smart phone can be a creator and find an audience on YouTube.” She went on to say, “If this bill passes as written, the CRTC could determine what content should be promoted in Canada through discoverability obligations.... This approach puts the regulator between viewers and creators, handing the CRTC the power to decide who wins and who loses.”

• (1005)

If Bill C-11 passes through the Senate, it will not create a level playing field. Instead, many digital-first creators will be harmed as the government, through the CRTC, picks winners and losers. Not only that, but, in the name of protection, the CRTC will build a wall around digital-first creators, and this wall will actually prevent them from being able to reach a global audience, which is what they depend on for their success. We should know that our Canadian digital-first creators are amazing and they are achieving tremendous success around the world. Their success, however, will be severely thwarted by the bill.

Scott Benzie, from Digital First Canada, explained:

The bill has the intent of promoting Canadian content to Canadians. While that's admirable, most Canadian creators do not care solely about the Canadian market. The platforms are built for global discovery.... [L]ocal discovery...is a recipe for failure and jeopardizes successes like the indigenous creator renaissance on TikTok, Canadian musicians seeing global recognition and the world-class gaming industry.

Let us talk further. Let us talk about freedom and choice, values that all Canadians hold dear. Right now, virtual codes, known as algorithms, are set up on the Internet to show Canadians more content that they love. Personal choice is honoured in this process. Bill C-11 would change that. Instead of using algorithms to give individuals more of what they want, the government will insist that YouTube and TikTok and Google use algorithms to give more of what the government wants Canadians to see. It is incredibly dictatorial. It is dangerous.

Jeanette Patell, from YouTube, explained:

Bill C-11 could deeply hurt Canadian creators and viewers [in other words, all Canadians]. For viewers who rely on us to serve them content that is relevant to their interests, artificially forcing an open platform like YouTube to recommend content based on government priorities would backfire.

Matthew Hatfield, from OpenMedia, gave a great analogy:

We would never consider a situation where the Canadian government would go to Canadian bookstores and say, “We've thought about what Canadians need, and these are the types of titles we want you to put in your front window.” However, through the discoverability requirements we have in this legislation, that seems to be what we're doing.... It's inappropriate. It's an overreach. If we're supporting Canadian content, it needs to be in ways that are respectful of and responsive to what people in Canada want.

Let us be very clear. The bill is not about protecting culture. It is about giving the government more control over public discourse, the things that we can see, post and hear online. To have a government agency regulate the dissemination of information online puts Canada in step with places like North Korea, China, Iran, and Russia.

The current chair of the CRTC, Mr. Ian Scott, has confirmed that this is the case. He has said that user-generated content, in other words our content, my content, anybody's content, will be wrapped up in the bill, but then he goes on to say not to worry, because even though he is given those wide-sweeping powers, he will not use them and we should just trust him. If he is asking us to trust him, why not just take those provisions out of the bill?

That is exactly what these amendments would do. We are asking that those powerful provisions that allow for an abuse of power be taken out of this bill and that Canadians be respected.

The best way to promote Canadian culture is through the protection of free speech. Giving Canadians the freedom to create, express their views, and speak freely is what supports the proliferation of our rich Canadian culture. Our culture is held within the Canadian people, all of them. However, the government has grown far too comfortable with taking control.

As I come to my conclusion here, I wish to thank all of the digital-first creators who weighed in and expressed their views. I also wish to thank the industry experts and the freedom advocates who worked tirelessly to expose the danger of this legislation. I want to thank the thousands upon thousands of Canadians who have had their voices heard. It is for them that I contend today.

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• (1010)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Lethbridge for her speech, although it was a bit much for my ears at times. I want to go back to one of the complaints that the Conservatives made in committee. They complained that there was not enough time to hear from a number of witnesses. One of those witnesses was Scott Benzie from Digital First Canada, an organization that has no members but is financially supported by YouTube. Many YouTube and TikTok users came to testify. There are 160,000 YouTubers in Canada.

How many more do the Conservatives need to hear from?

[*English*]

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Madam Speaker, as we went through this process at committee, there were only five meetings held in total where we heard from witnesses.

This is a piece of legislation that takes the Broadcasting Act, which is normally only applied to radio and television, and applies it to the Internet. It is a massive change to the way we do broadcasting in this country, or what is termed broadcasting.

For the committee to only have five opportunities to hear from witnesses when there were more than 100 who asked to be heard is inexcusable. There still remains more than half of our witness list who never got an opportunity to have a seat at the table and have their voices heard.

If someone were to ask how much is too much, and imply that to give more voice on this would somehow be hindering the process, I would say no to that, as this is a democracy. We want to hear from people.

• (1015)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, we certainly know that this member had a lot of opportunity to speak at the committee. As a matter of fact, when the minister came to speak to the committee, this member filibustered the committee so that the minister could not even answer questions that were being asked by committee members.

I think it is quite rich for this member to get up and talk about the democratic process and how it was not able to unfold at committee, when this member used tools that she had to specifically disrupt the operations of the committee. The other committee members could actually do their work.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind the hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets that if he has questions or comments, he should wait until I recognize him.

The hon. member for Lethbridge.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Madam Speaker, the speaker opposite is being incredibly disingenuous right now. I did filibuster at committee. I filibustered because the members opposite, the Liberal members at the table, brought forward a motion that was shutting down debate. I did not want debate to be shut down because I believe Canadians deserve to be heard.

Unfortunately, the Liberals planned it very strategically to have the minister sitting at the table at the same time, so it appeared as if I did not want to hear from the minister. Of course, Canadians who were watching know that is not true, and it is incredibly disingenuous of the member to suggest that.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. parliamentary secretary had an opportunity to ask a question. If he is thinking out loud or wants to have a discussion, he should take that outside.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am saddened by the member's speech. We have seen how disinformation has undermined, in the United States from the Republican Party, the basic principles of democracy. Her comments today are so far from the truth that I find them very disturbing.

For weeks and weeks, the Conservatives filibustered the committee and blocked witnesses from appearing. Even though all the other parties had submitted amendments, the Conservatives refused to move to have amendments discussed to improve the bill. The NDP got almost a dozen amendments through because we believed in working hard to improve the bill.

At the same time, it is important to note that we have a better bill because of the process, but not thanks to the member and not thanks to Conservatives who impeded, at every step, the due consideration of the bill that was so important. We had five weeks of witnesses—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Lethbridge has 55 seconds to respond.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Madam Speaker, I would like to correct the record. We did not have five weeks of witnesses. That is incredibly misleading, and I would give the hon. member the opportunity to apologize to the House for misleading. We had five days.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I will not apologize. We had the equivalent of five weeks of hearings. The member knows that. She should apologize for misleading the House.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The committee did not have five weeks. It had five meetings: five two-hour—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We are getting into debate. Therefore, I would ask members to maybe raise that during their speeches in the House or through other questions and comments.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in support of Bill C-11, the online streaming act.

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The online streaming act would help ensure a strong place for Canadian stories and music in the digital world. It would make the online streaming platforms contribute their fair share to our culture. The bill is based on the simple premise that those who benefit from the system must contribute to it. This has been the approach in Canada for over 50 years, and the results speak for themselves. As a condition of their licences, TV and radio broadcasters have to invest in our culture and arts. That is why we all have the Canadian content that we love so much.

I grew up on a small, quiet street in Kingston, Ontario. Five doors down from me were the Sinclairs and across the street from them were the Bakers. Little did I know, as an eight- and nine-year-old paper boy delivering papers around the street, that every time I passed by the Bakers' house and heard this loud music coming from the basement I was actually witnessing the formation of The Tragically Hip. Later on, they became the incredibly successful band that we have all come to know and love in Canada.

Gord Sinclair, one of the members of the band, appeared before committee. I listened to his testimony at committee and would like to share it with the House because I think it is extremely important and properly illustrates why this type of legislation is very badly needed. I believe that it belongs in Hansard.

Gord said this in his statement:

My name is Gord Sinclair, and I am a member of The Tragically Hip. I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

The Hip set out from Kingston, Ontario, in the mid-1980s, and our journey—

● (1020)

Mr. Rick Perkins: One witness in five weeks.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There seem to be some conversations and some heckling. I would ask those members who are heckling not to do that, and I would ask those who are having side conversations with other members to please go to the lobby and have that conversation. If they wish to come back and listen in on the conversation so they can ask questions and comments, they can do that.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I am just amazed that the member for South Shore—St. Margarets is heckling me while I read the transcript of what somebody said in committee.

This is, again, from Gord Sinclair, from The Tragically Hip:

The Hip set out from Kingston, Ontario, in the mid-1980s, and our journey took us around the world and lasted over 30 years. It concluded where it began, back in Kingston, when our final concert was broadcast nationwide and viewed by a third of the population of Canada.

How did we wind up there?

Over the years, we wrote some good songs, we worked hard and we had great fans, but in the beginning we were beneficiaries of CanCon, the partnership between private broadcasters and government. This was not a handout. For us, it was a leg-up. With the help of our managers, we recorded an EP and got signed to a label and, with their help, we were able to get some airplay on radio. That gave us enough exposure across the country to take the show on the road, as so many great Canadian entertainers have done.

Canadians excel at live performance. The sheer size of the country is our greatest asset. The road is long and hard, with vast distances between gigs. You can't have a day job and aspire to be a performer in Canada. You either learn to love the life and your travelling companions or you break up. The late great Ronnie

Hawkins always said that Canadians have to work 10 times as hard to get a tenth as far.

The artists who do endure have honed their talent to a very high standard. Canadian musicians are seasoned travellers. They've learned to play live and to live on the road, and that's what sets us apart. Somehow, during the years and hours of staring out the van window at granite and black spruce, you discover what it means to be a Canadian. You realize that despite its size, distinct regions and communities, there is more that binds us together in this country than separates us. The Hip wrote songs from that perspective. Many of them resonated with our fellow Canadians and enjoy enduring popularity.

Through the travel, the space, the time and the weather, the songwriter searches for meaning and what gives us a common identity. Nations create and preserve themselves through the stories they tell. Words set to rhythm and melodies are our stories. They allowed us to enjoy a long fruitful career until Gord Downie's untimely death....

Times change. In the 30 years that The Hip were performing, we went from producing vinyl records and cassettes to CDs, videos and DATs through Napster, and to iTunes and YouTube, and now to streaming and its dominant platform, Spotify. Through it all, until recently, there have been live shows to make ends meet, but people no longer buy the physical products our industry produces. In the digital age, people haven't given up on music—just the idea of paying for it. That business model is unsustainable.

We are all stakeholders of the arts, and the future has never been more dire. For years, traditional broadcasters, in partnership with the federal government, have helped develop and sustain Canadian recording artists. The Canada Music Fund provides critical support for music in this country. What will happen if that funding disappears?

Gord Downie wrote in our song *Morning Moon* that if "something's too cheap, somebody's paying something". Every song ever recorded can now be streamed for less than \$10 a month. The somebodies in this case will be the future you and me when we realize that we've undervalued the contribution of Canadian musicians and songwriters.

There is no better art form to preserve, promote and export our culture than music, but after two years of pandemic-induced venue closures and cancelled performances, our domestic industry is in peril. Artists must see a glimmer of hope for a career in music or they will simply give up. Where will our next Joni Mitchell come from if we abandon our young artists? Artistic development takes time. If we don't actually value something at a level necessary to sustain it, it will surely disappear.

Streaming is here to stay, but the platforms and ISPs must contribute to the long-term health of the arts in some way. They must look on it as an investment. Streaming is a great way for artists to have their material heard, to discover new music and to be discovered, but in an industry that has seen the majority of its revenue streams disappear, how can an artist earn a living? Streaming can help, but regulations must adapt to allow Canadian culture to flourish in the digital age....

My worry is that many will give up before they get the chance to find their voice. As much as the global market is important, Canadian artists must also reach their fellow Canadians from coast to coast to coast. In today's environment, there is a place for everyone, just as there is a place for streaming alongside traditional broadcasters and live performances.

● (1025)

Our potential as a creative nation is as vast as the country itself. Songwriters are our best cultural ambassadors. We are compelled to create, to express what we know and what we feel. We need partners in government and industry....

Right now, somewhere in Canada, a young artist is searching for their voice, the right bit of melody to go with the perfect words. We need your help to hear these voices.

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These are the words of Gord Sinclair. To the member who was heckling me previously, and who continued to heckle me while I was reading that, I really hope for the goodness of this institution that he was not doing the same while Gord was delivering those words at committee, because that would have been extremely disrespectful.

I thought it was extremely important to read those words into Hansard so they could be part of the debate the House experiences on this issue. I am very concerned by the rhetoric I have been hearing. Unfortunately for them, I do not think this applies to Canadian discourse, but unfortunately for Conservatives, I do not quite think this manufactured outrage they are attempting for a second time has been nearly as successful as it was the first time around in the last Parliament because they just do not seem to have the traction, despite the outrage we have seen, particularly from the previous speaker.

What I do know is that musicians and individuals who are looking to preserve that Canadian culture, and who take great pride in being Canadian, need our support. Doing something strictly because we think we are going to get a little political gain out of it, but doing it at the cost of those cultural creators throughout our country, is extremely, to use her word, disingenuous of what we should be doing and how we should be properly taking care of Canadian artists.

I have no problem supporting the bill. I know the bill does not do a number of the things that were previously said. It does not impose regulations on the content everyday Canadians post on social media. It does not impose regulations on Canadian digital charter content creators, influencers or users. It does not censure content or mandate specific algorithms, as the previous member indicated, and it does not limit Canadians' freedom of expression in any way, shape or form.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, the hon. member across the way made the comment that the bill does not give the CRTC the ability to regulate user-generated content. However, Mr. Ian Scott, the chair of the CRTC, came to committee, and he said that yes, in fact, they do have that ability. He said however right now they refrain from using it. He asked us to trust him, but he made it very clear that he has the power to regulate user-generated content, which is, in other words, everyday Canadian content online.

The member opposite seems to know something different. I am wondering who is telling the truth, him or the CRTC chair.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, that is a very interesting comment. If we reflect on the words that she just used, what she said is that apparently he already has the powers. Her words were, "he has the power" to do this. I am not here to reflect on what the CRTC's current powers are, I am here to reflect on the content of the bill.

My interpretation and my reading of the content of the bill is that it does not give any of those powers this individual is referencing, although we will note she was very judicious in her words. She specifically said, "he has the power". That would imply that he already has the ability to do that and that his comments are related to that, not what is in the bill.

• (1030)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague mentioning Gord Downie, someone that I was proud to know. I have seen the growth of careers of those in bands like the Hip, and I see the crisis facing musicians today, especially after COVID and the shutdown of live venues, along with the fact that Spotify is ripping artists off dramatically. When I hear the Conservatives talk, they are saying that the bill is actually going to somehow make it impossible for us to watch a video of someone fixing their deck. I do not know what they think entertainment is, but we are talking about a powerful industry in Canada. Our artists travel the world, yet without the ability to have a sustained financial income, we are seeing more and more musicians unable to make it, along with more and more theatres, and more and more groups.

I ask my hon. colleague this: What specifically in the bill will guarantee that we start to see a revenue stream return rightfully to the artists who make the content?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I started off my speech by telling the story about how I lived on the street five doors down from Judge Baker's house where The Tragically Hip used to practise in the basement. As a newspaper boy, I used to listen to the noise that was coming from the basement, and I had no idea I was witnessing the formation of The Tragically Hip.

Members heard from the words of Gord Sinclair when he was at committee, which I read out in the House, when he said that, had it not been for CanCon and government investment, The Tragically Hip would have never become what it did.

Finally, regarding the member's comment about the Conservatives being worried about somebody being able to watch somebody repair a deck, I just hope that all members know that the member for Timmins—James Bay has a great YouTube channel where they can watch some of his home improvements. If I thought for a second that this bill would limit my ability to do that, I certainly would not be supporting it.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I am very worried that it might be misconstrued that I am getting financial benefits when I do decks and drywalling. That is not the fact at all. I just want that on the record.

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

The hon. member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is well known that Pierre Trudel, a law professor at Université de Montréal, said that broadcasting must be protected—

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member is trying to pose a question. It is very hard for the parliamentary secretary and me to hear that when there are side conversations going on from one end of the chamber to the other.

The hon. member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou.

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[*Translation*]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé: Madam Speaker, I was saying that Pierre Trudel, a law professor at Université de Montréal, said that broadcasting must be protected, that the freedom of Internet users is not at risk, that there is no thought police on television and that there will be no thought police online.

In May 2021, the Department of Justice filed a legal opinion refuting these allegations and confirming Mr. Trudel's statement that freedom of expression is not at risk.

I do not understand why the parties are bickering about protecting broadcasting.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, perhaps that is a better question for the Conservatives, who continue to rail on this issue, despite the fact that these legal opinions have come forward. Of course they are going to dig up one or two individuals who can support what they are saying, as they continuously do in the House.

However, in my opinion as to why we are debating, it is because the Conservatives, in the last Parliament, drew a little blood out of this issue. They saw that, and like a group of sharks, they circled around it. They are attempting to get more and more blood out of it, quite frankly. I just do not see any concern, and this member has indicated that perfectly through her question.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-11 at report stage. Let me start by saying that this bill matters a lot to the Bloc Qu b cois and has since the last Parliament.

I spoke in favour of this bill in a speech last month. However, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the hard work of my colleague from Drummond, who has devoted himself, body and soul, to this bill ever since its previous incarnation as Bill C-10. He deserves every bit of the applause I am hearing right now.

I will begin my speech today with a reminder about how important Bill C-11 is to the discoverability of francophone culture. I will move on to a reminder about the importance of local media, and I will wrap up with an expression of hope regarding the importance of fighting misinformation, which has had such an impact on this parliamentary session.

As I was drafting my speech, I came across the Coalition for the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. The CDCE states that Bill C-11, which updates the Broadcasting Act, is one of Canada's important and long-awaited cultural policies. On its website, the CDCE has what I think is a very good summary of the importance of Bill C-11.

It ensures that Canadian creations and productions have a prominent place on our airwaves and on our screens, and that the companies generating revenues from access to culture in the music and audiovisual sectors contribute to their creation, development and distribution.

Canadians are increasingly accessing culture through online platforms. Much of the broadcasting ecosystem is transitioning to digital content. This has a number of benefits for the public and for creators: increased access to a variety of stories, music and ideas, increased opportunities for creators to launch their work, and renewed ability to reach audiences in Canada and around the world...

Many large corporations take advantage of this digital age without any obligation to contribute. Artists, creators, producers, publishers and other professionals of the music and audiovisual industries, as well as for Canadian society, do not reap the potential benefits of investment in the Canadian cultural ecosystem. C-11 was introduced to correct this unfairness.

Unfairness is indeed a problem.

The purpose of the new bill essentially remains the same as the previous one—namely, to apply the Broadcasting Act to the web giants by forcing them to contribute financially to the creation and discovery of Canadian cultural content.

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, or CRTC, will receive new powers that will allow it to determine which online services will have to be regulated and what quotas will need to be respected. Bill C-11 will help better regulate video streamers such as Netflix, Apple and TV Plus, Disney+, Prime Video, but also companies that specialize in streaming music online such as Spotify, YouTube and Apple Music. The bill will require them to contribute to Canadian content when commercial items such as albums are downloaded and distributed on platforms.

However, the exclusion clause, namely clause 4.1, addressed earlier, has been revised. Now creators, users and social media influencers are exempt from the legislation. The money a creator earns from their content is immaterial in the eyes of the new legislation. So-called amateur content on social media would be exempt. The legislation focuses specifically on commercial products.

The level of monetization of the use of content in full or in part by a broadcasting undertaking regulated by the CRTC will, among other things, be taken into consideration. The CRTC will also have the option to impose conditions associated with discoverability and the development of Canadian content.

The bill will not touch the algorithms that can influence the recommendations made to users, and that is very important. The Department of Canadian Heritage says it wants to focus on discoverability outcomes and not intervene directly with respect to web giants' algorithms. There are still questions to be asked, for example, on whether the two are not already intertwined and whether greater discoverability of Canadian and francophone content is necessarily dependent on algorithms.

In our case, it is the outcome that counts. Quebec, francophone and Canadian content must be much more accessible on platforms. Ottawa is trying to give the CRTC the power to hold discussions with each of the digital companies to determine how much they should contribute to Canadian content based on their business model. The CRTC will be able to impose administrative and monetary penalties on those digital broadcasters that refuse to comply with the Broadcasting Act.

Finally, the Minister of Canadian Heritage is proposing other legislative changes in his bill that will apply to all broadcasters, traditional or otherwise. The law should also strengthen programs produced by Canadians that cover news and current events—from the local and regional to the national and international—and that reflect the viewpoints of Canadians, including the viewpoints of indigenous persons and of Canadians from racialized communities and diverse ethnocultural backgrounds.

• (1035)

After everything we just talked about with regard to this legislation, I also want to mention the gains that the Bloc Québécois was able to secure with Bill C-11.

The Bloc Québécois did a lot to improve the previous version of the bill, namely Bill C-10, by ensuring the protection and promotion of original French-language programs; the discoverability of Canadian programming services and original Canadian content, including French-language original content, in an equitable proportion; the promotion of original Canadian content in both official languages and in indigenous languages; a mandatory contribution to Canada's broadcasting system if a company is unable to make use of Canadian resources as part of its programming; the requirement for first-run French-language content, in order to ensure there are new French-language shows on Netflix, for example, and not old ones; and a sunset clause that would provide for a comprehensive review of the act every five years.

This is very important, because we will thoroughly review C-11 and meet with the various industry stakeholders and experts to get a sense of what is happening in the industry. We will have to keep evolving this law. We will not hesitate to try to improve it, if necessary, and we will surely propose again many of the hundreds of amendments that were rejected in the spring. Some of our proposals would have made improvements for local, community and independent players, for example.

We have to keep in mind we want a piece of legislation that will not be obsolete as soon as it is passed. Technology is developing very quickly, and we need a long-term vision to ensure that the act does not become outdated after just a few years. Flexible legislation is important, especially since Quebec's and Canada's cultural sectors have been waiting for decades for this act to be updated.

The cultural sector made a simple demand just a few days after Bill C-11 was introduced. We need to ensure that this bill is passed quickly. The sector has waited long enough.

In May 2021, on *Tout le monde en parle*, even the former minister of Canadian Heritage said that every month that goes by without us enacting Bill C-10, now Bill C-11, represents more than \$70 million that does not go to our artists in Quebec and Canada.

Second, do not forget that, like Bill C-18, which specifically focuses on assistance to print media and is based on the Australian model, Bill C-11 also fits into the context of this media crisis.

Since their inception, Facebook, Twitter and Google have been appropriating news articles and reports without giving any compensation to the authors or the media outlets concerned. For too many years, the digital giants have therefore been instrumental in dismantling

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our traditional media. This phenomenon began with national advertisers deserting traditional media for Facebook and Google, later followed by local advertisers, who also stopped buying advertising in local weeklies in favour of the giants.

Advertising on digital platforms is now the property of Google and Facebook, which alone are pocketing 80% of online ad revenue. Moreover, digital giants pay nothing for journalistic content that ends up on their platform, and they disregard the copyright of journalists whose work others share on social media.

Third, I really want to talk about misinformation, especially since there has been so much of it in connection with Bill C-11: cat videos that will not be allowed to circulate, freedom of expression denied and information controlled, like in Russia. I have heard so many shocking things during the debates on this issue.

Just this week, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada expressed concerns about the impact of misinformation on the health of our democratic institutions. He pointed to the demonstration in downtown Ottawa that paralyzed the city for three weeks, but he emphasized the importance of our shared responsibility to fight ignorance and hatred, which lead to misinformation. He expressed one wish for people in positions of authority, such as ourselves, namely that we pay more attention to the statements we make and their veracity.

I also replaced a colleague at the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security during its deliberations on radicalization and online hate. We cannot continue to ignore our role as elected representatives in the deterioration of public discourse on topics like Bill C-11 and in the divisiveness that exists. I hope to see this place debating a bill to address online hate sooner rather than later.

As a final point, I do not know whether this will be my last speech of the session, so I want to remind everyone listening of my unwavering commitment to the people of Shefford. I always keep in mind that I am accountable to my constituents, first and foremost, and, in this case, I am thinking of our local media in particular. I want nothing but the very best for the people of my region who have a right to access francophone cultural products, and for our artists, who have such an important and vibrant presence in our communities. They have been hit particularly hard by the pandemic, so they need some good news. Let us do something for them and pass Bill C-11.

• (1040)

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in her speech, the member for Lethbridge gave the example of a Canadian content creator on YouTube who worries about not being included in the digital landscape, if Bill C-11 is passed, and about their voice being silenced by the government.

In an effort to set the record straight, could my colleague indicate whether this theory is correct?

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• (1045)

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question and for her love of French. She is improving. That is great. I love having discussions with her.

I think I demonstrated that there has been a great deal of misinformation about this bill.

I remember the sarcastic intervention by my colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert when he said that after listening to the Conservatives, he had to agree with their arguments.

The Conservatives claim that we now have a system that imposes things on us, controls information and might well drift into allowing excessive control over what is broadcast.

I showed that compared to the former Bill C-10, clause 4.1 of this bill adds protection against that. I would remind members that the bill includes a provision requiring a five-year review of the legislation. We could therefore monitor the progress of the situation.

In this specific case, I believe that this worry is unfounded. We have shown that there is a protection mechanism in the bill. This does not infringe on freedom of expression; Canada has not become a dictatorship that tells people what they can say, do, think or broadcast. That is really pathetic.

[English]

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to get some clarification from the member, because even at the eleventh hour of the abridged debate on this bill, there still seems to be doubt as to whether user-generated content is regulated. Liberal members, Bloc members and NDP members seem to be saying that it is not regulated. Why not remove all doubt and simply put a clause in the bill that says user-generated content is not regulated?

Mr. Peter Julian: There are numerous clauses, if you read the bill. Read the bill.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is not time for the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby to answer the question. It is up to the hon. member for Shefford.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Shefford.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Madam Speaker, I find that interesting. All parties seem to recognize that there is already a provision in this bill stating that this content will not be regulated.

When someone gets to the point where they feel like everyone else is wrong and they are the only one who is right, it may be time for them to do some soul searching. Are they contributing to disinformation? Have they properly done their work as parliamentarians? Have they read the bill? Are they representing all their constituents?

Francophone artists would not agree that they have not kept up with the times and have not been able to adapt to the digital age since 1993. That is what I heard said about certain francophones and artists from Quebec.

It is shocking that the Conservatives are trying to accuse our artists of not being able to adapt to the digital age. Quite frankly, that is insulting.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I completely agree with the member for Shefford. The Conservatives have lost it. They spread completely false information. It would seem that they never read the bill. They are making all sorts of accusations. People have to at least try to be realistic when saying things in the House of Commons. Even though we can say anything, the Conservatives should exercise some self-control.

I have a simple question to ask the member for Shefford, who gave an excellent speech. It is now estimated that web giants, who have been profiting for years, will contribute \$1 billion, which will be invested in Canadian jobs. What impact will this have in Quebec?

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Madam Speaker, as a former journalism student and as a lover of arts and culture, I am watching this bill very closely. I hope that the money will highlight some amazing cultural projects from Quebec and help make them successful.

I also want to say that we need to allow local media to thrive, as called for by the Voix de l'Est, a newspaper from back home. In my speech I mentioned Marie- ve Martel's excellent book *Extinction de voix*, which explains why this bill is so important. This money must be redistributed to help local media and local artists. This money could be reinvested elsewhere.

The web giants have done enough copying from our local media. Now it is time for them to give back to the smallest media outlets, in order to ensure that Quebec culture can truly be enjoyed around the world.

[English]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise. I certainly salute the numerous colleagues, such as the member for Shefford and the member for Kingston and the Islands, who have actually addressed the bill. They have obviously read it. This is very important.

What is unbelievable to me is the over-the-top, crazed, Republican-style rhetoric that we have heard from the Conservatives over the last few weeks. This is very simple. There were the equivalent of five weeks of hearings, and the vast majority of witnesses who came forward, as members know, were in favour of the bill but wanted improvements. I will be pleased in a moment to talk about how the NDP was successful in improving the bill, playing our role yet again as the effective opposition party and pushing to make sure that bills are better.

After the equivalent of five weeks of hearings, for two weeks the Conservatives blocked witnesses, refused to let the amendments that had already been submitted be discussed and debated, and blocked everything. They completely filibustered so that nothing could move forward. We have seen the same sad travesty here in the House. The Conservatives, ever since they basically imploded six months ago, have refused to let anything good go through the House for the benefit of Canadians. It is sad. The Conservative Party used to be a respected opposition party, but what it has done over the last few months undermines that.

I will say that there are members of the Conservative caucus whom I have a lot of confidence in, including the member for Perth—Wellington. I wish that his voice was heard more often in the Conservative caucus.

That being said, what did the NDP do? The New Democrats brought forward a series of amendments. We wanted to make sure the bill was stronger. That is our role. As the effective opposition in the House of Commons, we tackled it from five standpoints.

First, when we looked at Bill C-11, we wanted to make sure that we renew broadcasting in Canada and that online companies actually pay their fair share. We are talking about \$1 billion in investments. That means tens of thousands of jobs right across the country. This will mean a significant renaissance of the Canadian creative and cultural industries. There is no doubt.

We also wanted to make sure we broke down barriers for marginalized peoples in Canada, so we tabled Bill C-11 and successfully got it through the committee. It is now before the House for consideration at report stage, and hopefully it will get to third reading as well. There are substantial improvements that break down barriers for Black and racialized Canadians in broadcasting, for indigenous peoples, indigenous culture, indigenous voices and indigenous languages, and for people with disabilities. Canadians with disabilities have been excluded from the broadcasting system and from online streaming for far too long. Those are important barriers that the New Democrats broke down, and we are proud of our accomplishments. We want to compliment the members of the heritage committee who voted for those far-reaching amendments.

Second, we wanted to renew community broadcasting. The disinformation and Republican-style rhetoric of the Conservative Party, and the hate we have seen with the “freedom convoy” that many Conservative MPs endorsed, are things that really need a renewal at the community level. Hate and disinformation come from the fact that we do not know our neighbours, and the erosion of community media and community voices has unfortunately contributed to the amplification of the hate and disinformation in our country that we are all seeing.

The NDP tabled this, and again a majority of members of the heritage committee agreed with the idea that we have to reinforce community voices, community media, community broadcasting and community radio. I would like to thank CACTUS and numerous other community organizations that offered important amendments so that we could improve community broadcasting and know our neighbours better. The best antidote to the hate and disinformation we are seeing from the Republicans in the United States and the far right in Canada is to ensure that we know our neighbours and ap-

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preciate them. That was an important second series of amendments we brought forward.

Third, we wanted to reinforce freedom of expression. Unanimously, members of the heritage committee agreed, and that means freedom of expression is now paramount in this legislation.

Fourth, we wanted to make sure that Canadian jobs and Canadian broadcasting were enhanced. We have \$1 billion now, which is substantial. It is a massive increase in the resources available to Canadian cultural industries. We wanted to make sure it assures there are Canadian jobs, so we tabled with success a number of amendments that enhance the Canadian employment and Canadian jobs component.

Finally, we wanted to ensure more accountability for the CRTC, and we were successful in that endeavour as well.

As a result, what we have is a Bill C-11 that is better and more improved. We are happy that we were able to use our effective opposition voice not to destroy, block or stop any consideration, but to improve this important bill.

[Translation]

It is worth mentioning that the vast majority of witnesses who testified before the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage were in favour of this bill. Even the Conservatives have to admit that these witnesses said that the bill must be passed. Dozens and dozens of organizations representing hundreds of thousands of Canadians from across the country told us that this bill should be passed, but that it had to be improved.

The NDP proposed amendments to improve accessibility for marginalized people, people with disabilities, indigenous peoples and racialized people in Canada, and these amendments were adopted. These measures will improve the bill overall. We also succeeded in getting the number of local and community programs increased. The fact that the CRTC will now be more accountable to Canadians is another NDP success. Canadian jobs are another very important aspect of the bill. We wanted freedom of expression to come above everything else, and the NDP's amendment in that respect was successful.

The reality is that the equivalent of five weeks of meetings were held with regard to the bill before us, during which we heard from dozens and dozens of witnesses. We can say that we met the expectations of these witnesses by ensuring that the bill is better now than it was when the committee got it.

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Even though I am disappointed with the Conservatives for holding up all the work for weeks, refusing to hear from witnesses and consider amendments, and refusing to do everything necessary to improve the bill, I think that what did come out of the committee study was an improved version of Bill C-11. There is more transparency. All of the work that we have done over the past few weeks has resulted in a better bill.

I would like to say one last thing. Bill C-11 and the fact that we have managed to make more Canadian voices heard are another way to counter disinformation. There is not just disinformation around Bill C-11. In the United States, Republican disinformation is currently a major issue because it is warping democracy and undermining the very essence of voting. This hate coming out of the United States, this disinformation, must be kept out of Canada as much as possible.

We saw the hate expressed by the so-called “freedom convoy”. At that time, we saw that these people wanted to take down our democracy, take down Canada's Parliament. Some of the Conservative members supported that. The way to counter disinformation is to provide more information. That is also one of the objectives of the improved version of Bill C-11.

• (1100)

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member will have five minutes for questions and comments when we return to debate after question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

SAMUEL “ART” CRAIG AND E.W. “AL” ROEDER

Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Madam Speaker, over the past year, our community of Newmarket—Aurora has lost two gentlemen whose impact on health care is immeasurable.

Art Craig passed on October 17, 2021, and Al Roeder passed on May 29, 2022. Both served our community in leadership positions with what is now the Southlake Regional Health Centre. Each served as president.

Al was a consummate professional, a health leader and in many ways a health pioneer. He was also, above all else, a gentleman, loved and respected by family, neighbours and former colleagues.

Art was a great supporter of arts and culture who believed in serving the community. He is remembered as a kind soul with a love of family and friends. The respect that he had from those who benefited from his support is exemplified with lifetime memberships in various organizations.

Our community, and specifically our hospital and health care, owe much to the leadership and the vision of both of these gentlemen.

KYIV HOME PROJECT IN ESSEX

Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Madam Speaker, look no further than to Essex to find people who will rise to the occasion when there is a cry for desperately needed help for the families of Ukraine. We all need a good-news story these days, and wow, do I have a great one.

Gary Taveirne and his amazing family were horrified by the horrible images of the illegal war on Ukraine and knew they had to do something, but they have gone above and beyond.

They have created the Kyiv Home Project and are building a two-family home in Cottam's Woodridge Estates for Ukrainian families to settle in, as well as supporting these families for three years as they get back on their feet.

With the help of BK Cornerstone, the Town of Kingsville, corporate donors, contractors, skilled trades workers and Pastor Kim Gilliland and the congregation of the Cottam United Church, their goal is to provide safe housing and necessities, which will soon become reality for Ukrainian families.

I am proud to strongly support this incredible act of compassion. I ask all of my colleagues in the House to join me in thanking the Taveirne family for their generosity and for leaving the world a better place than they found it.

* * *

UKRAINIAN FAMILIES IN SACKVILLE—PRESTON—CHEZZETCOOK

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canadian families across the country are stepping up to help Ukrainians come to and stay in Canada. The Parkers, a family from Eastern Passage in my riding of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, are now hosting their second family from Ukraine.

Anastasia, Oleski and Paulina arrived in Canada two weeks ago. Last Friday, I visited the Parker home to give young Paulina a Canadian flag and a backpack full of goodies. It was heartwarming to see her playing on the trampoline and waving her hand-held Canadian flag.

I want to thank the Parkers and all other families across Canada who have shown incredible generosity in opening up their homes and their hearts to the people of Ukraine.

* * *

FOOD PRICES

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, food prices are going through the roof and working-class families are finding it harder and harder to make ends meet. We know that Vladimir Putin's illegal war in Ukraine is driving fears of a global food shortage, but those fears are the perfect cover for the giant food conglomerates that are jacking up prices, not because of inflation but to gouge us.

Cargill's profits were up 64% in a single year. Loblaw's first-quarter profits are 40% higher than last year.

What is the government doing? The Liberals, remember, used taxpayers' money to fix Galen Weston's fridges while Loblaw's was scamming us over the price of bread, and the Conservatives? Well, their would-be leader says to invest our savings in crypto-Ponzi schemes to beat inflation. I mean, a financial genius this guy is not.

What we are dealing with is not inflation but old-fashioned price gouging and corporate giants ripping off Canada's working class. The New Democrats say that it is time we took on these corporate giants and got this money into the pockets of working-class families.

* * *

• (1105)

MEN'S HEALTH WEEK

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Milton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we need to talk about men's health. This is Men's Health Week, and June is Canadian Men's Health Month, but we need to recognize how important it is for men to be aware of their physical and mental health every day of the year.

Canadian men die at alarmingly high rates of chronic illnesses in Canada, yet 70% of men's health problems are preventable just by living a healthier life. Healthy eating and daily physical activity play an important role in the health, well-being and quality of life of all Canadians, but physical activity in particular decreases stress and helps prevent chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer and many other things we should all work to avoid.

[Translation]

The good news for guys is that resources are available, and there is a huge community to support them. MensHealthFoundation.ca is a great place to start if my colleagues are ready to focus on their mental and physical health.

[English]

In closing, I would like to wish my dad, Joe, and all the other dads out there in Milton and across Canada a very happy Father's Day.

* * *

[Translation]

BEAUCE

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, summer is just days away. In my riding, patio umbrellas are starting to go up in backyards and the smell of barbecue is in the air.

I would like to wish all the people of Beauce a fantastic summer holiday. The past two years have been tough, but the summer promises to be more or less normal. We have to keep supporting our local grocery store, coffee shop or corner store this summer because the neighbour, friend or family member who runs it needs us now more than ever.

Let us not forget that we cannot spell "Beauce" without "beau", which means beautiful. I know that I am a bit biased, but our

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scenery, our hospitality and our sweet treats are a cut above the rest. I invite all my colleagues to come to Beauce this summer to enjoy our Beauce Route and learn all about our local legends along the way. Those who find it hard to leave are welcome to stay at my place.

I wish everyone a great summer. In Beauce, they will feel at home.

* * *

[English]

FUNERAL AID SOCIETY OF PEEL

Mr. Shafqat Ali (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the residents Brampton Centre, I rise today to recognize Tahir Khan, Shafiq Ahmad, Aqeel Akram, Raja Ashfaq, Farooq Ahmad, and Zia Inam for their selfless service to the community as the founding members of the Funeral Aid Society of Peel. The society is a not-for-profit organization, and its more than 1,100 members self-insure against funeral and burial expenses.

When a loved one passes away, the funeral and burial expenses can add to the stress of bereavement. Upon the demise of one of its members, the Funeral Aid Society steps in to pay all funeral and burial expenses. It then distributes that cost pro-rated among its members.

I have much appreciation for the Funeral Aid Society of Peel, as well as its founders, volunteers and members, for helping community members during one of the most difficult times of life.

* * *

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill is situated on the traditional territory of the Wyandot, Haudenosaunee and Anishinabe peoples. It is covered by Treaty 13 and the Williams Treaties. We are privileged and grateful to share this part of Turtle Island.

The actions of many, including our government, have been revealed under the bright light of truth. We cannot deny the residential school graves or that the number of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls has become an epidemic. It should enrage us all that more than 63% of indigenous women have experienced physical or sexual violence. We cannot remain complacent. That is why national action plans have been put into place and why a special interlocutor on residential schools has been appointed.

Change finds its roots in many places. High school students in York Region, where my riding is located, will be studying indigenous literature. In 2021, Richmond Hill closed its facilities for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, and Aurora held a gathering, led by Jared Big Canoe of Georgina Island, to mourn and affirm that every child matters.

Statements by Members

June is National Indigenous History Month, and June 21 is National Indigenous Peoples Day, but these are just dates, unless we all commit ourselves to ensuring that the future is different than the past and choosing to change. I am committed, and I believe change is possible. Together we must all walk the path of reconciliation.

* * *

• (1110)

STANLEY MISSION EVACUATION

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Madam Speaker, this week, the residents of Stanley Mission returned home after the whole community was evacuated due to a forest fire. In this overwhelming situation, there are many people deserving of our thanks and recognition. These include the fire crews of Stanley Mission and surrounding communities, who were on the frontlines; the La Ronge Regional Fire Department for providing equipment and personnel; the council of Stanley Mission, the PAGC and the SPSA for their organization and assistance in managing both the fire and the evacuation; the Red Cross, which went above and beyond in the preparation for and implementation of the evacuations of the cities of Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina; and finally, EMO coordinator Maurice Ratt and Chief Tammy Cook-Searson of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band for their steadfast leadership and hard work in guiding their communities through a very difficult and stressful emergency.

To all of those I mentioned, and to the many volunteers who played a role in keeping the community and the people of Stanley Mission safe, I say, "Thank you."

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RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, after 46 years of being the voice of sports in Kingston, local legend Doug Jeffries is hanging up his microphone. A native of nearby Gananoque, Doug's career started in 1976 when, shortly after graduating from Loyalist College in Belleville, he was hired by local radio station CKLC to cover the sailing events that were being held in Kingston as part of the 1976 Montreal Olympics. For the next 25 years, Doug was a staple on CKLC and its sister station Fly FM, hosting both morning shows and sportscasts, as well as being the voice of the Queen's Golden Gaels football and OHL's Kingston Canadians.

Doug then moved on to TV, working for CKWS, initially as a news anchor before returning to sports in 2002 as the station's sports anchor. Doug also cares deeply for local sports in Kingston, showcasing, in particular, the skills and highlights of local high school athletes on the evening news.

This past Wednesday, June 15, was Doug's final broadcast, and it has been declared Doug Jeffries Day in Kingston. I would like to thank Doug for sharing his talent and his voice with us over the last 46 years. I wish him a happy retirement.

CANADIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, last week marked the start of the 2022 CFL season, and football fans across the country are excited and ready to cheer on their team. As a die-hard CFL fan, I am always happy to get a chance to highlight this great Canadian sport, which I believe is the best version of the game of football. With wide open play, exciting offence and energetic defence, one needs to stay to the very end to see who wins.

The CFL has nine teams split between the east and west divisions, and hopefully there will be a team in the Maritimes soon. The season will culminate in the Grey Cup championship game happening on November 20 in Regina. This will be the 109th Grey Cup game, and after two years of the pandemic, the province of Saskatchewan and the city of Regina are excited to welcome tourists back with open arms. This is a great opportunity to take in some world-class football played by outstanding athletes. I encourage everyone to attend a game and to watch the games on TV.

While I know which team I will be cheering for, but I wish all players, coaches and staff a successful season. Go, Riders, go.

* * *

PETERBOROUGH—KAWARTHA CONSTITUENT

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, Lee-Anne Quinn has received the Order of Military Merit award, the highest order a member of the military can receive. She is the honorary lieutenant colonel to the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment.

She is an all-star athlete. She is a Guinness World Records holder. She is an RN. She is a nurse practitioner who volunteers her time at Camp Maple Leaf. She received the Florence Nightingale Medal in 2007 as Canada's top nurse. She has served and practised medicine around the world in war-torn countries. She is also a survivor of PTSD. Lee-Anne is passionate about mental health solutions and service. She retired this past Tuesday so she can devote all her time to the Brock Clinic, which she worked tirelessly to make happen. The clinic offers free care for the homeless.

Lee-Anne has done so much for this community. I promise, as I said I would, that I will continue my work at the federal level to work across all party lines to ensure that mental health care becomes a priority from coast to coast to coast in this country. I am so honoured to know Lee-Anne.

• (1115)

[Translation]

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to draw the attention of the House to the dire situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We are seeing renewed violence on the part of M23 fighters and other terrorist militias, which has resulted in egregious human rights abuses. Tens of thousands of people have been driven from their homes. UN peacekeepers have been targeted, and there have been allegations of cross-border rocket fire.

The head of MONUSCO stated, and I quote: “We reaffirm our strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the DRC and strongly condemn the use of proxies.”

I urge the Government of Rwanda to work with the DRC to de-escalate the situation and reach an immediate ceasefire for all armed groups.

* * *

[English]

IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION OF MANITOBA

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, today I am honoured to acknowledge a special anniversary of an extraordinary organization in Winnipeg Centre. The Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba, known as IRCOM, is celebrating 30 years this month. This organization uses a one-of-a-kind model that provides safe, affordable transitional housing, along with wraparound supports, to 111 newcomer families in Winnipeg Centre.

I want to acknowledge the leadership of the refugee communities and advocates for building IRCOM Ellen 30 years ago and for opening IRCOM Isabel in 2016. I thank them for creating these spaces for the community to thrive. IRCOM introduces its values like this: “At IRCOM, we love...our community. We are full of hope and optimism.”

I am proud to share this with the House and to celebrate this with every member of the IRCOM community, including families, staff and volunteers, and with a special tribute to IRCOM’s youth.

* * *

[Translation]

JOËL LE BIGOT

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, this Saturday will be our last opportunity to hear Joël Le Bigot's smooth voice on Radio-Canada's radio show *Samedi et rien d'autre*. He is retiring at the end of this season.

Joël Le Bigot delighted listeners every weekday morning as host of *CBF-Bonjour* for nearly 20 years with his team of contributors. After taking a year off, our seafaring broadcaster headed back to land to become the king of weekend radio in Quebec.

Statements by Members

Throughout his brilliant radio career, Joël has been much more than a voice. He has a kind and curious nature, a playful sense of humour and a big heart. He is known for being a devotee of Georges Brassens' music, and many consider him to be the driving force behind the return of Quebec's Media Food Drive.

We know that he will be busy in retirement, embracing his role as doting grandfather and catching up with friends. This is the end of an era, but what an era it was. Fair winds and following seas to Joël Le Bigot.

* * *

[English]

UKRAINE

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I asked Yuliia, a 24-year-old intern from Ukraine, to describe Putin's brutal war in her own words. This is what she wrote, “Imagine it's Wednesday night. You set your alarm for 6:00 a.m., but it never goes off. Instead, your world is shattered by the deafening sounds of explosions. You're not sure what's going on. Your phone incessantly beeps with notifications. The war has started. Death steals your mind. Adrenaline fills you. You grab your passport, stuff your life into a backpack and try to escape. It takes six hours. You have no destination. Everything has been bombed. Friends text, 'Russians are entering the town, shooting civilians, looting apartments, stealing your life's belongings and sending them back to Russia.' Air sirens wail constantly as you read heart-breaking stories: A six-year-old boy's hair turning grey as he watches his mom being raped, a mom and daughter tied to a mine that exploded, a missile launched at a maternity hospital.”

Plain and simple, the Liberals need to stop sending their officials to drink champagne and eat caviar with Russian officials and do more to help Ukrainians.

* * *

• (1120)

CHIEF SCIENCE ADVISOR'S YOUTH COUNCIL

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this week the youth council of Canada's chief science advisor, Dr. Mona Nemer, is in Ottawa. I had the great privilege of speaking with the council yesterday as part of its meetings in the capital. I was deeply impressed by the diversity of its members' fields and backgrounds, from oceans to aerospace and everything in between. I was also moved by their brilliance, their probing and smart questions, their passionate and advocacy for their research, and their curiosity with respect to the intersection of science and politics. Dr. Nemer has tasked the youth council with writing a report on the future of science in Canada, and its meetings this week with government representatives and members of Ottawa's science policy community will inform its work.

Oral Questions

One thing is clear to me. With these young people at the forefront of research and discovery in Canada, the future of science in our country knows no bounds. I would like to invite all members to join me in congratulating the chief science advisor's youth council on its successful trip to Ottawa and in thanking it for its excellent contributions to science in Canada, both those of today and those to come.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

PASSPORTS

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canadians continue to have to pay Service Canada for expedited passports, despite the minister assuring this House that this would not be the case. Half the time, they are not even getting the enhanced service they are being forced to pay for. This directive first came out weeks ago, yet it is still not being implemented.

If the minister's department does not respect her enough to follow her directives, how does she ever expect to clear the backlog?

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as the hon. member and many Canadians know, after two years of travel restrictions in this pandemic there is an unprecedented backlog of applications both in Canada and around the world. This has led to delays in processing and issuance, but the minister has been adamant with the department to address the situation and improve service and we continue to do so on a day-to-day basis because the situation is not acceptable. Canadians need their documents. We will keep Canadians informed about additional measures as we take them, and encourage people to plan ahead to ensure they have passports planned before booking. I would like to also emphasize that those who—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Red Deer—Lacombe has the floor.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Madam Speaker, Passport Canada's narrow definition of "need" for expediting a passport is very troublesome.

If people have an upcoming ticket to Disney World, they can get an expedited passport. If they are pleading to expedite their passport so they can fly to say goodbye to their dying parent or go to Europe to help their scared, elderly mother escape from Ukraine, that is not really an urgent need according to Passport Canada.

If the minister cannot be competent, can she at least try to be compassionate?

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to be clear that those clients and Canadians who need to travel for humanitarian reasons or other compassionate purposes, such as critical illness or other emergencies including the death of another person, can obtain a passport within two business days with proof of travel or need. This standard is being pressed upon and upheld from coast to coast at every Passport Canada counter across the country.

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, yesterday in Toronto, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance was supposed to make an announcement that would give Canadians some relief from inflation. Unfortunately, once again, the Minister of Finance showed that she is completely out of touch with the reality all Canadians are facing. There was no announcement at all, just more rehashing of the same Liberal talking points.

Here is a simple question for the government: Why is the Liberal government refusing to give Canadian families a break by lowering taxes?

• (1125)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the answer is very simple. We lowered taxes for the middle class, and the Conservatives voted against it. It is unacceptable that today the Conservatives are asking us to do something they refused to do a few years ago.

Yesterday, the Deputy Prime Minister announced our plan to support Canadians during this time of inflation and rising costs of living. It is a serious plan. The Conservatives have no suggestions.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, every Canadian knows that on April 1, this government increased the Liberal carbon tax. Writing in *Le Journal de Québec* and *Le Journal de Montréal* today, Loïc Tassé was blunt but truthful.

He wrote that all these measures by the Liberal government will not fight inflation. On the contrary, they will accelerate it. He asks: "What magical world is she living in?"

The problem is that while the minister is living in her magical world, Canadians are living in the Liberal government's Canada, where taxes are spiralling. Why is the government refusing to lower taxes for all Canadians?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in his question, my colleague talked about carbon pricing. I would like to begin by reminding him that federal carbon pricing does not apply in Quebec because Quebec has its own cap-and-trade system.

Second, in provinces where carbon pricing is in effect, people get more back from the system than they put into it. In Ontario, families will get \$745 this year. In Manitoba, they will get \$830. In Saskatchewan, they will get \$1,100, and in Alberta, they will get \$1,080. Canadians are better off with the pollution pricing system.

Oral Questions

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a treat when the founder of Équiterre, who is currently being sued by Équiterre, is in teacher mode.

The fact is, countries such as Germany, England, Australia, South Korea and the United States have taken steps to lower taxes, especially those that affect the price of gas, which affects everyone, particularly when it is time to buy groceries.

Groceries need to be transported. That takes gas, which means taxes are rolled into prices. Why is the government refusing to lower taxes?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, honestly, it is such a shame that one of our colleagues from Quebec is arguing favour of cutting taxes for oil companies when we know we are facing a climate crisis here in Canada and around the world.

We will end up paying a lot more if we do not tackle the climate crisis right now. That is what we this side of the House are doing.

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OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, Quebec's minister of the French language, Simon Jolin-Barrette, has been invited to address the Académie française. He will head to Paris to explain to “the immortals”, who have been defending the French language for 400 years, how Quebec plans to protect its national language.

The Minister of Official Languages has also introduced a bill that is supposed to protect the future of French. Has she also been invited to address the Académie française?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her question.

We recognize that French is in decline in North America and that French is in decline in Canada. That is why we went ahead with a much more robust version of the bill, to ensure that we can address this situation.

I want to once again extend an invitation to the opposition members, especially the Bloc Québécois, to work with us because we do share a common objective, which is to ensure that we are doing everything we can to protect the beautiful French language.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will take that as a no. It is probably because Bill C-13 does not really protect French in Quebec. It protects institutional bilingualism, which results in the anglicization of workplaces and reduces the perception of the importance of being fluent in French in Quebec. Bill C-13 does not recognize that French is the only official language that requires protection in light of the predominance of English in North America.

Is it possible that the Académie française did not invite the Minister of Official Languages because Bill C-13 lacks vision?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Madam Speaker, very briefly, it is clear that the member opposite has not read Bill C-13, because the opposite is true.

I really believe that the Bloc Québécois is misleading Canadians. We have moved forward with a new bill to ensure that all federally regulated private businesses are subject to this new law, that workers can work in French and that clients can be served in French, and also that they live in French in their community.

Once again, I would like to make sure that the members of the opposition will work with the government to pass this bill as quickly as possible.

* * *

• (1130)

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, hard-working Canadians are getting crushed by the rising cost of living. People across the country can barely afford the gas to drive to work or to get groceries.

Yesterday, the government had a chance to finally give them a helping hand. Instead, the Deputy Prime Minister was on Bay Street, reassuring the richest 1% that the Liberals would not tax record oil and gas profits or give Canadians the help they need right now.

What will it take for the government to stop making re-announcements and finally stand up for working class Canadians getting gouged at the pumps?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Finance did give a speech on Bay Street in order to explain to Canadians how we have their backs in this time of unprecedented volatility on a global scale.

In fact, she detailed a five-point plan that is going to help Canadians deal with the inflationary crisis that we are seeing right around the world. We have an affordability plan that is putting money directly back into the pockets of Canadians. What the NDP is proposing is tax hikes on grocery stores, which could only lead to increased prices for groceries—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, in her speech at the Empire Club this week, the Deputy Prime Minister treated inflation like it was a public relations problem for the government rather than the very real financial issue that it is for so many Canadians.

Oral Questions

As she was speaking, new mothers on employment insurance and others depending on EI were having their EI payments garnished to pay debt back to the government while they were trying to keep their homes. It is the wrong approach. We did not hear anything new in the speech yesterday.

I am hoping we are soon going to hear that the government will bring into force a low-income CERB repayment amnesty and a freeze on payments for middle-class Canadians who are struggling to keep their homes in this time of inflation. When are we going to hear that?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the finance critic for the NDP for his question and for his work on the finance committee.

I would point out that yesterday's plan announced by our Minister of Finance included many supports that Canadians would feel for the first time this year. For a couple in Ontario with an income of \$45,000 and a child in day care, our plan could mean an additional \$7,350 this year, above existing benefits. This is real money going back into the pockets of real Canadians.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canadians are struggling and looking for relief, but instead, they are getting skyrocketing costs, unaffordable groceries and toonie-a-litre gas. It is because of the Liberals' reckless spending and double dipping with taxes on top of taxes that Canadians are barely making it to the end of the month. Just like George Costanza, these Liberals will keep dipping as they see fit. It is disgusting.

When will the Liberals stop double dipping in Canadians' pockets and give us some relief?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives are making jokes about a very serious situation. Maybe the hon. member saw what happened this week with cryptocurrency. That is the type of economic policy that is coming from the Conservative Party these days. Do the Conservatives not agree that a 50% reduction in child care this year is real savings for Canadian families? Do they not believe that \$2,400 in the pockets of a family of three through the Canada workers benefit is real money in the pockets of Canadian workers? They should know that. They voted against all of these measures.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is a lot of chatting back and forth here. I would ask, if members are not being recognized for questions or answers, that they hold on to their thoughts.

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

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary talks about jokes. What is a joke is that yesterday, the minister stood in the House when I talked about rising costs and talked

about history with things that happened 10 years ago, when it was her government and the minister's department that approved \$93,000 in champagne and caviar for government officials, while Canadians cannot afford to heat their homes or feed their families. It is a failed approach that they have doubled down on time and again. If anyone is laughing, we cannot hear them because the joke is on that side of the House. It might come as a surprise to them, but just like budgets, gas prices and grocery bills will not balance themselves.

Will the Liberals cut taxes for Canadians?

• (1135)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we did cut taxes for Canadians and the Conservatives voted against it. Thank goodness there was other support in the House to ensure that Canadians would see a reduction in their taxes. When it comes to supporting Canadians, we will continue to put in place the measures that put money directly back into the pockets of Canadians. I am thinking of a one-time payment for all Canadians having trouble finding low-income housing that is coming into effect this year. We also have a reduction in child care costs of up to 50% this year. That is real money going back into the pockets of real Canadians.

* * *

FINANCE

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, ABS: When buying a vehicle, ABS stands for automatic braking system. When a vehicle senses an impending danger, it brakes immediately. Canadians have no such braking system when it comes to our finances. In fact, we have the opposite. The finance minister has a different take on ABS. It is "always be spending".

Will she order an immediate pause to all discretionary spending to fight inflation, or does the Liberals' blood pact with the NDP forbid any of that?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives are changing their tone by the day. Yesterday, the member was accusing us of not spending more money in order to support Canadians, and today he is saying that we are spending too much. Which is it? What we have done is ensure that over the course of the past several months and years, our budgetary planning would ensure that we would be there for Canadians. That—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I am sure the hon. members of the opposition party would want to hear the answer. There is going back and forth on both sides. I am sure everyone would like to hear what the hon. parliamentary secretary is saying, as they may have a follow-up question.

Oral Questions

The hon. parliamentary secretary can restart her answer.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Madam Speaker, as I was saying, the Conservatives are changing their story by the day. Yesterday, the hon. member was accusing our government of not adding new spending into the economy in order to support Canadians. Today, he is saying we are spending too much. In fact, Moody's, S&P and all of the credit agencies have reconfirmed our AAA credit rating. The spending that the minister put forward yesterday was included in our fiscal framework. We are there for Canadians while ensuring we do not add fuel to the fire and continue the inflationary spiral.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member is just plain wrong, and I see where she gets it from. The Minister of Finance has gotten inflation wrong at every turn. She said deflation was the concern; that was wrong. Then she said it was transitory; that was wrong. Now she has a so-called affordability plan that only includes more spending.

Stephen Gordon is an economist at Laval. He has said that now is not the time for increased spending as it only pours fuel on the inflationary fire. Instead, she can reduce discretionary spending, stop the Morneau escalator on user fees and give Canadians a break at the pumps.

Will the minister listen to Conservatives and start fighting inflation, or does she, just like her Prime Minister, love spending too much?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, all of the experts agree that what we have presented is a very fiscally responsible budget in April. S&P and Moody's have reconfirmed our AAA credit rating. Our debt-to-GDP ratio continues to consistently go down. Our economic forecast is absolutely incredible. Experts are predicting that this year and next year Canada will have the highest and fastest growth among G7 countries. We will continue to create jobs and ensure strong economic growth.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, when asked why the government will not temporarily remove GST from gasoline to help offset the high cost of fuel, the government claimed that there was no evidence that removing a tax at the point of sale would reduce prices. Liberals even called the suggestion a subsidy for industry.

Is the government so economically illiterate that it actually thinks that removing a tax on consumers is an industry subsidy?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the way the GST is administered in this country is that we impose it on the company, in this case the oil company, and it passes it on to consumers. What I have been explaining is that there is no certainty that oil companies will pass those savings directly—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

I apologize.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, I would just ask members to keep whatever they have to think about in their head until it is time for them to ask a question. I do not think that the comment was very respectful at all. I appreciate the hon. member saying that he is sorry, but again, I would remind members to maybe just hold on to their thoughts and comments until it is their turn to ask a question.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

• (1140)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Madam Speaker, I would just say that so far, all the Conservatives have been proposing when it comes to economic policy is either a tax cut for oil companies or elimination of certain tariffs we have imposed on Russia. This is not serious economic policy. What we have proposed is.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, I think others are trying to weigh in on the response and I would ask them to wait.

The hon. member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley.

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Madam Speaker, gas prices, food prices, home prices, what do they all have in common? They are all going up, way up. What else is going way up? It is government revenues from the massive taxes it collects on those things. While the Liberal cabinet is flush with cash, kitchen cabinets are looking pretty bare.

Will the Prime Minister finally wake up, have just a little compassion for those who are struggling and give Canadians a tax break so they can at least afford to put food on the table?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I agree with the member opposite. Canadians are feeling it. They are feeling increased prices at the grocery store and at the pump, which is why as prices are increasing, so are our benefits. Many, if not all, of our important benefits supporting Canadians right now are indexed to inflation, which means that they will continue to increase as inflation increases.

Also increasing this year is our support for seniors with the old age security benefit. Also increasing is the Canada workers benefit, and I could go on and on.

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[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, yesterday, we were looking forward to hearing the Minister of Finance provide details on her plan to help citizens and businesses deal with inflation.

Oral Questions

What a letdown. There will be no increase in the GST tax credit for people with low incomes and no monthly payments. There will be nothing for industries affected by fuel prices, such as the trucking, agricultural and taxi industries. There will be no increase in old age security for those under the age of 75, and nothing will be done to address the labour shortage. All the minister did was repeat measures that had already been announced in April's budget.

Why did she show up empty-handed when people are struggling?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the Bloc Québécois's question.

What was announced yesterday is still very important. It is a plan to help Canadians who are dealing with the rising cost of living, whether it be through the increase to the Canada workers benefit, the increase to old age security, or the one-time payments to Canadians facing housing affordability challenges.

It is a real plan that ensures that we do not add fuel to the fire and that we manage our economy properly here in Canada.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, it was the same old talking points.

There is no one in this government to listen to Quebeckers. Ever since the Minister of Finance started covering for both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, there is no one we can talk to about making progress on the issues that matter to businesses and citizens. The minister's three jobs, coupled with her refusal to delegate to colleagues, has made this government blind to what is happening on the ground.

Is there anyone left in this government who realizes that inflation is a real problem with real consequences that requires a response now, not in six months?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is accusing us of serving up the same lines. Would he have us add fuel to the fire and spend billions of dollars at a time when inflation is the issue?

We already spent \$300 billion during the pandemic to help Canadians. Now is not the time to spend more. Yesterday was simply an opportunity for us to explain the support measures we put in place in the April budget that are there to help Canadians this year.

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[English]

PASSPORTS

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Madam Speaker, the chaos at Passport Canada and Service Canada is past being temporary. It is worse than ever. The lawn chair lineups are now starting at 4 a.m., 3 a.m. or 1 a.m. in many cities.

Our office alone is handling dozens of transfer requests, each and every day, of people who are going to leave the country in the next day or two and still do not have their passports, despite applying months ago. Each time people call, they are on hold for a minimum of two to three hours. The chaos never had to happen in the first

place. Each time the Liberals offer a remedy, we get longer lines and longer phone call delays.

Can the Liberals even admit what their actual service standard is now or are they too afraid to tell Canadians?

• (1145)

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, since December, Service Canada and our passport agents have been preparing for what we have now. The surge is unprecedented, and we continue to work through the process. Just as an example, 600 new employees have been hired and are on the job. Another 600 employees are in the process of being put into place. Every counter across this country is open.

We know there are long lines, and that is why Service Canada agents are going through those lines, checking passports and travel plans and making sure that seniors, those who have children and those who have work times are being accommodated within two business days for immediate travel.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, let us talk about those new employees. It now takes nine weeks to get a passport. Let me repeat that: nine weeks. Someone who submits their application today can expect to get their document in mid-August, if they are lucky.

The minister says she has already hired 600 people, and another 600 are coming to the rescue. There is a labour shortage at the moment. Businesses in my region are struggling to hire a single person. The minister expects us to believe that she has found 1,200 people in the blink of an eye.

When will the minister take immediate action to address this unprecedented crisis?

[English]

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I mentioned before, additional processing facilities have been opened and initial staff have been hired, but this is not unprecedented, just here in Canada. It is around the world. Wait times in countries like Australia, the U.K. and elsewhere are anywhere between nine and 11 weeks for expedited passports. Here, we are meeting the challenge for Canadians, both in the lines and in our application process, to make sure that those who have immediate travel needs are being addressed so they can get on their way.

Oral Questions

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, my staff tell me that the passport backlog is an absolute horror show. People are crying and freaking out when they call us, distressed that they are about to lose thousands of dollars of money spent on upcoming trips. At committee, the minister responsible for Passport Canada said, “Have thou no fear, MPs have a direct hotline to passport services.” Well, the hotline is cold. My assistant waited five hours on Wednesday to get through.

Will the minister responsible acknowledge the Liberals' absolute incompetence?

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, after two years of travel restrictions, the surge is unprecedented. We know Canadians are frustrated. We know case workers are frustrated, which is why we are doing everything we can. The minister continues to work with officials to look at every opportunity to improve processing times, whether it is by phone, in person or every other application process that we can do.

We continue to work with our colleagues across the way if there are immediate needs. Some have already reached out to me, and we continue to collaborate.

* * *

HEALTH

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a senior from my riding said, “We do not have a smart phone, or the technical knowledge to figure it all out, it discriminates people like us.” People cite technology cost. They are talking about the “ArriveCAN'T” app. Businesses are waiting months instead of weeks for deliveries from the U.S. due to vaccine mandates affecting truckers. The Liberals' reducing some travel and vaccine mandates does not help either of these situations.

Why are the Liberals keeping the mandatory use of the ArriveCAN app and keeping Canada closed?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Speaker, ArriveCAN has been a very important tool in helping to keep Canadians safe against the virus. We continue to work with our stakeholders and we continue to work with travellers to improve their experience on ArriveCAN by making it more accessible.

I am pleased to report to members in this chamber that compliance is up well over 90%, which, in the long run, will make travel more efficient and, of course, we will continue to improve that app as we go forward.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, food insecurity in Nunavut is a major issue. The cost-of-living crisis is making a bad situation even worse. In budget 2022, the Liberals did not mention food insecurity in the north once. My constituents are being left behind by the government. Food has expired by the time it reaches shelves in Nunavut. This is not how people in Canada should live.

Why has the government not taken steps to make sure all people in the north can access fresh, affordable food?

• (1150)

Hon. Dan Vandal (Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I absolutely agree with the member. There is nothing more important than food security in Canada and around the world.

All Canadians, regardless of where they live, deserve access to safe and affordable food. Through budget 2021, we have added another \$170 million to the nutrition north program. We have added the harvester support grant so indigenous groups can have help harvesting traditional country food. There is more to do, but we are in the right direction.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, rents will continue to rise and things will only get worse for people already struggling to pay for groceries. Rent for a one-bedroom unit in Vancouver is over \$2,300 a month, in Toronto over \$2,100, and in Halifax almost \$1,700. The Liberals' response to struggling Canadians is an extra \$7 on GST cheques. The government is so out of touch with reality.

Will the Liberals double the GST rebate and increase the Canada child benefit by \$500 so families can get an additional \$500 to \$1,000 back in their pockets?

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

We fully agree that it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to pay the rent. That is why our budget includes the Canada housing benefit, as my colleagues know. That investment will total more than \$4 billion.

We are also adding another \$475 million this year. That is an additional \$500 on top of what we have already introduced, just to help families pay the rent, which is becoming increasingly difficult.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in my riding of Kitchener—Conestoga and across Canada, we have seen the effects that global inflation has had on the everyday lives of Canadians, inflation caused in part by the illegal war in Ukraine and China's zero-COVID policy.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance tell this House what the government is doing to help Canadians deal with this global phenomenon?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, just yesterday, the Minister of Finance released our affordability plan in order to tackle exactly what my colleague is addressing, and that is the increased cost of living. What we have presented is our plan to increase the Canada workers benefit, to increase old age security, to provide a one-time payment to Canadians finding it difficult to access affordable housing and, of course, our programs are indexed to inflation so they continue to rise. This is a concrete plan.

The member of Parliament for Kitchener—Conestoga is an excellent musician and I would like to tell him, “Rock on, my friend.”

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, we have already seen the steepest 52-week rise in the price of meat since Pierre Elliott Trudeau, and we have producers across the Prairies reeling because of dry conditions. With the government's insistence on pushing through front-of-package labelling on beef and pork, it is further hamstringing producers and consumers without solid evidence that this expensive change is necessary.

With Canada set to become the only country on earth to impose this policy, is the government using the same top-secret scientists it used to defend its unnecessary COVID mandates to now defend kneecapping our ag producers?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on this side of the House, we are alarmed and concerned about the rising rates of illnesses, and particularly chronic illnesses, that are impacted by poor diets. These labels are widely recognized by health organizations and the scientific community as an effective tool to help counteract the rate of diet-related chronic disease that continues to rise in Canada.

More information for consumers is always a good thing. During our engagements with industry stakeholders, Health Canada experts and Canadians across the country, Health Canada analyzed the feedback it received and has made adjustments to the proposal where supported by science.

On this side of the House, we will always be there for Canadians when they are making good decisions at the grocery store.

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Madam Speaker, residents in northern Saskatchewan travel great distances to attend medical appointments in Saskatoon.

From Meadow Lake, it is three hours; from Pierceland or Goodsoil, it is over four hours; from La Loche or Creighton, over six hours. Depending on road conditions, from Stony Rapids it can be 14 hours.

These are one-way trips. Can the minister tell us if the rising price of gas is threatening his constituents' ability to receive the medical care they need, as it is my constituents?

● (1155)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his commitment to his constituents and his consistent advocacy, particularly for lower-income families in his riding.

The health committee just concluded a study on the health care human resources crisis in this country. We are going to make sure that every Canadian has access to a family doctor, including through telehealth in remote ridings, such as my friend's riding. The cost of living is rising across the country. We will be there for Canadians to support their health.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Madam Speaker, after stridently defending it, the government has suspended the vaccine requirements to travel domestically or outbound internationally. Provinces have acted to lift COVID-related mandates, citing high vaccine rates, reduced hospitalizations and lower COVID case counts. Even Liberal caucus members want all federal pandemic restrictions lifted.

The Prime Minister's Office is acting alone, and using these mandates as political weapon of choice. When will the Prime Minister put an end to divisive mandates that do not follow the science?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on this side of the House, we agree that Canadians want to get back to normal, and we all want to get back to normal but we have to be honest. The COVID pandemic is not over yet.

At every step, we have adapted our COVID-19 measures based on the current situation. This week, we were able to announce that we are lifting the travel mandates. We are pausing them because this pandemic is not over. Because of our strong vaccine rates, we are able to relax some of those requirements, but Canadians continue to die from COVID-19 and we cannot take our foot off the brake just yet.

*Oral Questions***SENIORS**

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Madam Speaker, during the last election, the Liberals promised in their platform to develop a safe long-term care act to ensure that our seniors would be guaranteed the care that they deserve, no matter where they live.

Over nine months later, nothing has happened. Seniors are tired of waiting. It has been long enough. When will the government show some respect, stop treating seniors as second-class citizens and commit to tabling a long-term care act?

Hon. Kamal Khera (Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this pandemic continues to highlight the challenges in long-term care, including gaps in infection prevention and staffing.

I have personally seen these challenges on the front lines as a nurse. Our government has made significant investments, including \$4 billion to provinces and territories, to improve the standard of care in those facilities. I would like to remind the member opposite that her party voted against the measure when we put it in the fall economic statement. There was \$41.9 billion in cash support for provinces and territories through the Canada health transfers.

We will keep working with provinces and territories so that we can continue to fight this pandemic and ensure that seniors in long-term care have the supports they need.

* * *

[Translation]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Madam Speaker, the federal government shut down the herring and mackerel fisheries just two days before the season was to start, and it did so without even mentioning compensation, knowing full well that action was almost certain.

With 48 hours' notice, Ottawa pulled the rug out from under Quebec fishers, who now have no income after they made significant pre-season investments in their boats and equipment.

At the very least, the government needs to provide compensation. That is what fishers in the pelagic fishery are calling for and what the Quebec National Assembly unanimously called for on April 7.

Will the minister respect this unanimous demand from Quebec and compensate fishers in the pelagic fishery?

[English]

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my goal is to grow the fish and seafood sector because of its importance to Canadian fish harvesters, processors and exporters. This is an amazingly strong part of our economy on both coasts. To do that, we need sustainable fisheries. When fisheries are frail, then we need to take action and that is just what we have done. There are many programs to support our fish harvesters.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Madam Speaker, we need to manage fish and humans. We have just three sitting days left. Our fishers need compensation, and they need it now, not in six months. Even the Minister of National Revenue and member for Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine has said that suspending the fishery without compensation was unacceptable and showed a lack of understanding of the situation.

It is true that the resource is declining. The minister has known that for 10 years now, but it is unacceptable to ban someone from doing their job with 48 hours' notice and with no compensation. Will the minister commit to immediately compensating our fishers—

• (1200)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. minister.

[English]

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I understand the difficulties for fish harvesters. Stocks in some years are abundant and there is a lot of opportunity to fish them, and in other years and other stocks the abundance is just not there and we need to close down the fisheries. It is a difficult situation. I want to acknowledge that our government has many ways in which we support Canadians in need when their employment is not available.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Madam Speaker, my question is for the public safety minister. Just before the pandemic, I met with his predecessor on the subject of placing defibrillators in every RCMP cruiser. He agreed with me that this would save 300 lives per year, and he expressed personal pride at the fact that earlier in his career he had placed defibrillators in every city of Toronto police cruiser.

Could the current minister advise the House as to whether RCMP cruisers have been receiving defibrillators since the time of this conversation?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Speaker, of course, over the past number of years we have invested hundreds of millions of dollars to provide the RCMP with the tools and equipment it needs not only to keep Canadians safe but obviously to ensure our frontline officers are safe, and we will continue to make those investments. Going forward, we certainly hope that Conservatives will support the investments that are in budget 2022 to achieve many of those goals. I look forward to continuing to speak with my colleague on the specific issue he raised.

*Oral Questions***HEALTH**

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, last week I spent an hour on the streets with a young woman who had passed out. She was in danger of getting hit by a car. I could not call paramedics because she was not in medical distress. I could not take her to the hospital because they did not have room for her, and I could not call the police because there was nowhere to take her.

I understand that decriminalization is very important to destigmatization, and that is critical in treating addiction, but why are we not investing in real solutions and investing in a mental health system to treat people and help them on their way to recovery?

[Translation]

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for that important question. People are dying every day. Putting an end to this crisis calls for a multi-faceted plan that includes diverting drug users away from the criminal justice system.

We approved British Columbia's plan to decriminalize personal possession of small amounts of drugs. It is based on a comprehensive implementation plan, along with a broad range of resources and services for people who use drugs, including safe supply. We will monitor and assess the outcomes in British Columbia because information about how the plan works is essential.

* * *

[English]

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Madam Speaker, many of the residents in my riding are struggling to make ends meet. Helping special-needs children and giving the required assistance has had an emotional and financial impact. Care centres are having to severely cut hours. The current government has failed our most vulnerable citizens, who are urgently attempting to stay afloat.

When will the government stop punishing Canadians, start demonstrating compassion, and start doing its job by assisting our most vulnerable families in meeting their basic needs?

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Madam Speaker, since 2015, we have taken historic steps toward building a barrier-free Canada. In addition to the \$112 million from budget 2021, with budget 2022 we are investing nearly \$300 million in disability inclusion, including an employment strategy for persons with disabilities and funding to support the creation of materials for persons with print disabilities.

Moving forward, we are committed to implementing the disability inclusion action plan, which would establish a robust employment strategy and enhance eligibility for government disability programs and benefits, and to introducing the Canada disability benefit act to address poverty among Canadians with disabilities. We all benefit when everyone participates equally in society.

• (1205)

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one in three Canadians say that their mental health got worse due to the pandemic.

While many Canadians struggle with mental health issues, certain groups in Canada have been disproportionately affected.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions inform the House of the announcement she made with the Red Cross regarding the work of community-based organizations across the country?

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her important question. This allows me to reaffirm that good mental health will always be a priority to our government.

This funding will not only help enhance resilience in communities across Canada but also support those whose mental health has been most affected by the pandemic.

Yesterday, I was pleased to announce that our government will provide \$10 million in funding to the Canadian Red Cross for mental health programs and support as we work to build a resilient recovery. The funding announced yesterday is part of the \$100-million investment provided in budget 2021 to support populations disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

* * *

[English]

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals continue to fail Canadians on transparency. Official complaints on access to information requests are up 71%. The Treasury Board has delayed its ATIP review for years and the government continues to keep most of its ATIP staff at home, yet somehow it managed to pay over \$36 million to private consultants to process information requests, including over \$300,000 for one single request.

Has the government given up on “open by default” and replaced it with “incompetent by default”?

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are the first government to update the Access to Information Act in 34 years. We gave the Information Commissioner order-making power. We have waived all fees beyond the \$5 fee. We have put into law a system for proactive disclosure of so much information that could be more easily released to Canadians. We are very proud of what we have done with the Access to Information Act.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, defence department documents revealed that Pakistan's chief of army staff, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, had a visit to Canada approved for a \$50,000 taxpayer-covered trip in 2020 that was cancelled thanks to COVID-19.

General Bajwa has been accused of toppling two governments in Pakistan. The military under his command has been involved in human rights abuses and extrajudicial killings and has links to terrorism groups. An assistant deputy minister called this visit appropriate.

Does the defence minister share the same opinion that a \$50,000 trip to Canada was appropriate for General Bajwa?

Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would concur with the member opposite. This situation is not appropriate. I am unaware of the current situation and would be happy to speak with the member opposite when I get further details.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Madam Speaker, Gene from White Bay, and many like him from all over Newfoundland and Labrador, are trying to plan their summer. Getting out on the water to catch codfish is knit into the very fabric of life in Newfoundland and Labrador, and is an important driver of the local economy.

The dates and regulations for the food fishery should be released in March or April, but here we are close to Canada Day without knowing whether this fishery will even open at all.

Given that this is Come Home Year and the government is already two months behind on this announcement, will the minister show some respect and release the dates and regulations for the food fishery immediately?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the work of fish harvesters and fish processors from coast to coast in this country. We make all of our decisions on fish allocations based on science and in consultation with harvesters and others. We are preparing decisions on this fishery and they will be released soon.

Oral Questions

NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Madam Speaker, critical minerals are essential building blocks of the green digital economy of tomorrow. Earlier this week, the Minister of Natural Resources went to PDAC, the world's largest mining conference, to position Canada as a global leader in sustainable mineral development and green mining innovation.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources please update the House on the work regarding Canada's critical minerals strategy?

• (1210)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for all of her hard work on mines.

We know there is no energy transition without critical minerals. They represent an important economic opportunity for our country.

That is why our government is working on a critical minerals strategy. This week, we released our discussion paper to inform the development of that strategy. Canadians will be able to have their say in the development of Canada's critical minerals strategy and how it can achieve its objectives. Our goal is to develop an end-to-end value chain, from exploration, mining, refining and processing to manufacturing and recycling.

I appreciate all the hard work from the member.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, Canada has an equity problem. The Canadian Climate Institute reports that the Liberals are failing again to deliver needed infrastructure in the north. Decades of underfunding mean that people do not have the tools to face wildfires, floods and other extreme weather. Most indigenous and northern communities already lack access to safe drinking water, adequate housing and reliable roads. That is not fair.

When will the Liberals finally make meaningful investments in infrastructure and stop neglecting people in the north?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Dan Vandal (Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government has been very clear: Climate change is real. The north is seeing the effects of climate change at the rate of three times the rest of Canada.

We are working with northerners, with industry, with indigenous partners and with territorial and provincial partners to support the development of knowledge and tools to adapt to the impacts of climate change and to reduce reliance on diesel in the north by shifting to renewable sources of energy.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, on a point of order arising out of question period, I take the parliamentary secretary's explanation to mean that I should aid him and the House, so I am seeking the unanimous consent of the House to table an access to information request with the information regarding General Bajwa and the trip to Canada for \$50,000 that was to be approved.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to six petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-28, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (self-induced extreme intoxication).

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, entitled "Towards a Violence-Free Canada: Addressing and Eliminating Intimate Partner and Family Violence". Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to the report.

I would like to thank our clerk, Alexie Labelle; our analysts, Clare Annett and Dominique Montpetit; our hard-working translation team; the staff; and all members of the committee. Everyone

worked tirelessly on this study and on the report. I want to especially thank witnesses who appeared and submitted briefs.

Talking about intimate partner violence is not easy, but it is critical to building a violence-free Canada.

* * *

• (1215)

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-291, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other Acts (child sexual abuse material).

He said: Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise to introduce my private member's bill, an act to amend the Criminal Code.

First, I want to thank the bill's author and seconder, the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo. The private members' draw resulted in my name being drawn much earlier than that of the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, so we agreed to use my earlier draw to get this bill tabled, and hopefully passed, in Parliament.

My hon. colleague's experience as a prosecutor brought to light the issue of how the Criminal Code uses the term "child pornography". The term "child pornography" sanitizes what children go through, having never given consent. Child victims will have their victimization live on in perpetuity, and the words used in the Criminal Code must reflect the seriousness of this so that it is correctly understood within and throughout the judicial system.

This is a simple but necessary bill. It would simply change the name of "child pornography" to "child sexual abuse material". That is all.

Words matter. "Pornography" is used to describe media depicting or describing consenting adults. Children can never consent to sexual activity with adults. That is why any sexualized depiction of children must be called what it is: abuse.

I call on all members of the House to support the prompt passage of this bill.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

* * *

ONLINE ALGORITHM TRANSPARENCY ACT

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-292, An Act respecting transparency for online algorithms.

He said: Madam Speaker, with thanks to my seconder, the member for Hamilton Centre, today I am tabling an important bill, Bill C-292, an act respecting transparency for online algorithms.

Routine Proceedings

The purpose of this bill is to ensure that online platforms do not use algorithms and personal information to discriminate against anyone. This legislation is particularly timely, because as we have seen during this pandemic, there has been an unprecedented rise in online hate, disinformation and right-wing extremism.

For years, online platforms have been using algorithms to discriminate, to make predictions or decisions about a user and to direct information by amplifying or promoting content to that user. The online algorithm transparency act would require transparency and accountability in all algorithms that are used.

Other jurisdictions, such as the United Kingdom, the European Union and New Zealand, are looking at implementing similar legislation. Of course, Senator Ed Markey has sponsored a landmark bill in the U.S. Senate. Anti-hate organizations are also calling for algorithm transparency.

I urge all members of Parliament to support this important legislation.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

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PANDEMIC PREVENTION AND PREPAREDNESS ACT

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-293, An Act respecting pandemic prevention and preparedness.

He said: Madam Speaker, I am introducing the pandemic prevention and preparedness act because the last two years have been impossibly hard for all of us. The costs of prevention and preparedness are insignificant in comparison with the significant human and economic costs of a pandemic. The purpose of this act is to prevent the risk of, and prepare for, future pandemics and to promote transparency and accountability toward that goal.

Specifically, the bill would require the health minister to collaborate with other ministers, other levels of government and indigenous communities to develop a pandemic prevention and preparedness plan and table an updated plan in Parliament on a regular basis. There are factors that the minister would have to consider in the course of that plan, and those factors are informed by UNEP, IPIS, the independent panel and other experts. The minister would also have to establish an advisory committee to review and learn the lessons of our COVID response, and appoint a national pandemic prevention and preparedness coordinator.

We need to do all that we can to prevent and prepare for future pandemics, and this bill would ensure that this obligation remains in focus for any future government in the years ahead.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

* * *

● (1220)

COPYRIGHT ACT

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-294, An Act to amend the Copyright Act (interoperability).

He said: Madam Speaker, today I am here in support of Canadian consumers as well as the countless innovators who work in our industry across the country.

Bill C-294 would provide a clear and limited exemption to consumers and product innovators who simply wish to enable their device or machinery to interoperate with other equipment, as they were once able to do. Right now, they run into a problem with doing this under the Copyright Act. Section 41 was passed back in 2012 to legally enforce technological protection measures, but 10 years later, technology has changed a lot and we see a much different landscape with the types of products available.

Many devices and machinery now include software, and that is how some companies try to block interoperability for users and small competitors alike. I have seen first-hand how this issue plays out with our farmers and manufacturers.

Interoperability is important for a lot of other industries as well. There is a special business near Frontier, Saskatchewan, called Honey Bee Manufacturing. It is a short-line manufacturer of farm equipment. I would be happy to share its success story when we discuss this bill in greater detail, but what I will say for now is that it is a source of creativity and innovation in the field. It is also the lifeblood that is keeping a small rural community alive.

There are other stories like this, and there is no reason to shut them down. Canada has been the home of many remarkable advances. We should never discourage new ones from happening now or in the future. If we make a small adjustment in the law, Canadian creativity will do the rest. We can support consumers and innovators while upholding our copyright framework, and I hope all members will help in doing that.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

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ANISHINABEK NATION GOVERNANCE AGREEMENT ACT

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill S-10, An Act to give effect to the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement, to amend the Sechelt Indian Band Self-Government Act and the Yukon First Nations Self-Government Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts.

Routine Proceedings

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

* * *

[*Translation*]

PETITIONS

OLD AGE SECURITY

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to present two petitions on the same subject, which I am proud to sponsor.

These petitions were signed by almost 7,000 citizens across the country and formally call on the Canadian government to significantly increase old age security payments starting immediately so that all eligible seniors aged 65 and over can receive an additional \$110 a month.

The signatories to these petitions believe that the federal government is discriminating by increasing old age security only for seniors aged 75 and over. This request is all the more reasonable given today's runaway inflation, which disproportionately affects seniors of all ages, not just those aged 75 and over.

• (1225)

[*English*]

POWELL RIVER SALMON SOCIETY

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud today to be tabling another petition. I have tabled many of these in the House of Commons. This petition is really from the members of the Powell River region, who are very dedicated to their community hatchery and the incredible work that they do there.

What the members are asking is that the Canadian government understand that they have not seen a single increase in any resources since 1982, and that makes it increasingly hard for them to carry out Pacific salmon enhancement, conservation and educational activities. They really need to see an increase in resources to help them stabilize and support all the people who rely on Pacific salmon in our communities.

They are also very concerned that there is not proper representation of coastal communities by DFO staff and that a lot of the work they do is not supported meaningfully because there are just not enough staff from DFO. They appreciate the work done by the staff, but they recognize that many more are needed to help protect the waterways of our region.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present two petitions.

The first is on long-term care. I rise to present this petition on behalf of Canadians who are concerned about conditions in for-profit long-term care, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The petitioners are calling on the government to research and support alternative and co-operative models of care. They are asking the government to consult and identify the types of multi-stakeholder co-ops that would ensure quality care, and to implement this new model of care within 24 months of research completion.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is on human rights and environmental due diligence.

I am presenting a petition on behalf of Canadians who are concerned that Canadian companies are contributing to human rights abuses and environmental damage around the world.

The petitioners note that indigenous people, women and marginalized groups are disproportionately impacted. They call on the House to adopt human rights and environmental due diligence legislation that would require Canadian companies to prevent human rights abuses, would result in meaningful consequences for companies and would establish a legal right for people who have been harmed to seek justice in Canadian courts.

[*Translation*]

VACCINE MANDATES

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are calling for the government to lift all federal COVID-19 restrictions and restore personal and health freedoms.

Canadian provinces and businesses, along with other countries like the United Kingdom, Ireland, Sweden, Denmark and Israel, have lifted all of their COVID-19 restrictions.

The government says it is following the science and admits that it is now safe to sit next to someone who has not been vaccinated on a plane. However, it claims that it is dangerous for a trucker, travelling alone, to cross the border without being vaccinated. That is ridiculous.

I agree with the people who signed my petition to lift all the COVID-19 restrictions.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, perhaps now would be a good time to remind members, including seasoned members, that during petitions we are supposed to be presenting on behalf of those who have petitioned the government and Parliament, rather than providing our own personal commentary, which is unfortunately what the member for Carleton strayed into.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): That is a point of debate, in my opinion.

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

*Routine Proceedings**[English]*

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, members in this place present petitions to speak to the petitioners and to speak to all Canadians in presenting it. The member opposite raised what the Speaker just identified was a point of debate. The Speaker said it was a point of debate, and that is not my assertion but that of the Speaker.

In fairness to the member for Carleton, I would ask that he be given leave to re-present his petition, as it was interrupted by the parliamentary secretary.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): I thank the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes for his intervention.

I want to remind all hon. members that when presenting petitions in the House, they must try to avoid giving their opinion on it.

The hon. member for Carleton.

• (1230)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that my microphone was off while I was presenting the petition. I am wondering if I could present it again.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): The hon. member has 10 seconds to finish presenting his petition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the people who signed my petition to immediately end all federal COVID-19 restrictions and restore freedom for all Canadians. That is what Canadians want, it is what the science supports, and it is what other countries are doing. It is time to do this for all Canadians. It is time for the restrictions to be lifted permanently, not just suspended, for everyone.

* * *

*[English]***QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 533 and 538.

[Text]

Question No. 533—**Mr. Mel Arnold:**

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' execution of contests since 2016: (a) how many contests has the department executed; (b) what was the nature of each contest; (c) who was the winner of each contest; (d) what monies or other prizes were awarded to the contest winners; and (e) how did the department publicly communicate the openings and results of the contests?

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Fisheries and Oceans Canada does not centrally track the execution of public-facing contests across the department, and the time allocated to answer this question does not allow for the preparation of a comprehensive response.

Question No. 538—**Mr. John Brassard:**

With regard to the votes in the House of Commons considered by the government to be matters of confidence: (a) since January 1, 2022, which recorded divisions in the House of Commons did the government consider to be matters of confidence, and what were the dates of each of those votes; and (b) for each vote in (a), on what date did the government inform the New Democratic Party that it considered the vote to be a matter of confidence?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the position of the government on confidence votes has been clear since 2015. For members of the Liberal caucus, all votes will be free votes, with the exception of those that implement the Liberal electoral platform; traditional confidence matters, such as the budget; and those that address our shared values and the protections guaranteed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

* * *

*[English]***QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS**

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 528 to 532 and 534 to 537 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 528—**Mr. Tom Kmiec:**

With regard to Elections Canada's "Inspire Democracy network": (a) when was the network established; (b) which community organizations and stakeholders are members of the network; (c) which of the 27 community organizations and stakeholders in the network promoted early voting options on behalf of Elections Canada in the 2021 federal general election; (d) how much funding or other support was provided by Elections Canada to each organization or stakeholder referred to in (c) for the promotion of early voting options; (e) who has editorial control over the materials and communications products used or distributed by or on behalf of the Inspire Democracy network; (f) what are the details of the network's 139 community outreach events during the 2021 federal general election, including for each event (i) the date, (ii) the location, (iii) the host or hosts, (iv) who was invited, (v) how the invitation list was determined, (vi) the general description of the audience invited to attend, (vii) the purpose of the event, (viii) the general messages conveyed at the event; (g) how much funding or other support was provided by Elections Canada for each community outreach event referred to in (f); (h) what are the details of the further 26 outreach events in which the network participated during the 2021 federal general election, including for each event (i) the date, (ii) the location, (iii) the host or hosts, (iv) who was invited, (v) how the invitation list was determined, (vi) the general description of the audience invited to attend, (vii) the purpose of the event, (viii) the general messages conveyed at the event; (i) how much funding or other support was provided by Elections Canada for each outreach event referred to in (h); (j) what are the details of the distribution of election information to 619 contacts by the network during the 2021 federal general election, including for each contact (i) the identity, (ii) the date, (iii) the content or subject-matter, (iv) whether the contact was sent the information on a solicited or unsolicited basis?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 529—Mr. Stephen Ellis:**

With regard to the procurement of COVID-19 rapid test kits: (a) how many kits have been procured since April 1, 2021, and what is the value of those kits, broken down by (i) month acquired, (ii) supplier from which they were acquired, (iii) provincial or territorial government, federal department or other entity to which they were provided; (b) what are the responses to (a), broken down by those procured under the authority of each of (i) section 1 of An Act respecting certain measures related to COVID-19 (S.C. 2022, c. 2), (ii) Vote 1c under the Department of Health and Vote 1c under the Public Health Agency of Canada of the Supplementary Estimates (C), 2021-22, enacted through the Appropriations Act No. 5, 2021-22 (S.C. 2022, c. 3), (iii) clause 46 of Bill C-8, An Act to implement certain provisions of the economic and fiscal update tabled in Parliament on December 14, 2021 and other measures, (iv) any other statutory or proposed retroactive statutory authority; (c) what are the details of the statutory or proposed retroactive statutory authorities referred to in (b)(iv); and (d) what is the balance outstanding on funds appropriated for the procurement of rapid tests, broken down by each authority referred to in (b)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 530—Mr. Mel Arnold:

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' management of fisheries, broken down by year since 2016: (a) what was the total number of fisheries managed by the department; (b) in which fisheries did the department reduce licenses; (c) what was the total number of licenses reduced, broken down by each fishery; (d) in which fisheries did the department reduce total allowable catch; (e) what were the total reductions of total allowable catch, broken down by each fishery; (f) in which fisheries did the department reduce quotas; (g) what were the total reductions of quota, broken down by each fishery; and (h) what are the total amounts of money that the department disbursed as compensation for reductions of licenses, total allowable catch and quotas, broken down by fishery?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 531—Mr. Mel Arnold:

With regard to the government's allocation of funds for the upgrading of the existing Lions Gate Primary Wastewater Treatment Plant (Lions Gate) and construction of the North Shore Wastewater Treatment Plant (North Shore), both located in Vancouver, British Columbia: (a) since 2016, what are the total amounts of funds allocated by the government to the Lions Gate and North Shore projects; (b) what were the dates of the allocations; (c) what are the amounts of allocations that the government will make to Lions Gate and North Shore in the 2022-23 fiscal year; and (d) when will the North Shore project be completed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 532—Mr. Mel Arnold:

With regard to the government's provision in budget 2017 of \$43.8 million over five years, starting in 2017-18, to Fisheries and Oceans Canada to continue and expand aquatic invasive species programming: (a) how much of the funds have been allocated to date; (b) to whom have the funds been allocated; and (c) on what dates were the allocations made?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 534—Mrs. Laila Goodridge:

With regard to Service Canada Centres: (a) what is the current processing time for each service provided to Canadians (Social Insurance Number, Employment Insurance, Apprenticeship Completion Grant applications, etc.); (b) for each service in (a), what was the processing time as of January 1, 2020; (c) how many Service Canada employees are currently (i) on leave in relation to the vaccine attestation requirement, (ii) working from home, broken down by location; (d) broken down by each Service Canada Centre, what is the number of daily on-site staff, (i) as of January 1, 2016, (ii) as of January 1, 2020, (iii) currently; (e) what safety protocols are in place at each Service Canada Centre; (f) between March 1, 2020, and May 2, 2022, which Service Canada Centres (i) had new air filtration systems installed, (ii) did not have new air filtration systems installed; and (g) broken down by each location in (f)(i), what are the details of each system, including the (i) date of installation, (ii) vendor, (iii) amount of the expenditure, (iv) description of the system, including the make and model?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 535—Ms. Marilyn Gladu:

With regard to Translation Bureau operations: (a) how many hours of simultaneous interpretation of parliamentary proceedings were provided in fiscal year 2021-22, broken down by (i) sittings of the Senate, (ii) sittings of the House of Commons, (iii) meetings of Senate committees, (iv) meetings of House committees; (b) how many employees have provided simultaneous interpretation in fiscal year 2021-22 (i) of parliamentary proceedings, (ii) in total; (c) how many freelance contractors have provided simultaneous interpretation in fiscal year 2021-22 (i) of parliamentary proceedings, (ii) in total; (d) have the minimum employment qualifications for simultaneous interpreters employed by the Translation Bureau changed since the government's response to Order Paper Question Q-611 in the Second Session of the 43rd Parliament, and, if so, how have they changed; (e) how many of the employees and freelance contractors identified in (b) and (c) met the Translation Bureau's minimum employment qualifications; (f) what are the language profiles of employees and freelance contractors listed in (b) and (c), broken down by "A language" and "B language" pairings; (g) what was the cost associated with the services provided by freelance simultaneous interpreters, identified in (c), in fiscal year 2021-22, broken down by (i) professional fees, (ii) air fares, (iii) other transportation expenses, (iv) accommodation expenses, (v) meal and incidental expenses, (vi) other expenses, (vii) the total costs; (h) what percentage of meetings or proceedings where simultaneous interpretation was provided in fiscal year 2021-22 has been considered to be (i) entirely remote or distance interpretation, (ii) partially remote or distance interpretation, and broken down between (A) parliamentary, (B) non-parliamentary work; (i) how many employees or freelance contractors providing simultaneous interpretation have reported workplace injuries in fiscal year 2021-22, broken down by (i) the nature of the injury, (ii) whether the meeting or proceeding was (A) entirely remote, (B) partially remote, (C) onsite, (iii) whether sick leave was required, and, if so, how much; (j) how many of the workplace injuries identified in (i) have occurred during (i) sittings of the Senate, (ii) sittings of the House of Commons, (iii) meetings of Senate committees, (iv) meetings of House committees, (v) meetings of the Cabinet or its committees, (vi) ministerial press conferences or events; (k) why was the turnkey interpreting solution not available by the projected 2021 date; (l) what is the current status of the turnkey interpreting solution; (m) what is the current projected date of availability for the turnkey interpreting solution; (n) how many requests for services in Indigenous languages have been made in fiscal year 2021-22, broken down by (i) parliamentary simultaneous interpretation, (ii) non-parliamentary simultaneous interpretation, (iii) parliamentary translation, (iv) non-parliamentary translation; and (o) what is the breakdown of the responses to each of (n)(i) to (n)(iv) by language pairings?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 536—Ms. Marilyn Gladu:

With regard to the Department of Justice's Laws website: (a) how are the entries under the "Frequently Accessed Acts" and "Frequently Accessed Regulations" lists determined; (b) broken down by item, on what date was each item currently on the lists referred to in (a) added; (c) what items were formerly on the lists referred to in (a) and during what time periods was each item on the lists; and (d) how many page views has the website received since 2012, broken down by (i) calendar year, (ii) act or regulation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 537—Mr. Jamie Schmale:

With regard to all contracts for Cloud-Based Storage Services at the Protected B level since 2016: what are the details of all such contracts, including for each (i) the date, (ii) the vendor, (iii) the amount, (iv) the description of goods or services, (v) the duration of the contract, (vi) whether the contract was sole-sourced, (vii) reason for sole-sourcing the contract, if applicable?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Routine Proceedings[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): Before giving the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby the floor, I see that the hon. member for Durham is rising on a point of order.

[*English*]

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, I rise to seek support for a unanimous consent motion. The details on this motion have been provided to all members of Parliament. There have been discussions between the parties.

I would say to my colleagues respectfully that the subject matter is dealing with people who sacrifice all for our country. This is something that stems from e-petition 3636, brought by the member of Parliament for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, and it comes as well from thousands of veterans of the Afghanistan war. I know all members of this chamber would at least want to be heard before the question is called in the House. I would ask for that courtesy as we are nearing the end of this session.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I have conducted extensive research and engaged in discussions with all parties and members and, if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

[*English*]

That the House recognize that Canadians are fortunate to enjoy peace, order, and good government, and that we must honour the service and sacrifice of our citizens who serve in the Canadian Armed Forces; that presently Canada has no independent review body to advise the government and the Chancellery of Honours with respect to errors or omissions related to military honours within the Canadian honours system; that the Canadian Victoria Cross, created in 1993, has never been awarded, including during the 12-year period of the Afghanistan war, when more than 40,000 Canadians served as part of the longest deployment of the Canadian Armed Forces in history; that the organization Valour in the Presence of the Enemy, alongside the Afghanistan Veterans Association of Canada, the Royal Canadian Legion, and countless other Veteran associations have asked for the Star of Military Valour awarded to Jess Larochelle, of North Bay, Ontario, be reconsidered for elevation to a Canadian Victoria Cross to recognize the tremendous valour he demonstrated in Afghanistan on October 14, 2006;

[*Translation*]

(e) that thousands of Canadians have supported this request for reconsideration as evidenced through the 14,129 signatures for petition e-3636 tabled by the member of Parliament for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski on May 19,

(f) that such reconsiderations for the Victoria Cross or the Medal of Honor have been and are being performed by our major allies in an independent fashion that also permits historic reconsideration for error or omission including due to racism or bias in the past with regard to language, race, religion, or other form of intolerance of the era, and

● (1235)

[*English*]

and therefore, the House calls for the creation of an independent Canadian advisory body with the specific mandate to review decisions made under the Directorate of Honours and Recognition and its precursor bodies when new evidence demonstrates that the reconsideration of a military honour is warranted to ensure that no error or omission was made; that the advisory be styled as the Military Honours Review Board; that the board have at least nine members including, but not limited to, the Canadian Secretary to the Queen or designate from the Privy Council Office, a designate from the Department of National Defence, a designate from Veterans Affairs Canada, a designate from the Canadian War Museum, a designate from La Citadelle de Québec, a designate from the Royal Canadian Legion, a designate from Canadian Aboriginal Veterans and Serving Members Association, an anglophone professor of military history from a Canadian university and a francophone professor of military history from a Canadian university;

[*Translation*]

that the Board and its participant organizations undertake to select designates that incorporate gender balance and diverse perspectives, that the Board meet at least twice annually to fulfill its function, that the Board consider requests for reconsideration referred by a committee of the House of Commons, a committee of the Senate, the Department of National Defence, Veterans Affairs Canada, or by reference from the Prime Minister's Office, that the Board be funded with staff researchers to support in administrative and reporting duties, including the administration of applications, examination of evidence provided by applicants, and providing recommendations to the Board,

[*English*]

that the board deploy a formal process for review which would include the requirement that scholarly evidence be provided by applicants for consideration; that the board advise the Chancellery of Honours at Rideau Hall and the Prime Minister's Office of their decision in each specific case and that the decision be tabled in the House within sixty days of notice to Rideau Hall and the Prime Minister's Office; and that the Department of National Defence be instructed to amend the Canadian Forces honours policy in accordance with the intent of this motion, including but not limited to chapter 1, paragraph 26, on retroactivity, and chapter 1, paragraphs 75 and 76, on award errors and policy changes.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members to consider that valour has no time limitation attached to it, so I hope we can do the right thing as a chamber before we rise and before we celebrate our country on Canada Day.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): All those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***ONLINE STREAMING ACT**

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, as reported (with amendment) from the committee and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I certainly listened to the intervention of the member for New Westminster—Burnaby prior to question period. He started by talking about the way that the NDP, a relatively small party in this chamber, was able to successfully take forward its concerns to committee through amendments and to negotiate at committee to properly represent their constituents.

I know my question is going to come off tongue-in-cheek, but I am wondering if the member for New Westminster—Burnaby can provide the Conservatives some insight into how it feels to know that members are actually doing the job that they have been elected to do as opposed to just coming forward with rhetoric and bringing forward misinformation about everything the bill does not represent, and that they actually did their job and were able to bring forward some amendments that were important to them.

● (1240)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is not only important for us, but it is important for all Canadians. There is no doubt that we have improved the bill.

I have some suggestions for the Conservatives, because they have certainly lost their way over the last six months. First off, when a bill comes—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, I am just wondering if you could inform the House if we do, in fact, have quorum at this time.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): We will check.

And the count having been taken:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): We have quorum, and I therefore invite the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby to complete his question. He has a few seconds left.

[English]

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, first, I just wanted to suggest that Conservatives actually read legislation.

Second, they should actually listen to witnesses when they come before committee, rather than blocking them from testifying.

Third, they should actually offer improvements to legislation. That is the role that we have here. That is why the NDP has been the real effective opposition in the House of Commons. Yes, we are seeking to oppose when it is warranted, but above all we are seeking to make sure that things in the House of Commons are done in

the best interests of Canadians. The NDP influence on Bill C-11 has been undeniable, in terms of improving it, including aspects of freedom of expression.

That is the kind of work all members of Parliament should be doing.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think I speak for most of us in the House when I say we are thankful to receive correspondence from our constituents on issues that matter to them. Even when we disagree, it is important to engage and inform them about the process in this chamber.

I wonder if the member could speak to the disinformation campaign that we have seen on the bill in particular, because there is nothing so disheartening as when I receive correspondence that is just riddled with conspiracy theories, to be honest.

Could the member comment on that?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, this is a disturbing undercurrent that we saw bring the United States right to the edge of having a coup d'état. The kind of disinformation that drives people from the far right, the far-right extremists, is something we have to be very acutely conscious of. The comments from Conservative MPs that, somehow, Bill C-11 is going to allow the government to follow people on cellphones, and the odious comparisons with the murderous dictatorship in North Korea are unbelievably inappropriate comments made on the floor of the House of Commons.

This is very disturbing. We have to push back against Republican-style disinformation from many, but not all, Conservative MPs. Some Conservative MPs still respect Parliament. The ones who do not, though, need to be called out.

That is why we have spoken specifically on the bill and specifically on the provisions that we have improved. It is an effort to get real information out to Canadians. Shame on the Conservatives for what they have said through the course of the last few months.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in Vancouver East on a per-capita basis, we actually have the largest number of artists in our community. They are actually very much looking forward to the passage of Bill C-11.

Can the member explain to the Conservative members why this bill is so important to artists?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I will do my best, because my community, as well, of New Westminster—Burnaby, is really known as Hollywood North. There is a real creative energy that is in our communities. We know that \$1 billion will be transferred from the web giants, which have basically been taking that money out of the country, and it will be provided to Canadian cultural content and Canadian cultural institutions, broadcasters and Canadians who are creative, both in the online world and the broadcasting world.

What we are going to see is a real renaissance of Canadian content, and that is why I will be supporting the bill.

Government Orders

• (1245)

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in support of Bill C-11. For decades, Canadian broadcasters have given us incredible Canadian content on our televisions and our radios. This is no accident. We support our cultural sovereignty. It is who we are as Canadians. It is our past, it is our present and it is our future. It is how we tell our stories to each other. As a condition of their licences, TV and radio broadcasters have had to invest in our culture and our artists. That is why we have the Canadian content that we are so proud of.

Here is what has changed. Online streaming platforms are the new broadcasters, yet they do not have to play by the same rules. Online streaming is the norm. Canadian broadcasters play by one set of rules and streaming platforms play by another. There should be one set of rules for everyone. That is why the government introduced Bill C-11, the online streaming act. This bill ensures that online streamers contribute in an equitable but flexible way to the creation of Canadian content, and ensures that Canadians can find that content on their platforms.

Now, let us talk about what this bill would not do. This bill would not impose regulations on content that everyday Canadians post on social media. This bill would not impose regulations on Canadian digital content creators, influencers or users. This bill would not censor content or mandate specific algorithms on streaming services or social media platforms, and this bill would not limit Canadians' freedom of expression in any way, shape or form.

We have heard a lot of misinformation. My colleague just mentioned previously that a lot of emails have come in with a lot of confusion and misinformation, and I believe that is deliberate. I was going to address two of the issues that we might be hearing some of the most misinformation about in the Online Streaming Act.

First is the fact that user-generated content is excluded. People ask where that is in the legislation. The bill explicitly excludes all user-generated content in social media platforms and streaming services. I will read the subsection. Subsection 2.1 of Bill C-11 states:

A person who uses a social media service to upload programs for transmission over the Internet and reception by other users of the service — and who is not the provider of the service or the provider's affiliate, or the agent or mandatary of either of them — does not, by the fact of that use, carry on a broadcasting undertaking for the purposes of this Act.

In plain language, that means that users, even digital-first creators with millions of subscribers, are not broadcasters and therefore they will not face any obligations under the act. Any suggestions otherwise are simply untrue.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do not think we have quorum in the House again.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): We will check.

And the count having been taken:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): We do indeed have quorum, so the member for Kitchener—Conestoga may continue.

[*English*]

Mr. Tim Louis: Mr. Speaker, as I said, in plain language, that means that any users, even digital-first creators with millions of subscribers, are not broadcasters. They will not face any obligations under the act. Any suggestions otherwise are simply untrue.

With this approach, the experience for users creating, posting and interacting with other user-generated content will not be impacted whatsoever, while still standardizing the treatment of commercial content such as TV shows and songs across the platform. We studied this and it is very clear. It is a little hard to explain in legalese, but the bottom line is that music content creations are exempt.

The other misinformation that has been floating around is on freedom of expression issues. Just to be clear, clause 12 of the online streaming act explicitly states that any regulation the CRTC imposes on platforms through the Broadcasting Act cannot infringe on Canadians' freedom of expression on social media. It states:

For greater certainty, the Commission shall make orders under subsection 9.1(1) and regulations under subsection 10(1) in a manner that is consistent with the freedom of expression enjoyed by users of social media services that are provided by online undertakings.

Freedom of expression is protected under the charter and would be protected in the online streaming act. Artists are at the forefront of protecting freedom of speech. It is our arts that allow us to push these conversations. Every single arts stakeholder I have met supports this bill and free speech. I am putting that misinformation aside.

I am a recording artist. The arts sector is how I was proudly able to make a living for my entire life before having the privilege of serving my community and my country as the member of Parliament for Kitchener—Conestoga. As an artist, I felt support from fellow Canadians. I felt support from Canada. We are proud of our artists, and they deserve our respect and support.

During the pandemic, we turned to our artists to make sense of the experiences we were going through. It was the stories, the books, the shows and the music that got us through the pandemic. I have said on more than one occasion that science is getting us out of the pandemic, but arts is getting us through it. We need to support our arts sector. It is one of the hardest-hit sectors in all of the economy and is taking the longest to recover as we move out of the pandemic. That is another reason this bill is so important. We need to show our artists that we support them.

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I sit on the heritage committee and was at every meeting on Bill C-11 and at every meeting on Bill C-10 in the previous Parliament. I have studied this. I met with countless stakeholders, individuals and organizations, and they are expressing the fact that the Broadcasting Act needs to be updated. Our arts and culture industry is telling us how vital and urgent this legislation will be for it, and we are listening.

I try not to get political in the House, but I find that politics has been creeping back in. The Conservatives have used every tactic in their tool box to delay and block Bill C-11. They did not allow the committee to get to clause-by-clause with their filibustering. They went as far as to filibuster their own study motion at one point. They said they had questions for the CRTC and then filibustered a whole meeting while the head of the CRTC and officials sat there and could not appear to answer the very questions we wanted to ask. The Conservatives said they wanted to hear from the Minister of Canadian Heritage and then filibustered a whole meeting while the minister sat there. He could not appear to answer the questions we needed to ask. It has been deeply disappointing, because those stalling tactics are wasteful and prevent us from helping our artists.

I will not stop advocating in support of our artists. I appreciate the co-operation of every party except the Conservatives. We have worked together to move things forward. We have co-operated, we have contributed to amendments and we have had conversations. I truly do not understand why the Conservatives are supporting the foreign tech giants over our own Canadian artists.

I would like to quote Marla Boltman from an organization called Friends, who summed it up very nicely. She said:

Requiring contributions from foreign tech giants that extract billions of dollars from our country will help sustain our industry while driving investment and innovation in the creation of Canadian content that continues to reflect our diversity of voices and who we are as Canadians. Foreign contributions will level the playing field between Canadian broadcasters and foreign platforms.... If you benefit from the system, you must contribute to it.

I could not agree more.

• (1250)

Bill C-11 is about fairness. It is about supporting our cultural sector. It is about having the power to shape our culture and make sure that everyone can see themselves in our culture. It is about being proud of who we are and being proud of Canadians. That is why I think it is important to keep moving on this important legislation, and why I will be supporting it.

I just want to say that, as a musician myself, some of my earliest memories of playing were in our small apartment on the piano. My dad would pick up his bass. He used to play bass in the day. That is part of the way I learned how to play music, just playing some rock and roll songs. I actually thought my dad wrote all those Beatles' tunes we used to play. I did not find that out until later.

As it is Father's Day, I want to say a personal happy Father's Day to my dad and to all the fathers and father figures out there who have supported the next generation of artists.

• (1255)

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague across the way for his contribution to the arts.

As somebody who was an online content creator and able to create a business as a result of it, and who also worked in mainstream media, I am curious to have his thoughts on how he thinks the CRTC can logistically regulate the millions of videos that are uploaded to social media and YouTube every single day.

Mr. Tim Louis: Mr. Speaker, digital creators are a future source of our culture. They are going to continue to tell stories. Many of them are already artists in the existing ecosystem here.

In no way will this bill have the CRTC regulating their content. The CRTC is working with the platforms themselves. That is why there is flexibility between the regulation and the legislation we have right now. The legislation will give the CRTC the tools to work with the platforms, but according to proposed subsection 2.1 of Bill C-11, the user content itself, even for digital first creators, will not be subject to the Broadcasting Act.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I was glad to see that amendments were made regarding user-generated providers. I wonder if the member could help clarify what the amendments would mean if Bill C-11 were to pass.

Mr. Tim Louis: Mr. Speaker, my colleague always asks wonderful questions. Every time she asks a question, the whole House listens, and I think that is a testament to her nature. She is looking out for our artists, including digital first creators.

The intent of this bill is not to scope in digital creators. If they have user-generated content, the bill is not going to cover them. It is simply requiring platforms that are not paying into our system to contribute. Right now our traditional broadcasters contribute to the system. They pay into it, and the online foreign streamers are not paying into that system. The bill would simply let them pay into the system and make sure that all our voices can be heard with some discoverability measures.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Kitchener—Conestoga, who is himself an artist.

I would like him to explain to all Canadians client why it is so important that web giants compensate artists and content creators. Can he explain how the financial framework changed in the space of a generation and why this bill is important?

[English]

Mr. Tim Louis: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the advice he offers from time to time. It always comes in handy, and I appreciate that.

The world is changing fast. It used to be a closed system, where our traditional broadcasters paid into the system to make sure they contributed to Canadian culture with grants and programs that artists could draw from to tell their stories. Right now we have two systems. We have the traditional broadcasters, which are in radio and TV and are still paying into the system, and we have our online foreign streamers, which are not. They are not paying into any kind of system. Sometimes they contribute to a production here, but they are not paying into the system itself, and that is the level playing field we need to see. If they are acting as broadcasters here in Canada, which these foreign online streamers are, they would fall under the same regulations and would have to contribute funds to our culture for our Canadian artists to draw from to tell their own stories.

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I recognize that proposed subsection 2.1 provides clarity to some extent with user-generated content, but proposed section 4.2 clearly says that user-generated content or programs that generate revenue can be regulated. I am wondering if the member would at least acknowledge that this act would in fact allow for the regulation of user-generated content that generates revenue?

• (1300)

Mr. Tim Louis: Mr. Speaker, I believe my colleague is in Dauphin, Manitoba, and I used to play at that festival, which is one of my favourite festivals of the summer, so he understands the importance of supporting our artists.

We need to make sure there is a balance between legislation and regulation. If we put everything in and do not give any flexibility, we will not have the ability as technology changes to make sure we can adopt to new technologies.

Right now the digital creators are still protected. Proposed section 4.2 does not say that they would be scoped in.

Mr. Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if I may, as my hon. friend opposite did, before I begin my remarks on Bill C-11, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize my father, as Father's Day is coming up this weekend. I thank him for all his love, guidance and support over the years. He is currently undergoing chemotherapy and is not feeling 100% himself. However, my three brothers, my mother, all of our extended family and I know he will be back to 110% soon. I just want to say we love him.

I am happy to rise today to speak about Bill C-11. Although I believe the Broadcasting Act needs to be renewed, I am deeply concerned with Bill C-11 because, in many ways, it is simply a revival of the flawed and failed Bill C-10 from the previous Parliament.

The government claims that Bill C-11 is being introduced to protect Canadian content creators. However, the bill fails, as many such entrepreneurs are opposed to this legislation. The bill fails, for example, Chad, who lives in Upper Stoney Creek in—

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[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): I have to interrupt the hon. member because the hon. Minister of Seniors is rising on a point of order.

* * *

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Kamal Khara (Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I request that the ordinary hour of daily adjournment of the next sitting be 12 o'clock midnight, pursuant to order made Monday, May 2, 2022.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): Pursuant to order made on Monday, May 2, the Minister of Seniors' request to extend the said sitting is deemed adopted.

I invite the member for Flamborough—Glanbrook to continue his speech.

* * *

[English]

ONLINE STREAMING ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was speaking about Chad, who lives in the Upper Stoney Creek portion of my constituency. Chad is a digital creator who is concerned about the threat Bill C-11 poses to his livelihood. Chad is not alone by any means. We have seen dozens of Canadian content creators testify at the heritage committee to their deep concern with regard to this bill.

Chad told me that Canadian content creators are thriving with open social media platforms and, in fact, 90% of all viewer traffic on Canadian YouTube channels comes from international audiences. Let me put that another way: Canadian content creators export 90% of their product. Every Canadian knows that the world is a consumer of Canadian content. Our talented comedians, musicians and other artists are the content creators, just like Chad, who do a fantastic job of making sure that people from around the world get a glimpse of our great nation. Therefore, why is the government failing Canadian content creators again? Prominent YouTube artist J.J. McCullough, who testified before the heritage committee, said, "I also worry that the dreams of the next generation of Canadian YouTubers will become less achievable once they're forced to navigate intimidating new regulatory hurdles my generation did not."

Government Orders

It is the same government that is already failing young Canadians in so many ways. As they struggle to fill up their tank to drive to work each week, as they are no longer able to achieve the dream of home ownership, and as they struggle to keep up to the costs of living because of generationally high inflation rates, now the government introduces a bill that would place hurdles on the ability of young Canadians to succeed in one of the few sectors of the economy that has flourished during the last two years. Instead, it is putting big print media companies first. With respect to this bill, if it were really concerned about content creators, then why would it not put content creators first? Why are the Liberals so against it?

I know that Professor Michael Geist was a speaker at one of the committees. He is the University of Ottawa's Canada research chair in Internet and e-commerce law. He expressed this concern and I will quote. He said, "Canada punches above its weight when it comes to the creation of this content, which is worth billions of revenue globally.... We are talking about an enormous potential revenue loss for Canadian content producers."

The article then states, "Geist says [that] would make platforms including YouTube and TikTok 'force-feed Canadian content' that people might not usually choose to watch, rather than curated content matched to their preferences." It then continues, "If people do not select Canadian content they are offered, or if they indicate they don't like it or choose another video instead, it could lead to content that wasn't chosen, disliked or not watched to the end automatically being downgraded around the world."

Therefore, why would this bill be placing power in the hands of the government to make these decisions? I might add that this is the government that cannot manage the passport system, as we have seen with the ridiculously long lines at Service Canada offices across the country. Why would we trust the same government to regulate content creation, which is a space which, by its definition, needs to be nimble, flexible and dynamic?

The concerns over Bill C-11 are not limited to detrimental effects on the livelihood of Canadian content creators, but extend to the right of free speech, which is a core identity of Canadians. If the last few years have taught us anything, it is that open social media platforms are vital and crucial for us as we maintain our social connections. Podcasts and the simple joys of sharing videos of puppies and kittens and such with friends could be heavily regulated and restricted if this legislation goes through. These are examples of social media content that have seen great success without government regulation, but that would be controlled by the CRTC, a bureaucracy which would needlessly clamp down on social media platforms.

The government is failing Canadians in the sense that it is introducing legislation that would reduce choices in content that have given Canadians relief over the course of the past number of years. What also gives constituents and I concern is the threat to the ability of Canadians to freely express themselves without government interference.

• (1305)

Poet Maya Angelou once said to watch people's feet, not their lips. The Liberal talking point is that they want free speech and do not want to curtail it. This happens to be the very process to discuss Bill C-11, and it is a sham. We are seeing the Liberals stopping and

silencing debate, not just in committee, but also in this chamber. This is ironic, because the Minister of Canadian Heritage was recently reported in the Globe and Mail saying that the Senate is not going to look at this before the summer, and recently the chair of the CRTC, Ian Scott, estimated that it could take two years to implement Bill C-11. What is the rush? Why is there curtailing of debate on this bill in this House? Canadians need to stop watching the Liberals' lips and start watching their feet.

The impact that this legislation would have on freedom of speech is a serious concern for many in Flamborough—Glanbrook, who have sent hundreds of emails and made dozens of calls to my office, and I have to say the overwhelming majority are opposed to Bill C-11. As an example, Christina and Albert from Mount Hope emailed my office to express their concerns about the vagueness of the legislation and how it would allow for almost unhindered regulation of the Internet by the CRTC and, in turn, would influence what social media posts Canadians can see. Christina and Albert were also concerned with the possibility that those views that differ from the government's might be more readily clamped down on in social media, because the CRTC would have regulatory control over the Internet. There are similar concerns from Harry in Lynden, in my constituency, as well as Arie in Mount Hope. Their overall concern is the limiting of the content they might watch or the content they might create and post.

I share the concerns of my constituents. We are proud as Canadians that Canada is seen internationally as a beacon of democracy, but this legislation and the limitations it would have on free speech are a betrayal of those freedoms that we certainly cherish and promote worldwide.

I know my time is winding down, so let me conclude.

For these reasons, Canadians are rightly concerned about this bill, its contents and the process by which it is being pushed through this chamber. This is why I stand with the people who have contacted my office and taken the time to call or write, with the people of Flamborough—Glanbrook and with my Conservative colleagues and urge everyone to vote against Bill C-11.

• (1310)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I also want to assure the House that the government, the CRTC, is not interested in puppies and kittens.

Government Orders

I am a francophone. There are 600,000 Franco-Ontarians. Unfortunately we are not a strong market force. Is my colleague saying that we should not help develop my culture in Ontario?

That is exactly what Bill C-11 does. The same content that is on television and radio goes into a fund to support francophone communities in developing their culture. If those same videos are streamed on platforms, nothing goes toward supporting our cultures.

Does my colleague not agree that we should be supporting my culture? Is my culture equivalent to his?

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Muys: Madam Speaker, I want to assure my hon. colleague opposite that I very much respect the francophone culture and franco-Ontarians. If members were to look at my CD collection, and I am dating myself by saying this, I had perhaps an equal number of francophone artists as anglophone artists, so I certainly encourage and respect that.

I do not think this bill is necessarily what is necessary to accomplish that, and I would note that the chair of the CRTC, Ian Scott, did indicate that this bill would allow the CRTC to regulate user-generated content, so that is the concern.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I share his concerns. He also made reference to people that he and his party consulted. Unfortunately, we have noticed that it is always the same person who is consulted, while the member for Drummond has long consulted all the organizations that represent content creators and the creative industry. They are in favour of Bill C-11 and they also agree that it is urgent to pass it.

I would ask my colleague to explain to us the source of all these concerns expressed by the only person, just about, that they consulted.

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Muys: Madam Speaker, I did refer to one individual in my riding who is a content creator and who expressed his concerns, but as I noted as well, a number of content creators who spoke at the heritage committee raised similar concerns. My home city of Hamilton, Ontario may be not the same as Burnaby, which is the Hollywood of the north, but I think we are quickly becoming a destination for a lot of movie production and content production, so we take that personally as well.

As I said, there were hundreds of emails and quite a number of phone calls, and the vast majority were opposed to this legislation. It was not one single source at all. It is a concern. We are hearing that directly, and I did not solicit these.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I would like to ask the member if his party understands that the proposed changes in Bill C-11 include user-generated content creators generally but provide exceptions only to professional content providers who are generating revenue.

Mr. Dan Muys: Madam Speaker, given the brevity of time for a response, let me just reiterate this. As was pointed out by my colleague for Lethbridge this morning, there were five days of two-hour debate at the committee, which was shut down. There were committee amendments that were voted on by number, without being read into the record, at committee this week, which really is a sham. There were a number of people who wanted to present at committee and have their voice heard, which ended up on the cutting-room floor, because this was rammed through. I think that is really the story of what this is about, and the reason why we should be very concerned about the content of the bill.

• (1315)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 1:15 p.m., pursuant to an order made on Monday, June 13, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the report stage of the bill now before the House.

[*Translation*]

The question is on Motion No. 1, and a vote on this motion also applies to Motion No. 3.

[*English*]

If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request a recorded division or that the motion be adopted on division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

[*English*]

The recorded division will also apply to Motion No. 3.

The next question is on Motion No. 2.

If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request a recorded division or that the motion be adopted on division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Normally at this time, the House would proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions at the report stage of the bill. However, pursuant to an order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the recorded divisions stand deferred until Monday, June 20, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

Private Members' Business

The hon. parliamentary secretary on a point of order.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I hope that if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to see the clock at 1:30 p.m. so we can start private members' hour.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have consent to see the clock at 1:30 p.m.?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1320)

[English]

NATIONAL STRATEGY RESPECTING ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ACT

The House resumed from April 26 consideration of the motion that Bill C-226, An Act respecting the development of a national strategy to assess, prevent and address environmental racism and to advance environmental justice, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise this afternoon to speak to Bill C-226, an act respecting the development of a national strategy to assess, prevent and address environmental racism and to advance environmental justice, put forward by my colleague, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

It is far past time we addressed environmental racism and the disproportionate siting of polluting industries in Black communities, indigenous and racialized communities and those of the working poor. These are communities that typically lack an economic and political base to fight back. It is impossible to ignore the reality that governments have consistently put harmful industries and dumpsites dangerously close to some of the most marginalized communities across the country. This is a systemic issue that not only negatively impacts those residents' physical health and wellness through abnormal instances of cancers and other diseases, but also discourages others from moving into that area, deterring growth and new opportunities for those within it.

These decisions also impact the environment around those who live there, affecting drinking water and food sources for indigenous communities in particular. All of this has a negative impact on the mental health of these residents, compounded by gaslighting, with the onus routinely placed on those impacted most to prove the situation is leading to these adverse effects and that change is required. I would like to share a few examples.

Africville was a Black community in Nova Scotia established in the 1850s on the outskirts of Halifax. The community was pushed to the margins and did not receive the same services or infrastructure as others in the nearby city. Over the decades, undesirable developments were built in or near the community, including an infectious disease hospital, a dump and a prison. Africville's water and land were contaminated. Eventually the city relocated residents in 1964 without meaningful consultation or compensation.

Another is the toxic dumping in Kanesatake, Quebec, a community that is suffering ongoing health impacts because of the toxic waste from a recycling facility which has not been cleaned up despite repeated calls.

We can take the example of when a pipe at a pulp mill ruptures, spilling untreated effluent into a Pictou Landing First Nation wetland and it takes six years to solve the issue.

Closer to my community, in Ontario, there is the mercury-poisoning crisis in Grassy Narrows First Nation and neighbouring White Dog Independent Nation, one of Canada's worst environmental disasters that is still ongoing. A recent CBC investigation found that 90% of the population of Grassy Narrows experienced the symptoms of mercury poisoning, which include neurological problems, seizures and cognitive delays. Many homes do not have safe drinking water in an area with very limited health services and no on-reserve mental health care. The community has been fighting to have this contamination cleaned up for over 50 years without result.

These are just a few of the many examples of how Black, indigenous and racialized communities have been disproportionately impacted by neglect and the siting of environmentally harmful industries.

We can also see environmental racism and injustice showing up in other ways, like when racialized neighbourhoods do not have the same access to green spaces, public trails and playgrounds, or even street trees in their area.

Personally, I have learned so much on this topic from the incredible work of Dr. Ingrid Waldron and the ENRICH Project, a collaborative, community-based project investigating the cause and effect of toxic industries situated near Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian communities. It is a project that Dr. Waldron started and has led since 2012.

Dr. Waldron literally wrote the book on environmental racism. It is called *There's Something in the Water*, which was turned into a 2019 documentary of the same name, co-produced with Elliot Page and Julia Sanderson.

• (1325)

Dr. Waldron says it best, "In Canada, your postal code determines your health." She went on to say, "Environmental racism is about a pattern and it is historical. It is rooted and embedded in historical inequities and it is about the lack of response by government to act on the citing of these industries and communities of colour and indigenous communities."

Dr. Waldron went on to lay out two ways we can meaningfully address environmental racism. One is to develop legislation across the country and the other is to provide education on the subject in schools.

Collectively as parliamentarians in the House of Commons we can take action on the first. In Canada we need to be honest. We are way behind. As an example, in the United States, the office of environmental justice was formed as part of the Environmental Protection Agency in 1992. That is more than 28 years ago.

Dr. Waldron has been making incredible progress over the last number of years. Dr. Waldron worked with then MLA Lenore Zann on what was Bill 111, an environmental racism protection act in the Nova Scotia legislature in 2015. The bill was defeated at second reading.

When elected as an MP representing Cumberland—Colchester, then MP Lenore Zann in the previous Parliament brought forward Bill C-230, which forms the basis of this piece of legislation before the House today. While Bill C-230 had widespread support, it died on the Order Paper when the election was called.

It is part of why I am so glad that my colleague, the MP for Saanich—Gulf Islands, has now brought back Lenore's private member's bill, as Bill C-226. I am also glad that as it has been brought back, it includes all of the work that has already been done to this point. It has already been to committee, for example. It has had an amendment adopted. The only difference between the current bill and the one in the previous Parliament is that the amendments that had been proposed are now included in the specifics of the strategy that would be developed should the bill be passed.

The bill has all of the benefit of the cross-party support that the previous version of the bill already had. It is for this reason that I am hopeful that Bill C-226 will continue to have the widespread support across party lines, recognizing that there is nothing partisan about ensuring that we take immediate steps to address environmental racism and environmental justice in this country. It is my hope that parliamentarians from all parties will choose to fast-track this legislation, recognizing it has already been studied, so that we can send it to the Senate as quickly as possible and ideally have it passed into law.

In conclusion, we know that for decades environmental racism has been neglected by all levels of government and to some extent the environmental movement itself. We must take action now to ensure that no community suffers the same harms as Africville, Grassy Narrows and so many others have. It is far past time to develop a national strategy to redress the harm of environmental racism and lead us into a just climate future for all.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is the last Friday of this session in the House. If I may, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge everyone who has supported our work throughout this past parliamentary session. This includes the interpreters, the pages, the Sergeant-at-Arms and his team, maintenance staff, cafeteria employees, IT support staff, law clerks, analysts, and so on. Not only do these people help us represent our constituents to the best of our ability, but they also make our job so much more enjoyable simply because they are so incredibly nice.

Madam Speaker, as everyone knows, Fridays can be a little colourful in the House compared to most other days. We are often treated to all kinds of surprises, including new faces in the chair

Private Members' Business

you are now occupying. I want to congratulate everyone who has taken a surprise turn in the chair over the past few weeks. Everyone did a great job. Let me single out my colleague from Joliette, as well as the member who spoke right before me, my colleague from Kitchener Centre.

As I said, Fridays are full of surprises, and parliamentarians' schedules are sometimes turned upside down. I would therefore like to say a quick hello to Marie-Andrée Cardinal's special education class at École Marguerite-Bourgeoys. I was supposed to meet with them this morning, but unfortunately had to reschedule. I look forward to meeting them, and I know that it will happen another time. In the meantime, I wish them a great end of the school year and above all a good summer vacation.

I will come back to our current subject, Bill C-226. This is not the first time that a bill on environmental justice has been tabled in the House. In the previous Parliament, the then member for Cumberland—Colchester, Lenore Zann, introduced Bill C-230, whose objectives were fairly similar to those of the current Bill C-226.

When the vote was held at second reading, the Bloc Québécois did not support the bill. Specifically, we raised questions about interference in Quebec's jurisdictions, because, as drafted, it contained provisions that directly attacked Quebec's environmental sovereignty. I will come back to this point later.

The bill did make it to second reading and the committee was able to correct these and other aspects, which made it possible for the Bloc Québécois to finally support it. What happened next is history. The bill died on the Order Paper when the government called an election in the summer.

Discussions about bills similar to Bill C-226 are not just a thing of the past. The other chamber is currently holding a similar debate on Bill S-5, the strengthening environmental protection for a healthier Canada act. We can see that people want something to be done about environmental human rights, and the Bloc Québécois thinks that is a good thing. Since Bill S-5 is broader in scope when it comes to addressing environmental injustices, one has to wonder whether, if it passes before Bill C-226, Bill C-226 will then become obsolete. We will see.

In short, Bill C-226 is no doubt inspired by a very noble desire to advance environmental justice. However, what starts out as a good intention unfortunately does not always lead to a good end result, or the implementation of a good policy, and we believe that Bill C-226 has some shortcomings. I mainly want to focus on two of them today.

Private Members' Business

As has already been mentioned, Bill C-226, like the first version of Bill C-230, would create a Canada-wide strategy, which, in a federative context, might not be the right approach. Any action by the Canadian government must take into account that Quebec and the provinces have jurisdiction over environmental protections and health and social services. More specifically, it should recognize that the Government of Quebec has authority over these matters. We therefore believe that it would be inconsistent to claim to be fighting for environmental justice at the federal level without, at the same time, defending the environmental sovereignty of Quebec.

Parts of the federal infrastructure, such as wharves, ports, airports, telecommunications infrastructure, federal property and so on, are not subject to our environmental protection laws or municipal bylaws. Quebec's environmental protection and land-use planning laws must apply to all Quebec territory and must not be overriden by federal laws.

This reflects the unanimous will of the Quebec National Assembly, which, on April 13, 2022, voted in favour of the primacy of Quebec's jurisdiction in matters of the environment and opposed any intervention by the federal government in matters of the environment on Quebec territory.

I want to add that, in Quebec, the right to live in a healthful environment in which biodiversity is preserved has been enshrined in the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, a quasi-constitutional statute, since 2006. I mentioned Bill S-5 earlier, and I want to point out that one of the objectives of this bill is to enshrine this type of right in Canadian legislation.

• (1330)

Because this happened last time, the Bloc wants to remind the House that respect for Quebec's environmental sovereignty cannot be sidestepped during the study of this bill.

The other concern I want to raise about Bill C-226 is that it should focus on environmental justice rather than environmental racism. Not only are there issues with the definitions, but also the notion of environmental racism might not be universal enough. Many people may slip through the cracks, even though we should be tackling the environmental inequality they experience too.

My colleague from Repentigny did a great job of summarizing the situation when she spoke to the former Bill C-230:

My thought is this. If we introduce new policies based on new rights, such as the right to a healthy environment, everyone should benefit from it. Furthermore, if the policy is well thought out and targeted, it will correct unequal situations. Those who suffer the greatest injustices will then receive help and support from the government, and even reparation for the harm done. That's my understanding. The rights and the criteria for receiving state protection and support are universal. If the principles are truly applied to everyone, without discrimination, then the policy will have the effect of reducing inequalities based on differences.

Leaving aside issue of interference for now, here is my question: If the only inequalities covered by Bill C-226 are race-related, are we leaving out other people who also deserve protection?

The Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse du Québec also addressed the issue of the systematic correlation between certain social inequalities and the notion of race.

...the idea that socio-economic, cultural and political differences between groups of individuals can be based entirely or in part on biological and genetic disparities has been widely rejected by most researchers in the social sciences.

Here is a concrete example. If the population of eastern Montreal, which is diverse and has its historical roots in the working class, were affected by air pollution, which we know it is, would it be subject to or excluded from the strategy? Furthermore, we must question the criteria used.

Similarly, would the municipality of Rouyn-Noranda, which is grappling with serious problems of air quality and overexposure to arsenic, be covered by the bill? This matter does raise issues of environmental justice, because, like David against Goliath, citizens whose life expectancy has been cut by five years are fighting Glencore and its \$4-billion profits. Would Rouyn-Noranda, on the sole basis of environmental racism, enjoy protection under the law?

In short, this seems to be a matter of universality. We know that a policy is good when its measures are reasonably flexible. Throughout history, the social policies that have best served the advancement of rights and social protections and reduced inequalities, in other words, the development of a welfare state, have been universal policies. The best way for the government to avoid discriminating based on differences is to blind itself to differences.

If our institutions implement new policies based on new rights, such as the right to a clean environment, everyone should have them. If the policy is well-thought-out, if the implementation measures manage to remedy inequitable situations, then those who suffer the most from injustice will receive help and support from the government, as well as reparation for any harm done. If the rights and the eligibility criteria for government protection and support are universal and if those principles are applied to everyone without discrimination, then the policy will also eliminate inequalities based on differences, all differences.

These are two things that we should think about in order to improve the bill. I will end there.

• (1335)

[English]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, my dad completed suicide when I was very young, but I was very fortunate to have several different father figures with several different families throughout Nunavut. I would love to wish them a happy Father's Day. I also wish a special one to my husband Allan. As a blended family, we were able to raise nine children together, so happy Father's Day to Allan.

Private Members' Business

I am privileged to stand here as we celebrate and acknowledge that this is National Indigenous History Month, especially since next week, on June 21, many people across Canada will be celebrating National Indigenous Peoples Day. Having said this, I want to call attention to education by insisting that all governments and educational institutions in Canada implement the TRC's calls to action 6 through 12 and 63 to 66, which focus on education.

I also want to thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for introducing this bill. Its predecessor, Bill C-230, died on the Order Paper.

I will outline briefly how opportunities for environmental racism have been perpetuated by Canada and implemented in Canada's constitutional and legal framework for dealing with lands in Canada.

The violation of the indigenous inherent right to lands is the strongest form of colonialism. This practice by Canada has negatively impacted indigenous peoples. This colonialism has happened for hundreds of years, from the time of first settlers to present-day Canada. This is evident with case law leading to the current landmark case on the land title of Haida Nation. We cannot deny that there is conflict between colonial Canada and many of the first nations that have had to go through the courts to have their rights and title recognized.

Before settlers arrived in what is now known as Canada, indigenous peoples thrived. They managed the environment and the wildlife, ensuring a pristine and balanced environment. Since the arrival of settlers that led up to the Constitution Act in 1867, indigenous peoples have been robbed of their lands. However, indigenous peoples can reclaim lands in one of four ways. Rather than explaining the Constitution Act, I will simply state that sections 91(24), 92 and 35 create the opportunities for environmental racism to be perpetuated.

There are many cases dealing with rights and title, including *Calder, R. v. Sparrow*, *Delgamuukw, R. v. Marshall*, the *Tsilhqot'in* case, *Clyde River*, *Haida Nation* and *Carrier Sekani*. These cases lead to opportunities for environmental racism to be perpetuated. While these important cases have advanced indigenous rights and title to lands, the courts have ensured that these rights are limited and incremental.

Another instrument is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which was adopted in the United Nations in 2007. Canada was one of four countries that voted against it. It was not until 2016 that Canada finally endorsed UNDRIP. It was finally in the last Parliament that legislation related to UNDRIP received royal assent here in Canada. I will specifically and quickly say that article 32 states:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories

I am going to give a quick example of the impacts of environmental racism.

When environmental racism seemed to reach its peak in Nunavut, in February 2021, a group of hunters from Arctic Bay and Pond Inlet marked a shift in how Inuit voice their concerns. While this group was hunting, it happened to be at the same time the

Nunavut Impact Review Board was holding one of its technical hearings on the proposal by the Baffinland Iron Mines Corporation to expand its current mine.

● (1340)

During this time, Inuit who attended the hearings felt unheard. The questions they posed to Baffinland were not being answered, and the Nunavut Impact Review Board was continually limiting the number of questions the Inuit could ask throughout the proceedings. The hunters, having heard reports about the suppression of Inuit voices, took the drastic action of impeding access at two points of the mine. Baffinland, rather than working with Inuit, chose to close the mine and impose a court-ordered injunction.

Because of the courage of what is now known as the Nuluujaat Land Guardians and that of hunters and trappers organizations such as the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, which represents the regional interests of the Inuit, the Inuit changed their position. They went from being willing to support phase two to outright rejecting the phase two proposal in its form at the time. Inuit, indeed, have been willing to work with Baffinland to ensure Inuit employment and ensure proper environmental protection, adaptation and mitigation. They just were not heard to the extent they should have been.

On March 13 of this year, the Nunavut Impact Review Board, within its statutory mandate, recommended to the Minister of Northern Affairs that Baffinland's proposal to expand its current mine in phase two should not proceed. It said, "These potential significant adverse effects cannot be adequately prevented, mitigated, or adaptive managed under proposed mitigation, adaptive management and monitoring programs and/or revisions (to the project certificate)." The Minister of Northern Affairs has 90 days from March 13 to decide whether he will accept the Nunavut Impact Review Board's recommendation. While I very much appreciate the work of my forefathers, the fact that the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement ended up with a provision that allows the federal government to have the final say is more than environmental racism.

Since the Nunavut Impact Review Board's decision, Baffinland has requested an emergency decision by the Minister of Northern Affairs to expand the current project beyond its scope. Now Baffinland has issued notices that it will lay off its workers, choosing profits over labourers. While the price of iron ore has dipped, it is projected to continue to rise and remain stable.

There is another aspect to this. The fact that four ministers have been invited to hear directly from the most impacted community and have refused is more than environmental racism. The fact that the Minister of Northern Affairs will decide the fate of the lands, impacting directly the environment and the Inuit who have lived there since time immemorial, necessitates the passing of this bill.

Private Members' Business

While this bill will be another form of chipping away at the current system, it will still ensure that indigenous peoples are engaged in the development of a national strategy. That is why the NDP supports the passing of this bill. Finally, passing this legislation will ensure that Canada complies with article 32 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which is such an important international instrument that Canada has an opportunity to show leadership on.

• (1345)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak today about the bill brought forward by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, Bill C-226, an act respecting the development of a national strategy to assess, prevent and address environmental racism and to advance environmental justice.

Before I speak about the bill, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Lenore Zann, the former member for Cumberland—Colchester, because it was her important work on this bill in the previous Parliament that really kick-started this process. I am really happy that we get to stand today and continue the work that she started on it.

I would also like to thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for carrying forward that important work and reintroducing this bill.

Returning to Bill C-226, the bill proposes to develop a national strategy to assess, prevent and address environmental racism and advance environmental justice in consultation with any interested persons, bodies, organizations or communities, including representatives of governments in Canada and indigenous peoples.

The minister would be required to develop a strategy within two years of the bill receiving royal assent and to report on its effectiveness every five years.

The Minister of Environment and Climate Change is mandated to develop an environmental justice strategy and examine the link between race, socio-economic status and exposure to environmental risk.

Given the important objectives of this bill and its clear alignment with the government's commitment as declared by the Prime Minister, we support this bill.

It is important to also recognize that, while the development of our environmental justice strategy reflects a new approach, it is well aligned with a broader range of Government of Canada policies and initiatives. In fact, there are a number of complementary efforts under way that will support environmental justice for all Canadians and inform the strategy developed under Bill C-226. For example, the government introduced Bill S-5, the strengthening environmental protection for a healthier Canada act, in the Senate on February 9. Bill S-5 aims to strengthen the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, commonly referred to as CEPA, with a particular focus on recognizing a right to a healthy environment as provided under that act and strengthening Canada's chemical management regime.

If it is passed, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Minister of Health will be required to develop an implementation framework to set out how the right to a healthy environment would be considered in the administration of CEPA. Among other things, the implementation framework would elaborate on principles to be considered in the administration of CEPA, such as environmental justice, which includes avoidance of adverse effects that disproportionately affect vulnerable populations. The framework would also elaborate on non-regression, which generally refers to continuous improvement in environmental protection. Canadians would have an opportunity to participate in the development of the implementation framework.

In addition, the ministers will be required to conduct research studies or monitoring activities to support the government in protecting the right to a healthy environment. This requirement could provide valuable information as the government moves forward on environmental justice issues. For example, it could include the collection and analysis of data to identify and monitor populations and communities that are particularly vulnerable to environmental and health risks as a result of greater susceptibility or greater exposure.

Additional amendments proposed in Bill S-5 would recognize in the preamble the importance of considering vulnerable populations when assessing risks related to chemical substances, as well as the importance of minimizing the risks of exposure to toxic substances and the cumulative effects of toxic substances.

The amendments would also set out requirements for a number of new elements, including requiring that the Minister of Health conduct biomonitoring surveys that may relate to vulnerable populations, ensuring that vulnerable populations and cumulative effects are taken into account when developing and implementing the new plan for chemical management priorities, and requiring that the ministers consider available information on vulnerable populations and cumulative effects when conducting and interpreting risk assessments.

The proposed bill reflects the need to better understand the link between race, socio-economic status and exposure to environmental risk. This government has prioritized science and evidence-based decision-making, and this is a key component in setting a course for environmental justice.

• (1350)

In short, good information is crucial for providing the evidence-based foundation needed to enable informed policy actions. Ensuring that our policy actions are based on facts, science and evidence will strengthen our capacity to achieve the outcomes we strive for.

Private Members' Business

For example, it is important that science and how we manage risks from chemical substances systematically account for potential adverse impacts on vulnerable populations. The government will continue to consider available information on vulnerable populations when assessing risks related to chemical substances under CEPA, a practice that would be codified with Bill S-5.

In addition, in this context, biomonitoring data are an important source of information on levels of exposure for vulnerable populations, as well as on combined exposures to multiple chemicals. For example, the maternal-infant research on environmental chemicals research platform has been used to collect data on pregnant people and children. Furthermore, the issue of cumulative effects of toxins may be especially problematic for indigenous peoples.

In support of world-class scientific research and monitoring, the government provides funding for the northern contaminants program. It aims to reduce and, where possible, eliminate contaminants from the Arctic environment while providing information to northerners about contaminants in traditional country foods to allow them to make informed decisions about their food use.

Further, I would also like to make note of the recently released 2030 emissions reduction plan that sets the stage for continued emissions reductions and highlights the importance of cutting emissions as a means to fight inequality in communities more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. This plan also reflects the importance of engaging with indigenous peoples, and pursuing equality and justice in economic and sectoral transitions that will support emissions reductions.

In addition to these efforts, our existing legislation and policies continue to assist in advancing environmental justice. In August 2019, the Impact Assessment Act came into force and put in place better rules for federal assessment of major resource projects. The Impact Assessment Act reflects values that are important to Canadians, including early, inclusive and meaningful public engagement, partnerships with indigenous peoples, timely decisions based on the best available evidence and indigenous knowledge, and fostering sustainability for present and future generations.

The Impact Assessment Act provides more and earlier opportunities for participation by indigenous peoples, historically marginalized communities and all Canadians. Public participation provisions across the act would help to ensure the participation was meaningful and that in particular indigenous peoples have the information, tools and capacity they need to contribute their perspectives and expertise to project reviews.

For example, the planning phase would ensure early discussions and dialogue with indigenous groups and the broader public. Canadians want to know that industrial and resource development activities are appropriately planned and properly regulated in ways that account for the full range of impacts on Canadians, including on communities that are experiencing marginalization. The Impact Assessment Act would ensure robust oversight and thorough impact assessments that take into account both positive and negative environmental, economic, health and social effects of a project, including potential cumulative effects.

To understand how projects may impact diverse groups of people differently, the act requires that a gender-based analysis plus, GBA+, be applied to the assessment of project effects. The act also expressly requires that decision-making processes recognize and respect indigenous rights and knowledge. The act ensures that the effects within federal jurisdiction of projects are reviewed fairly and thoroughly in order to protect the environment and support economic growth. Budget 2022 contained impact summaries for each new budget measure in terms of gender, diversity and other factors as part of our continued commitment to GBA+.

In conclusion, we see the bill and the activities proposed by the bill as another way to advance and make progress in equality and diversity, which are fundamental to creating a thriving, successful and inclusive country. I want to thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for bringing forth this important bill, and I am very pleased to say that we will be supporting it.

• (1355)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): In resuming debate with the hon. member for Red Deer—Mountain View, we are not able to see your screen at this moment. If we are having difficulties, I can go to the next speaker and get you up afterward.

We will wait one minute and see if we can get this rectified. Otherwise it is eating into other people's time.

I will have to go to the next speaker.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Vancouver East.

• (1400)

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, environmental racism runs deep in Canada and is a direct result of Canada's historic and ongoing colonization. Environmental racism causes severe harm to people's health, threatens culture and destroys the natural environment. Discrimination and systemic racism in Canada's laws and policies, in addition to uneven enforcement of regulations and laws, have created patterns where marginalized communities are bearing the brunt of the worst environmental impacts from Canada's economic activities while receiving little of the benefits.

Private Members' Business

Indigenous, racialized and low-income communities are also the most heavily impacted by the effects of climate change. Last summer, a record-breaking heat dome killed hundreds of people in B.C. During the heat dome, analysis of surface temperature data from NASA's Landsat 8 satellite found a connection between income and surface temperature in census tracts across the Lower Mainland. The average ground temperature varied by as much as 23°C between metro's coolest and hottest census tracts.

Throughout Canada, lower-income neighbourhoods also tend to be neighbourhoods with higher percentages of racialized populations, and these neighbourhoods suffer disproportionately from the effects of extreme heat. Researchers indicate that residents of low-income neighbourhoods, like the Downtown Eastside in my riding, face a "double threat", as many of the neighbourhoods' residents suffer from chronic health conditions, which leaves them more sensitive to the effects of extreme heat. Other neighbourhoods in my riding struggle similarly with higher ground temperatures associated with the reduced green spaces in comparison with wealthier neighbourhoods.

While the impact of climate change has become more severe in recent years, indigenous communities in particular have had a long history of bearing the negative impacts of Canada's environmental racism, a phenomenon that is well documented. In 2019, Baskut Tuncak, UN special rapporteur on human rights and hazardous wastes, wrote, "During my visit, I observed a pervasive trend of inaction of the Canadian government in the face of existing health threats from decades of historical and current environmental injustices and the cumulative impacts of toxic exposures by indigenous peoples".

A 2020 report by the Human Rights Council entitled "Visit to Canada - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes" states, "Pollution and exposure to toxic chemicals threaten the right to life and a life with dignity," and it continues on to say, "The invisible violence inflicted by toxics is an insidious burden disproportionately borne by indigenous peoples in Canada."

Examples of environmental racism against indigenous communities across Canada abound. It is evident in the high number of drinking water advisories still active in indigenous communities, in the prevalence of health conditions linked to environmental pollution in indigenous communities such as Grassy Narrows, and in the destruction of traditional knowledge and traditional ways of life through pollution, climate change and displacement.

In B.C., the Liberal government continues to push a pipeline that it bought in the middle of a climate emergency, despite the lack of free, prior and informed consent from indigenous communities and in direct violation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Members will recall the violence faced by Mi'kmaq fishers on the east coast as they tried to earn a living by carrying out their indigenous rights to fish, while the government looked on.

Reconciliation and implementing UNDRIP are not possible without tackling environmental racism and fully and meaningfully in-

cluding indigenous communities in the shaping of Canada's environmental policies. Canada is very late to act on environmental racism.

As we debate this bill to assess environmental racism, in the United States the office of environmental justice, mandated to protect and promote environmental and public health in minority, low-income, tribal and other vulnerable communities, has existed since the early 1990s.

● (1405)

There is no reason to delay the passing of the bill that is before us. A similar bill, Bill C-230, was introduced during the last Parliament and passed second reading. It was studied at the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development and amendments from multiple parties addressing various concerns were passed. Sadly, Bill C-230 died on the Order Paper when the Liberal government called an election that nobody wanted.

Given the state of play with the climate crisis, I call on the government to expedite the passing of this bill so we can start taking the urgent action required to achieve environmental justice for indigenous and racialized communities. Environmental justice is social justice.

I am also calling for the establishment of an office of environmental justice, not only to support the development of a sound strategy to tackle environmental racism, but also to ensure accountability with regular reports. We must also enshrine in law the rights of Canadians to a healthy environment.

Former MP Linda Duncan introduced the environmental bill of rights. We should make that into law. Recent analysis of temperature data in B.C. projected that in 30 years B.C. could experience three to four times more hospitalizations and deaths from high temperature days than there are now.

In Canada's northern communities with first nations, Métis and Inuit populations, temperatures are rising as much as three times as the rest of the world. This is a matter that cannot wait. We must move forward on action tackling climate change and environmental racism now.

I want to thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for tabling this bill and fighting this fight. This is not just for us in this generation. It is also for future generations. We owe it to them. It is incumbent on us to take action now, for if we do not, it will be too late.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands has five minutes for her right of reply.

Private Members' Business

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I want to start of course by acknowledging we are here on the territory of the Algonquin nation, and to it we say *meegwetch*.

I also want to acknowledge the hon. member for Red Deer—Mountain View had intended to speak to this bill. It is unfortunate that technical glitches interfered with that, and I am sure he was about to support it wholeheartedly. In any case, we do not get the benefit of his speech, and I regret that.

[*Translation*]

I want to thank some of the members who took part in this debate during the first hour and today during the second hour.

Many thanks to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, to my colleague and friend, the member for Repentigny, to another very close friend, the member for Victoria, to my friend, the member for Lac-Saint-Louis, to the members for Dufferin—Caledon and York-Centre and, for today, my dear friend the member for Kitchener-Centre, who is also a member of the Green Party. I thank the Conservatives because they are the ones who gave him the opportunity to deliver a speech today. I also thank the members for Saint-Jean and Nunavut, the parliamentary secretary and member for Toronto—Danforth, and the member for Vancouver East.

[*English*]

These were rich speeches, and they gave us a lot.

I particularly want to thank my friend, the member of Parliament for Nunavut, for her reflections on the bravery of Inuit hunters who were forced, due to the lack of environmental rights, to go out and take their places in civil disobedience on a runway to blockade a mine site because their rights were being violated. We can hardly imagine what that was like in February in Nunavut. It was not warm.

With only five minutes, I certainly cannot get into the full details on that effort, but I stand in solidarity with my friend, the member of Parliament for Nunavut, and the communities that have succeeded in persuading the Nunavut Impact Review Board to say no to a doubling of the iron ore mine on Baffin Island. I hope the Minister of Northern Affairs will act as he should and accept that advice.

There is so much to say about the bill and why we are here and where we are.

[*Translation*]

The purpose of this bill is to prevent environmental racism, but it is also very important to point out that it will help advance environmental justice.

• (1410)

[*English*]

As a feminist commenting, I just went back to make sure I had that right in French. I had not realized before that “*le racism*” is masculine but “*la justice*” is feminine.

I should not digress from my digressions when I have a five-minute speech.

This is a critically important issue that we make progress—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am going to stop the member for a moment. Apparently, there is no interpretation.

We will allow the member to continue.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, the importance of the bill and what I wanted to underscore is that it is operative.

Earlier today, of all coincidences, I was speaking at a conference marking the 40th anniversary of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms at the University of Ottawa law school with many brilliant people. I was not one of the brilliant people, but I was invited anyway. We were reflecting on 40 years of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and what was missing: What do we need going forward? There were perspectives on the need for socio-economic rights, that we address the enormous income inequality that is growing in Canada and globally, that we address the needs that we express in terms of human rights, but also the rights that were missing from the charter. We spoke of the importance of addressing this gap through environmental rights.

I will note parenthetically that Bill C-226, while being complementary to this right that we should have but do not yet have, we will not have this right if Bill S-5 passes and the Canadian Environmental Protection Act amendments do not create environmental rights as they should, but perhaps we can fix that through amendments.

What are rights without tools to enforce them? The environmental justice program at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has, since 1994, created tools that can be used by communities, indigenous communities, people of colour communities, Black communities and low-income communities, who have been historically, and are to this day, deprived of a healthy environment, because they do not have the clout of white, wealthy neighbours. The tools are to hire a toxicologist, to hire an epidemiologist, and are so abbreviated and so well known in the U.S., the EJ program of the U.S. EPA. Environmental justice: that is what we are here for.

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

[*Translation*]

If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request a recorded division or that the motion be adopted on division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

[*English*]

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to an order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 22, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

Private Members' Business

It being 2:14 p.m., this House stands adjourned until Monday at 11 a.m., pursuant Standing Order 24(1). (The House adjourned at 2:14 p.m.)

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