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House of Commons Debates

Official Report
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Tuesday, June 21, 2022

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, June 21, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*Translation*]

UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ACT

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the annual progress report on the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

* * *

[*English*]

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 2020-21 progress report on Canada's national action plan for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolution on women, peace and security.

* * *

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 17 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as president of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association, and pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the following four reports of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association: the report respecting its participation at the joint meeting of the defence and security,

economics and security, and political committees in Brussels, Belgium, from February 17 to 19, 2020; the report on the 66th annual session by video conference, from November 18 to 23, 2020; the report on the spring session by video conference, from May 14 to 17, 2021; and the report on the Halifax International Security Forum in Halifax, Nova Scotia, from November 19 to 21, 2021.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

LIAISON

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 107(3), I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the liaison committee, entitled “Committee Activities and Expenditures: April 1, 2021 - March 31, 2022”. This report highlights the work and accomplishments of each committee, as well as detailing the budgets that fund the activities approved by committee members.

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 11th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, entitled “Review of the Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons: Part 1”.

[*English*]

I have a second report to present. I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 12th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, entitled “The Inclusion of Indigenous Languages on Federal Election Ballots: A Step Towards Reconciliation”.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

I would like to thank all members and everyone involved in making this happen. We have worked fairly well as a committee.

To ensure that we continue progressing and getting work done, while I am on my feet, I move, seconded by the member for Winnipeg North:

That the House do now proceed to orders of the day.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: The question is on the motion.

Routine Proceedings

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*]

The hon. opposition House leader.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1050)

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

(*Division No. 161*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Bains
Baker	Barron
Battiste	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Blaney
Blois	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chagger
Chahal	Champagne
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Fergus	Fillmore
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Garneau	Garrison
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Johns
Joly	Jones
Jowhari	Julian
Kayabaga	Kelloway
Khalid	Khera
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Kwan	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lattanzio	Lauzon

LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod	McPherson
Mendès	Mendicino
Miao	Miller
Morrice	Morrissey
Murray	Naqvi
Ng	Noormohamed
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski	Qualtrough
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Singh	St-Onge
Sudds	Tassi
Taylor Roy	Thompson
Trudeau	Valdez
Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Virani	Weiler
Wilkinson	Yip
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NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benzen	Bergen
Berthold	Bérubé
Bezan	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Block
Bragdon	Brassard
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Carrie
Chabot	Chambers
Champoux	Chong
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
d'Entremont	Desbiens
Desilets	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Ferreri
Findlay	Fortin
Gallant	Garon
Gaudreau	Généreux
Genuis	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram

Government Orders

Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Larouche
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lemire	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
MacKenzie	Maguire
Martel	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Michaud	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Normandin
O'Toole	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Perkins	Perron
Plamondon	Poilievre
Rayes	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Rood
Ruff	Savard-Tremblay
Scheer	Schmale
Seebach	Shields
Shiple	Simard
Sinclair-Desgagné	Small
Soroka	Steinley
Ste-Marie	Strahl
Stubbs	Thériault
Therrien	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Trudel	Uppal
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PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL C-21—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

That in relation to Bill C-21, An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms), not more than five further hours shall be allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of the said bill; and

That, at the expiry of the five hours provided consideration at second reading stage of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and, in turn, every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

[Translation]

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period.

[English]

I invite hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise in their places or use the “raise hand” function so the Chair has some idea of the number of members who wish to participate in this question period.

The hon. opposition House leader.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again we are seeing the hammer drop. It is on Bill C-21 this time, which further strengthens our resolve. You and I are unfortunate to have a front row seat to the further decline in democracy in this place and another attack on the institution of Parliament.

There has been three hours and 24 minutes of debate on this bill, which is a very substantive bill. Just last week, the Conservatives made an offer to the government: split the bill so we can work on portions of it that we can support, such as domestic violence and other matters within the bill. That was rejected by the government.

This bill would do nothing to solve gun and gang criminal activity in this country. This past weekend there were seven shootings in Liberal-held ridings just in Toronto. Instead of dealing with the situation, what the Liberals are doing is further traumatizing, stigmatizing and dividing Canadians through a bill by not offering to work and do the right thing.

My question for the minister is this. Is it true that, for the purposes of further dividing, stigmatizing and wedging, and using this bill as a politicized weapon, the Liberals have earmarked almost \$1 million for an ad campaign in the summer to target opposition parties that are looking to better this bill as opposed to oppose it?

• (1055)

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have personal respect for my colleague. He knows that, and I would like to think we reciprocate that. Unfortunately, I do not respect his position on this particular motion.

The reason why we are taking this step is betrayed by the way in which he has characterized the bill, which is that Bill C-21 would not be helpful in reducing gun violence. That is categorically untrue. In particular, I would point his attention to the fact that the bill, among other things, would raise maximum sentences against illegal gun smugglers. He seems not to take any particular note of that. He also does not address the fact that it was his party, sadly, that sought to filibuster this debate, consistent with the posture that the Conservative Party has taken on any number of important questions and matters of priority for Canadians, whether it is on the economy, on health or on the environment. Conservatives are always blocking debate. We want to advance debate.

This debate will now move to committee, where there will be more study of Bill C-21, which would help ensure that we protect Canadians.

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is not a question of whether we are for or against Bill C-21. We know that the bill is not perfect, but it is important.

Government Orders

This is about how the Liberal government has managed its legislative agenda. To be frank, honest and sincere, it has been a complete disaster. I have never seen a legislative agenda managed like this. We are meeting again today and we will likely sit until late on Thursday because we do not have the right people on that side of the House to manage the legislative agenda effectively. It is not the opposition's fault. It is not the fault of the Conservatives, the Bloc Québécois or the NDP. It is the government's fault. They keep imposing closure because they are unable to manage their legislative agenda properly.

The fact that we have gotten to this point, today, is serious. The government could have tabled its notice of motion on the weekend, but what we are seeing here is the government's inefficiency across all departments and in managing the legislative agenda.

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Madam Speaker, first, I share my hon. colleague's concerns, because there have been far too many tragedies related to gun violence, not only in Quebec, but across the country. That is exactly why we urgently need to deal with the situation.

The Conservatives are the ones who have been engaging in obstruction tactics. It is unacceptable. There is a lot of support, I hope, from the Bloc and the other opposition parties, like the NDP, for debating this bill and moving forward with a constructive discussion. However, we must manage the situation, and the only way we can move this debate forward is through the committee's fine work. It is important to ensure the safety of the Canadian public.

• (1100)

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have said this before: We have two bloc parties in the House of Commons, the Bloc Québécois and the “block everything” party. The Conservative Party has been systematically blocking everything over the course of the last few months, refusing to let through even bills that people are looking for. We are talking about teachers looking for tax credits. We have been besieged by letters throughout the course of the last few months. The Conservatives have said that nothing is going to pass at all. They do not even want bills to go to committee for improvements or, when they do go to committee, for amendments to be considered. It has been absolute chaos because of the Conservatives.

Why have the Conservatives wanted to block everything? Why would they not seek to go to committee so that we could hear from witnesses?

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for putting his finger precisely on the problem in his chamber, which is that there is one party, and that is the Conservative Party of Canada, that continues to obstruct on public safety, the economy, health and the environment. Rather than embracing the debate, which is the hallmark of our democracy in this chamber, what we see instead is relentless tactics to filibuster and postpone debate.

What we have before us is a bill that would help us advance the fight against gun violence. I would certainly urge the Conservatives to embrace the opportunities that would manifest in the committee stage, where we could look at Bill C-21 and hopefully find some

common ground on addressing handgun violence, addressing organized crime, and addressing the connections between domestic abuse and gun violence. That debate will continue there.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened to my counterpart from the Bloc Québécois talk about managing the legislative calendar.

However, managing the parliamentary calendar depends on the good faith of all parties and their willingness to not systematically block bills, such as Bill C-8, which helped us provide assistance to Canadians in this pandemic and inflationary environment.

I would also like to point out to my friends and colleagues in the Bloc Québécois that Quebecers support additional measures to control firearms, handguns and assault weapons. The Minister of Public Safety is advocating these measures, and I invite him to tell us again why we should hear from Quebecers and Canadians on this issue.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before recognizing the Minister of Public Safety, I would like to remind members that there are more than 20 minutes remaining for questions and comments. I ask members to wait their turn to ask their question or share their comments.

The hon. Minister of Public Safety.

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague is absolutely right. Strengthening our efforts in the context of the fight against gun violence is a priority for Quebec. That is why I am in constant contact with my Quebec counterparts, including Minister Guilbault, Mayor Plante in Montreal, and Mayor Marchand in Quebec City, who all support the bill.

Everyone understands that this is a step in the right direction. I want to work with the Bloc Québécois and with all the members to better protect our communities.

[*English*]

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have been talking with law enforcement officials from across my riding about the bill, and they have some serious reservations. We know that when the minister enacted the Emergencies Act, he said that he had advice from law enforcement officials to enact it, but in the meantime we found out that was actually false.

I want to ask the minister whether he has received advice from law enforcement on whether the bill is actually practical, and if he has, whether he could share with the House who it is that he received this advice from.

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Madam Speaker, I am all too happy to answer my hon. colleague's question. Among other branches, of course we are in the midst of consulting with law enforcement at the federal level with the RCMP. However, we saw the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, which represents the most senior levels and executive levels of law enforcement, say that Bill C-21 would be a step in the right direction toward better protecting our communities. Of course, that in no way diminishes the fact that we need to debate the bill and study the bill.

Government Orders

The problem with my hon. colleague's position is that her party has stood in the way of debate. It is her party that is standing in the way of the free speech that should be exercised in studying the bill.

We want to pass the bill so we can deal with gun violence and better protect our communities. I would hope that my colleague would embrace that effort.

• (1105)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, earlier my NDP colleague said that there is the Bloc Québécois and the “block everything” party, in other words, the Conservatives. What he forgot to say is that in politics the primary principle is to establish a balance of power. Since the marriage between the NDP and the Liberal Party that balance of power no longer exists.

That leads my colleague from Mirabel to believe that the New Democrats are spending so much time at the Liberals' feet that they are going to get oral thrush. It is quite dangerous.

On Bill C-21 in particular, we have seen many proposals from the member for Rivière-du-Nord, and we know that the main problem is the illegal guns. We will not be able to discuss the matter, however, because of the closure motion.

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Madam Speaker, I completely agree with my colleague's statement that we need to study the bill. The problem is that the Conservatives continue to use tactics to create delays and pick fights, in an attempt to shut down debate. That is not good.

I hope we can work with the Bloc Québécois and even the NDP. The NDP understands that, through compromise and dialogue, we can make progress in the House. There is a sharing of ideas. Even the Bloc Québécois understands that we need to share ideas. I am always looking for solutions to strengthen Bill C-21. However, the Conservatives need to stop with the nonsense. When they act like this on something that is such an important concern, their actions only hurt Canadians.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, we saw this with Bill C-11: Conservatives blocking witnesses at committee, blocking the tabling of amendments, blocking systematically improvements that needed to come to Bill C-11. Fortunately, we were able to—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is very disrespectful to be calling members names, and I would ask the member to apologize for doing so.

The hon. member for Peace River—Westlock.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, I would like to apologize for disrupting the House and calling the member names.

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, but, quite frankly, “sticks and stones”. We have seen the Conservatives' antics for the last six months and what they say does not bother me at all. What they do, though, does bother me, and this is what we saw at the committee level—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Sorry, we have a point of order.

The hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, according to the rules, the number of questions is supposed to be according to the proportion of people in a given party and what they received in votes at election time, instead of just going party to party. Since there were more votes and more seats won by the Conservatives, we should be getting more questions rather than just merely going around in a circle.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is up to the Speaker to decide who speaks, and I am being fair. Members will see that certainly when it comes to the government, because it is its motion, the Liberals are getting fewer questions.

Returning to the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, hopefully the Conservatives will not interrupt a third or fourth or fifth time. It just proves my point of how disruptive they have been. They have abandoned their voters and come to the House and they just cause chaos. That is what they seem to think their role is, and it is tragic. We saw that at committee, and now they are blocking a bill that needs to go to committee for improvements. There is no doubt that there needs to be work done and witnesses need to be heard from.

Why are Conservatives refusing to have the legislative process that allows for due consideration for witnesses, for amendments and for improvements on a bill?

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Madam Speaker, I do not know why. I wish Canadians could get into the heads of some of the tactics that we have seen here in this chamber. We embrace the idea of having a very vigorous debate about how to better protect our communities from gun violence, but, instead, we saw on the first day that was scheduled for Bill C-21 that Conservatives filibustered and we have seen similar tactics at committee.

As my hon. colleague the leader for the NDP in this chamber pointed out, it is not just on the matters related to public safety. It is on matters related to creating jobs, improving the economy, dealing with climate change and dealing with priorities related to Health Canada. I do want to take a moment to thank the New Democrats for their efforts at making this chamber work, which is what the vast majority of Canadians are entitled to expect from us, especially on matters related to public safety.

• (1110)

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the citizens of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

Government Orders

The hon. minister has talked about the fact that we need to have resolute debate in this place, and here we have the antithesis of that, the cutting off of debate with the help of the government's coalition partners in the NDP. How does the minister reconcile the fact that Conservatives are more than prepared to address certain aspects of this bill and more than prepared to split the bill and put it forward on the areas we agree on? Constantly, we hear we cannot get things done because we are not agreeing on things. Here we are, prepared to agree, and it is the Liberals who are pushing that away. How does the minister reconcile that with his recent comments?

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is saying, on the one hand, from his mouth to this chamber, that the Conservatives are prepared to work on certain elements of the bill and then, earlier this morning, we heard the House leader for the Conservative Party of Canada saying there is nothing in this bill that would protect Canadians. It is for that colleague to reconcile that logical inconsistency. Canadians expect better.

My hon. colleague, as a very accomplished, very intelligent individual member in this chamber, knows full well that the debate of Bill C-21 will continue at committee, where, of course, we embrace the exchange of ideas and potential improvements and amendments to the bill so we can better protect Canadians from the scourge of gun violence. I would urge the member to vote in support of this motion so that we can continue debate at committee.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am getting sick and tired of hearing the government call out the opposition for doing its job. The Liberal government has moved a series of closure motions in the past month and is now blaming the Conservatives and the Bloc for the lack of progress. The government cannot criticize the opposition for doing its job. It cannot criticize members on this side of the House for asking questions. The government keeps imposing closure because it cannot manage its own legislative agenda, even with the support of the NDP.

I listen to my NDP friends during question period, and I am not sure if they have noticed this, but no one listens to their questions anymore. No one is interested in what they have to say. They should give us their questions. Ever since they cozied up to the government, no one is interested in what they have to say. They criticize us for obstructing our work here, even though we are here to ask questions. That is what we have been doing since the beginning of this session.

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's passion for the subject. On this side, we understand our responsibility, which is to protect all Canadians. That is exactly why we need to move forward with debate on this bill—to better protect Canadians across Canada, including Quebecers. As a matter of fact, it was the Bloc that encouraged the government to take more action. We must take action. Debate on this bill is our opportunity to better protect all Canadians. That is our priority.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, we need to talk about the question from the member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert. Obviously, Quebecers are watching and listening to the NDP's questions, because we are seeing growing support in Quebec polls. As my colleagues know, if we had proportional representation—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order.

The member for Battle River—Crowfoot on a point of order.

[*English*]

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, it is my understanding that, when time allocation is moved, it is an opportunity not for the NDP to defend its actions and the decisions it has made in this place, but rather an opportunity for the government to defend the shutting down of debate on a particular—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): This is more a point of debate.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, Bloc and Conservative members are so sensitive. It is incredible.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member for Provencher on a point of order.

• (1115)

[*English*]

Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, I know it is at the discretion of the Chair, but it seems to me there are a lot of members who would like their opinions expressed here during this debate, and you keep deferring to the same member of the NDP. I think it is time to spread out the questions.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It depends upon who within the party gets up, so I would just indicate again that it is at the will of the Chair to recognize members.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. You do an excellent job. I know that it is not easy when there are parties that are blocking everything and that do not want to co-operate. You do an excellent job, and I thank you on behalf of all Canadians.

In my opinion, there is an unhealthy dynamic here. Some members are blocking everything. They do not want things to move forward. They do not want anything to be studied in committee. They do not want to hear from witnesses. They do not want any sub-amendments to be proposed and they do not want the bills to be improved.

I have a simple question for my colleague. Why are these parties refusing to improve the bills?

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Madam Speaker, honestly, I do not have an answer to his question because what the government cares about is working with all members on one of the highest priorities for the country, and that is protecting all Canadians. Even in Quebec, we are working on this bill with the mayor of Montreal, the mayor of Quebec City and my provincial government counterpart in a spirit of co-operation.

We want to continue the debate in committee. That is why we need to move forward in a spirit of co-operation.

Government Orders

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I completely agree with the member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert that invoking closure over and over again sets a dangerous precedent.

[*English*]

I am someone who has been in the House long enough to remember when time allocation was rare. When Stephen Harper started bringing it in over and over again, I counted. I put to the ministers then that between 1920 and 2000, we had seen these kinds of debates 40 times, and in the previous 18 months we had seen them 40 times.

I would urge my hon. friends in the Liberal Party and in the NDP to consider what we are doing here. When we make time allocation routine, it means that the next government in the next session will weaponize it further, and the rights of individual MPs to debate bills properly will be further eroded. I ask them to please not do this thing.

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her comments and her notes of caution. Of course, we are using this particular procedural motion to advance debate. I would hope that she would know that there is always going to be an open mind on studying this bill and that there will always be an open mind on improving this bill. Of course, I remain open to her suggestions and to the suggestions of all parliamentarians, and indeed of all Canadians, on how we can better protect Canadians.

My hon. colleague spoke about the weaponization of procedural motions. I am concerned about the weaponization of lethal firearms in our communities. Of course, this past weekend was a very harsh reminder that, tragically, innocent lives are being lost. Instead of getting any kind of collaboration from the Conservatives, we have seen delay tactics. That has to stop. Debate will continue at committee.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I disagree with the member from the Green Party. As I have said before, no one likes time allocation, but it is a tool that is necessary when we cannot negotiate and have co-operation.

We must remember that the mandate was not just given to this government in terms of co-operating. The mandate to co-operate was given to all political entities in the chamber. All it takes is any one opposition party to prevent any piece of legislation from passing, which will force the government to bring in time allocation or to concede the legislation and never see it pass.

My question to my colleague is this. Would he not agree that, at the end of the day, this is important? This is what Canadians want to see, which is the type of legislation that would have an impact on our lives. That is why we have to push it—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will allow the hon. minister to answer. There are other members who would like to ask questions.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Madam Speaker, in short, I wholeheartedly agree with my hon. colleague and the observation he

makes that Bill C-21 is vitally important to Canadians, because it seeks to address the increase of gun violence, which has been statistically studied by StatsCan and other individuals over the past decade or so.

We have seen gun crime go up. We have seen handgun crime, specifically, go up. We have seen intimate-partner violence and gender-based violence go up in connection with the presence of guns. Rather than being able to advance the bill in this chamber, we have seen Conservatives partake in filibustering, which is why we have brought forward this time allocation motion. It does not stop debate. Of course, this bill will continue to be studied by the committee so we can better protect Canadians from the scourge of gun violence.

• (1120)

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the government defending its use of something that Liberals previously said was an absolute affront to democracy: time allocation. It is incumbent upon us to talk about the fact that the bill has been debated for three hours and 20-odd minutes. This is not a bill that has been “filibustered”; this is a bill that has barely received scrutiny. There are valid questions that have been raised.

I believe that it is really important to point out right now, especially for the record, that the concerns that are being heard in my riding of Fort McMurray—Cold Lake and many ridings across the prairies are very different from the concerns that are being heard elsewhere. I think that this government would be very well suited not to move time allocation on this and instead hear directly from these witnesses. I would urge the minister to come to the prairies. He can come to my riding and talk to people who have serious concerns about the bill and what it would mean for their day-to-day living. Will he come to my riding to talk to the gun owners?

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Madam Speaker, I would be happy to accept my hon. colleague's invitation, and I thank her for it. Also, I am pleased to alert her to the fact that I have previously visited the ridings of some of her colleagues in opposition, including Lethbridge, Alberta, where I had the chance to interact with law-abiding gun owners, for whom we have a tremendous amount of respect.

I would point out that we are not stopping the debate on this bill. All of the urging that my colleague has impressed upon me and the government to hear from witnesses and to continue with debate is an effort that will continue at committee. We have to move on with the bill, because this is an urgent issue, and we look forward to making sure that we can study this bill and ultimately pass it to better protect Canadians.

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[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, what needs to be acknowledged this morning is that this government refuses to accept its status as a minority government, and has never accepted it, since 2019. Its minority status means that it has to work with the opposition parties. It refused to do so from the beginning, so the government called an election in the middle of a pandemic to try to win a majority. When that did not work, the government found a third party to be its puppet, and now it can do whatever it wants. Then it complains that the opposition is trying to obstruct proceedings in order to buy time. Of course, the government should not expect collaboration when it refuses to respect its collaborators.

We were told yesterday that we would be sitting until midnight tonight. No one knows who was consulted. The government House leader is not communicating with the House leaders of the other parties. If that is not contempt, I do not know what is. I urge the government to open its eyes and, more importantly, its ears and work with the opposition parties so we can stop debating about not debating. This is ridiculous.

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Madam Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for my colleague's role and the opposition's role. That is exactly why we came up with concrete and practical solutions for Canadians during the pandemic and obtained a consensus in the House. This was done very publicly and I am very proud of the result.

At the same time, with respect to gun violence, I am working with my Quebec counterparts, as I have mentioned several times. We must act. We will continue to debate this bill in committee with all members, including the Bloc members.

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I just want to say that this is getting disturbing. I hear the Conservatives time and again spending all the time of the House trying to tear this place down, instead of fighting for people in their ridings.

People are struggling right now. I say that with great frustration, because just in May there were three women murdered in Winnipeg—

• (1125)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have a point of order from the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, at page 662 of Bosc and Gagnon, it states:

The intent of the question-and-answer period after closure motion has been moved is to promote ministerial accountability, and it provides an opportunity for the government to justify its use of this measure.

This is not an opportunity for the fourth party in this place to hold the opposition to account.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I take the hon. member's comments. As he knows, I have been here for almost 14 years. Even when it was a Conservative government, the same line of questioning was actually happening. We have to have debate, and the debate is to hear both sides.

The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Madam Speaker, I will repeat that it is disturbing to listen to the Conservative Party taking people down instead of fighting for people in their ridings in question period after question period, and stalling things at committees.

It is concerning to me because, in my riding of Winnipeg Centre, there were three women murdered in the month of May. One other woman was hit and left to perish. These are serious issues that we are dealing with. If the Conservative Party and people in the House are so concerned about having time for debate, then maybe they should stop playing procedural games. I have concerns about debate, so I am making sure that we have proper time for debate.

I want to ask the minister this. How is he going to ensure accountability at committee to make sure that due process is followed and make sure that we can come up with something that truly helps individuals in Canada?

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Madam Speaker, first, I want to thank my colleague for her advocacy, and express my condolences and support to my hon. colleague's community for the recent tragic losses owing to gun violence. That is precisely why we have to continue to be motivated to have debate and—

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I hope if you seek it you would receive unanimous consent for the extension of the question-and-answer period by 15 minutes. I think there is incredibly valuable discussion that is yet to be had on this particular subject.

I would ask for unanimous consent to extend this period by what I think is a very reasonable 15 minutes.

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

An hon. member: Nay.

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Madam Speaker, I will conclude by saying that we will continue to have at least five more hours of debate on Bill C-21. Then it will go to committee, where I know there will be a very extensive, thorough and comprehensive study of Bill C-21. This is a good bill. It has the broad support of Canadians across a wide array of constituencies.

We embrace the idea of debating, and passing, this bill so we can better protect communities from the scourge of gun violence.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House. The question is on the motion.

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. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Madam Speaker, I would request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Call in the members.

• (1210)

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

(Division No. 162)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Barron	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Blaney	Blois
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Dong	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Garneau
Garrison	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gould
Green	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Johns
Joly	Jones
Jowhari	Julian
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lattanzio
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	McDonald (Avalon)
McGuinty	McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod
McPherson	Mendès
Mendicino	Miao
Miller	Morrissey
Murray	Naqvi
Ng	Noormohamed

O'Connell
O'Regan
Powlowski
Robillard
Rogers
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Schiefke
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
St-Onge
Tassi
Thompson
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Virani
Yip
Zarrillo

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Oliphant
Petipas Taylor
Qualtrough
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Singh
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Trudeau
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi— 170

NAYS

Members

Abouttaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benzen	Bergen
Berthold	Bérubé
Bezan	Blanchette-Joncas
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chabot
Chambers	Champoux
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	d'Entremont
Desbiens	Desilets
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferrieri
Findlay	Fortin
Gallant	Garon
Gaudreau	Généreux
Genuis	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Larouche
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lemire	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
MacKenzie	Maguire
Martel	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Michaud	Moore
Morantz	Morrisse
Morrison	Motz
Muys	Nater

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Normandin	O'Toole
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Perkins
Perron	Plamondon
Poilievre	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Rood	Ruff
Savard-Tremblay	Scheer
Schmale	Seeback
Shields	Shipley
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Small	Soroka
Steinley	Ste-Marie
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Thériault
Therrien	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Trudel	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Vien
Viersen	Vignola
Villemure	Vis
Vuong	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williams
Williamson	Zimmer— 150

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[*Translation*]

SECOND READING

The House resumed from June 20 consideration of the motion that Bill C-21, An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms) be read the second time and referred to a committee, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will begin by saying I will be sharing my time with the always incisive member for Rivière-du-Nord.

Some debates are complex, difficult and delicate. They elicit strong reactions, and even divide us and help create rifts in our society. The debate on Bill C-21 is a striking example.

I remember that this is the first file I commented on publicly after I was elected for the first time in fall 2019, and here we are at the end of the session in my second term, in June 2022, and we are still talking about it.

I would like to point out that the Bloc Québécois will still be voting in favour of Bill C-21 at second reading, but we believe that the bill should be improved in committee. My colleagues can rest assured that the Bloc will try to be as constructive as possible, but our now-famous dynamic duo, namely the hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord and the hon. member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, could explain it better than I can, since they have asked the Minister of Public Safety many questions on the issue. I will begin my speech by addressing certain aspects of Bill C-21, then certain points more specifically related to femicide and, lastly, other points focusing on domestic violence.

First, given the numerous events in the news in Montreal lately, Bill C-21 is a step in the right direction, but it will have little effect in the short term and change practically nothing in the streets of Montreal. The most important new feature in this bill is a complete freeze on the acquisition, sale and transfer of handguns for private individuals. Legal handguns will therefore disappear on the death of the last owner, since it will be impossible to bequeath or transfer the guns to others.

However, the bill includes exceptions for people who need a handgun to perform their duties, such as bodyguards with a licence to carry, authorized companies, for filming purposes for example, and high-level sport shooters. The government will define by regulation what is a “sport shooter”.

Those who already own a handgun will still be able to use it legally, but they will have to make sure to always renew their licence before the deadline or lose this privilege. The bill freezes the acquisition of legal handguns, but we will have to wait many years before all of the guns are gone, through attrition. In contrast, the number of illegal guns will continue to grow.

The federal government estimates that there are more than one million legal handguns in Canada and that more than 55,000 are acquired legally every year. The federal freeze would therefore prevent 55,000 handguns from being added to the existing number, but it does nothing about the millions of guns already in circulation. The Bloc Québécois suggests adding handguns to the buyback program in order to allow owners to sell them to the government if they so wish. In short, we are proposing an optional buyback program.

However, one of the problems is that, according to Montreal's police force, the SPVM, 95% of the handguns used to commit violent crimes are purchased on the black market. Legal guns are sometimes used, as in the case of the Quebec City mosque shooting, and it is precisely to avoid such mass shootings that the Bloc Québécois supports survivor groups in their demands to ban these guns altogether.

Bill C-21 does nothing about assault weapons either, even though manufacturers are custom designing many new models to get around the May 1, 2020, regulations. The Bloc suggests adding as clear a definition as possible of the term “prohibited assault weapon”, so that they can all be banned in one fell swoop, rather than on a model-by-model basis with taxpayers paying for them to be bought back. The government wants to add to the list of prohibited weapons, but manufacturers are quick to adapt.

Also, Bill C-21 will have no real impact on organized crime groups, which will continue to import weapons illegally and shoot people down in our streets. The Bloc Québécois has tabled Bill C-279 to create a list of criminal organizations, similar to the list of terrorist entities, in order to crack down on criminal groups that are currently displaying their gang symbols with total impunity while innocent people are dying in our streets. My colleague from Rivière-du-Nord will discuss this bill in more detail, since he is the sponsor.

The most important thing for getting to the heart of the problem is reducing the number of guns available. Bill C-21 increases prison sentences for arms traffickers, from 10 years to 14, and makes it an offence to alter cartridge magazines. It was already illegal to possess cartridge magazines that exceed the lawful capacity, but the government is now making altering cartridge magazines a crime.

Second, as the Bloc Québécois critic for status of women, I am regularly asked about this type of bill. What is interesting in this case is that Bill C-21 incorporates the red- and yellow-flag system from the former Bill C-21. With the red-flag provisions, the Criminal Code will allow any individual to ask a judge to issue an order to immediately confiscate firearms belonging to a person who could be a danger to themselves or others, and even to confiscate weapons belonging to a person who might make them available to a person who poses a risk. The order would be valid for 30 days, and judges could take measures to protect the identity of the complainant.

• (1215)

The yellow-flag provisions would allow chief firearms officers to temporarily suspend a person's firearms licence if they have information that casts doubt on the person's eligibility for the licence. This suspension would prevent the person from acquiring new firearms, but it would not allow for the firearms they currently own to be seized. However, the person would not be allowed to use those firearms, for example at a firing range.

A new measure in this version of Bill C-21 is the immediate revocation of the firearms licence of any individual who becomes subject to a protection order or who has engaged in an act of domestic violence or stalking. This measure has been lauded by many anti-femicide groups, like PolyRemembers. There are several such groups, far too many, in fact.

This includes restraining orders and peace bonds, but also, and this is interesting, orders concerning domestic violence and stalking, including physical, emotional, financial, sexual and any other form of violence or stalking. A person who was subject to a protection order in the past would automatically be ineligible for a firearms licence.

However, there is another problem in relation to gun smuggling. The bill contains only a few measures and, I will say it again, it does not mention a buyback program for assault weapons or even the addition of a prohibited assault weapons category to the Criminal Code, two things that are absolutely necessary.

It is important to point out that 10- and 12-gauge hunting rifles are not affected by the ban. The gun lobby tried to sow doubt with a creative definition of a rifle's bore, which is now limited to under 20 millimetres. The bill therefore does not affect hunters. I know that many hunting groups are concerned about the new measures, but we need to reassure them that assault weapons are not designed for the type of hunting they do.

Getting back to assault weapons, the government as already planning to establish a buyback program through a bill in order to compensate owners of newly prohibited weapons, but it did not do so in the last legislature. If the government persists in classifying guns on a case-by-case basis, the number of models of assault weapons on

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the market will continue to rise. That is why the Bloc Québécois suggests adding a definition of "prohibited assault weapon" to the Criminal Code so that we can ban them all at once.

The Liberals keep repeating that they have banned assault weapons when there is nothing preventing an individual from buying an assault weapon right now or going on a killing spree if they already have one, since a number of models remain legal. Having already come out against this in Bill C- 5, the Liberals are also sending mixed messages in removing mandatory minimum sentences for certain gun crimes.

Third, I know that this bill will not stop all cases of femicide, but it is significant as part of a continuum of measures to address violence. There is still much work to be done, for example in areas such as electronic bracelets and health transfers, to provide support to groups that work with victims and survivors.

On Friday, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women tabled its report on intimate partner and family violence in Canada, and that is essentially the message I wanted to convey in my supplementary report. I hope it will be taken seriously. We will also need to work on changing mindsets that trivialize violence and try to counter hate speech, particularly online.

To talk a little bit about the bill, it relates to cases of violence, and we mentioned electronic monitoring devices. The bill would provide for two criminal offences that would qualify for electronic monitoring, including the authorized possession of a prohibited or restricted firearm or ammunition. That is a good thing. Something worthwhile came out of the work that we did at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

In closing, we are not the only ones who are saying that this bill does not go far enough or that it needs more work. The mayor of Montreal herself said that this bill does not go far enough. She said, and I quote:

This is an important and decisive measure that sends the message that we need to get the gun situation under control. The SPVM is making every effort to prevent gun crime in Montreal, but it is going to be very difficult for police forces across the country to do that as long as guns can continue circulating and can easily be obtained and resold.

There is still work to be done, and we must do it. We owe it to the victims. Enough with the partisanship. Let us work together constructively to move forward on this important issue. We cannot stand idly by while gunshots are being fired in our cities, on our streets and in front of schools and day cares. Let us take action to put an end to gun culture.

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• (1220)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the fact that the Bloc members are going to be voting in favour of the legislation, yet I am a bit surprised about the most recent vote. Surely to goodness they recognize that the Conservative Party of Canada does not support the legislation and that it is the Conservatives' intent to see the bill never go to committee, yet the Bloc seems quite content to allow the Conservative Party to filibuster it at second reading. I was surprised that the Bloc is not recognizing the value of having time allocations, given the track record of the Conservative Party.

To that end, my question to the member is this: To what degree does the Bloc party want to see this legislation ultimately passed? She made reference to the fact that it is an important issue, which we know it is. If it goes to committee, she indicated there could be some possible amendments. Would she like to see the legislation ultimately passed before the end of this year?

• (1225)

[Translation]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague from Winnipeg North for his question.

I believe I mentioned this in my speech, but we do want to work on the bill. We do want to study it in committee. That is not the issue. The previous vote was to condemn an affront to democracy.

Right now, the Liberals are constantly imposing closure. They are ultimately the only ones responsible for their legislative agenda, and they have done nothing. They are also responsible for the Conservatives' current filibustering. These two parties have led us to a dead end.

That is what we were condemning in the previous vote, not Bill C-21. Frankly, this government offends against democracy. It is acting like a majority government when it is in fact a minority government. That is the mandate it was given by voters. That offends me.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Shefford for her fantastic speech, as well as for her passion, especially on this issue that affects her profoundly and personally. Bravo.

Our constituents ask us about this issue. It comes up all the time in my riding, Drummond, because there are many airsoft fans there. They are concerned. They do not understand why these toy guns were not immediately excluded from the bill, since they only look like weapons and are essentially harmless.

The fact that we are unable to debate this bill for any length of time means that details like that may be ignored and overlooked. That troubles me. I would like to know what my colleague thinks.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Madam Speaker, we are also concerned, and that is why I said that the bill is incomplete. We need to review the matter of airsoft guns and rework the bill accordingly in committee.

This is obviously not the final bill. We hope to be able to make amendments and rework it constructively in committee, as I said before. We should not be accused of being obstructionist because of the previous vote. As I mentioned to my colleague from Winnipeg North, that is what some people are saying in light of the Conservatives' filibustering, but we do not want to be associated with that. We really want to move this bill forward by proposing constructive amendments.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, to follow up on the question that was just posed to the member, is it the position of the Bloc Party that there should be no restrictions on airsoft guns?

[Translation]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Madam Speaker, that is not what I said.

I am saying that there is work to be done. We must be able to identify these weapons and study the entire issue in committee. The member for Winnipeg North tends to put words in my mouth at times, as he does with many other members. That concerns me as well. When we talk about misinformation—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mend s): Order. The hon. member for Drummond.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, since we are on the topic, I will follow up to the question.

I am glad we discussed airsoft guns, even if the discussion was far too brief. Airsoft fans themselves have proposed some solutions for clearly identifying the guns so they could not be used to commit crimes.

There were proposals on the table long before Bill C-21 was introduced. That is what my colleague wishes we could have discussed. I simply wanted to add my two cents.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Madam Speaker, yes, this type of proposal was made. Groups that make proposals must be heard, just as the political parties seeking to improve bills in committee must be heard.

With a minority government, it is even more important to listen to what the other parties are saying and not act like a majority government. That is one example—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mend s): Order. Resuming debate.

The hon. member for Riviere-du-Nord.

Mr. Rh al Fortin (Riviere-du-Nord, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will try to live up to the compliments my colleague from Shefford just gave me. I think she does outstanding work on the status of women, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank her.

As we have said, Bill C-21 is a good bill. The Bloc Qu b cois plans to vote in favour. That said, it does need to be improved in committee.

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Let us talk about the pros. It puts a freeze on the acquisition of legal handguns. That is a good thing. As we know, right now, over one million such weapons are in circulation across Canada. Every year, over 55,000 of them are acquired legally, increasing the total number of handguns in circulation in Canada. We do not need one million handguns in Canada. We hope it will be possible to cap and significantly reduce the number of weapons in circulation, which do nobody any good and can be very harmful under certain circumstances, as we have seen in recent years.

To deal with that issue, the Bloc Québécois is proposing that the government bring in a voluntary buyback program. That was not included in Bill C-21, but we would have really liked to see that in the bill. The owners of these legally acquired weapons are not breaking any laws, but considering that these weapons are so harmful that we want to freeze their acquisition and restrict their circulation, let us go for it. This is a step in the right direction, as is often said, but let us go one step further and bring in a buyback program. It would be voluntary, not necessarily mandatory, at least not at this time. The government should be able to take these handguns off of people who want to hand them over, thereby reducing the number of such weapons in circulation.

Now let us talk about assault weapons. Gun manufacturers are finding ways around the regulations adopted over two years ago on May 1, 2020. Everyone knows this. Manufacturers just have to modify the models slightly so that they no longer match the prohibited models. The government has decided to draw up a list of banned assault weapons. Of course, like any list, it is not exhaustive, and there are ways to get around it.

An hon. member: Even the Liberalist?

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Madam Speaker, even the Liberalist can be circumvented, but that is another matter.

What we are saying is that we would resolve a big part of the problem that was mentioned regarding air gun users. We are proposing that the bill include a clear definition of what constitutes an assault weapon, rather than listing all the weapons that are banned. There are currently 1,800 weapons on that list. It is never-ending. Weapons would need to be added to the list annually or even monthly to cover everything that needs to be covered. We would not be able to keep up. Instead, we should establish a clear definition of what constitutes an assault weapon and then ban them all. A weapon that does not meet the established definition would be allowed. That would surely satisfy the many firearms users who are telling us that the gun they use is being banned when there is no reason for it because it is not a real assault weapon. If we clearly define what constitutes an assault weapon, we can avoid a lot of discussion and problems regarding air gun users.

What really takes the cake is hearing the Minister of Public Safety and the Minister of Justice tell us that the increase in maximum sentences set out in Bill C-21 will solve a lot of problems with crime, shootings and so on. We have been opposing Bill C-5 for months because the bill is unexpectedly and inopportunistically going to eliminate minimum sentences for gun-related crimes. We are saying that the minimum sentences for gun crimes must not be reduced. People want us to do something about the shootings. In the case of that bill, the minister told me not to worry about it because crimi-

nals do not care about the elimination of minimum sentences. That does not concern them. There is not one criminal who worries about what the minimum sentence is before they commit a crime.

● (1230)

Today, not even a week later, the Minister of Public Safety is boasting about how great the government is for taking action on shootings by increasing the maximum sentences. Something does not add up here. I do not get it.

About increasing the maximum sentences from 10 to 14 years, I think that someone committing a firearm offence cares more about not getting caught. Is the maximum 10 years or 12 years? I would be surprised if that person thought long and hard before committing the crime. Having said that, we obviously cannot be against this measure. I think it is a good measure, but it will have virtually no effect on the growing crime rate.

Then there are the yellow-flag and red-flag provisions. This is a good thing. For quite some time, many women's groups and victims' groups in the community have been saying that someone who becomes threatening or violent should have their licence and weapons taken away. The red-flag provisions would allow for the confiscation of a firearm from someone who is a danger to themselves or others. If someone is accused of domestic violence or stalking and a protective order is issued against them, their licence could be revoked or at least suspended.

The red-flag and yellow-flag provisions are a good thing, and the Bloc Québécois is happy to support them. We thank and commend the government for them.

As far as cartridge magazines are concerned, they are already limited to five bullets or a bit more depending on the type of gun. We were glad it was limited because no one who goes hunting needs a cartridge magazine with 20 bullets, unless they are a bad shot. If so, they would be better off staying at home. Limiting the capacity of cartridge magazines to five bullets was already a good thing. Bill C-21 also seeks to prohibit the alteration, import or resale of these cartridge magazines and make it a Criminal Code offence. These are good provisions that the Bloc Québécois supports.

Again, I want to reiterate what my colleague from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia and I have been saying for weeks in the House: There is a problem. Bill C-21 is a good bill, but 95% of the shootings happening right now every day in the streets of Montreal and elsewhere are committed with illegal handguns that were acquired on the black market.

That is what people want us to tackle. People talk very little about legal guns, if at all. They do talk about them, that is true, but those guns are not used to commit most crimes, although it does happen. Once again, the Bloc Québécois is in favour of Bill C-21, but what is the government doing about the illegal guns that are used to commit 95% of crimes?

Government Orders

The Bloc Québécois is very worried about that because our voters are worried about it. Perhaps Liberal voters are not worried about it, but I will let the Liberals discuss it with their voters. People are talking about it in our ridings. People call my riding office and ask me when will we solve the problem of people shooting at one another in the streets of Montreal like in a western. It is outrageous, and we must act. However, Bill C-21 does nothing about that.

Last week, Quebec announced \$6.2 million to tackle gun smuggling through Akwesasne. That is a good thing, and we were pleased. However, Quebec should not be paying for it, given that border control is a federal responsibility. It would seem that the Liberals are not interested in managing things that fall under their jurisdiction. It is disappointing and worrisome for the public, and for the Bloc Québécois.

As my colleague from Shefford stated, the Bloc Québécois will be voting in favour of Bill C-21. However, once again, we are very disappointed with this government's complacency on the issue of guns illegally crossing our border.

• (1235)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Drummond on a point of order.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, out of curiosity, I just want to make sure that we have quorum for today's debate.

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

And the count having been taken:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We do have quorum. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I suspect the member was curious about quorum because there were no Conservatives, but I will not say anything further on that.

To the member, I want to go back to air guns, which look like and appear to be real guns, although they are replicas. What is the Bloc's position on that? Does it believe air guns that replicate real guns are a danger to society?

• (1240)

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I know it is against the rules of this place to reference the presence or absence of members, and I would suggest that the statement made by the parliamentary secretary may have approached, and possibly even crossed, that line. I would encourage you to make a ruling on that matter.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member is quite correct, and I would like the hon. parliamentary secretary to take note.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would apologize for making note there were no Conservatives in the chamber.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary knows that we cannot say indirectly what we cannot say directly. I would like to insist on that.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, unreservedly, I apologize.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Madam Speaker, in response to my colleague's comment about air guns, I will say that the bill needs to explicitly define what an air gun is. I think that the assault weapons that this bill is meant to ban need to be better defined. Such a definition would necessarily exclude air guns, which are for recreational purposes. We could also define what kinds of air guns are acceptable, based on the air pressure in the cylinder, for example. There are a variety of criteria that could be used. I am not a firearms expert.

One thing is certain: What matters most is not the toy guns being used for play, but the real guns shooting real bullets in our streets. I would like people to stop avoiding the topic and stop talking about toys. We need to be talking about the real weapons that are being used to kill real people in our communities every single day.

[*English*]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I was glad to hear the member say that the Bloc is supporting the red flag laws, which would allow for the removal of firearms from homes, because we know that, in this country, there are about 10 intimate partner violence incidents a week involving firearms.

Would he agree with me that is one of the reasons for urgency in getting this bill through Parliament? Despite other concerns we have about the bill, I think it is very important that we do something to help remove firearms from homes with intimate partner violence.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Madam Speaker, I completely agree with my colleague. This needs to be done as soon as possible. It is past time. In my opinion, it should have been done long ago. I never understand why the government waits and stalls like this, but I agree that this should be done quickly. I thank my colleague for his question. I am not saying that we will support each and every clause in the bill. We will see as we go. However, we will do whatever it takes to ensure that it moves forward and to steer clear of unnecessary, counter-productive roadblocks.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Rivière-du-Nord for his speech. The group PolyRemembers has some concerns about Bill C-21, including the fact that it does not ban assault weapons outright.

How important does he think it is that this be added before the bill is passed?

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent question. We do think that assault weapons are a serious problem.

With all due respect to the government members, I feel like they are slow learners. Two years ago, they learned that they needed to ban assault weapons, but they did not know how, so they drew up a list of about 1,800 weapons, as I said earlier. That is a step in the right direction. I cannot say it is a misstep, but we would like them to learn a little faster.

We are suggesting that the government clearly describe what an assault weapon is, and then ban that. That would save us a lot of discussion and enable us to move faster and prevent gun manufacturers from skirting the rules by slightly tweaking the assault weapon models in circulation. There may be better solutions, and I invite my colleagues to propose some.

• (1245)

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his brilliant speech.

I would like him to explain why our Liberal colleagues do not support Bill C-279, which seeks to create a list of criminal organizations.

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Madam Speaker, that is another excellent question from an excellent colleague. I thank him for it.

The bill that I introduced, Bill C-279, says that we need to do something not only about guns but also about those who use them. It seeks to create a registry of criminal organizations, like the one we have for terrorist entities, in order to crack down on organized crime and eliminate it altogether.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Humber River—Black Creek.

If we go back to 2009 and compared it with today, what we will find is that there has been a substantial increase of 81% in violent offences involving guns in a relatively short period of time. We should all be concerned about that. This piece of legislation would continue to move us forward. It is an issue the government has been familiar with for a number of years. In fact, one only needs to take a look at the other pieces of legislation we have brought forward and our budgetary motions and measures to deal with the issue of gun violence.

Canadians as a whole are concerned. It has been estimated that getting close to 50% are concerned about gun violence and what impact it is having on our communities. As a government, not only have we taken a look at legislative measures, which we are talking about today in Bill C-21, but we have also taken other actions, actions that have led to restrictions on some types of assault weapons and actions such as supporting Canada's border control.

We often hear members of all political stripes talk about the smuggling of weapons into Canada from the United States. That is something we take very seriously, unlike Stephen Harper, who cut back on agents at our border.

An hon. member: Blame Harper.

Government Orders

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, yes, let us assert blame where it is to be asserted in this situation. We are a government that has supported our border agents, recognizing how important that is.

There is a different mentality in the United States versus Canada. Consider the number of mass shootings with more than one victim. They take place virtually every day in the United States. In fact, some of the numbers shared with me indicate that there are well over 200 cases of mass shootings in the United States already where there have been two or more victims. It is a totally different mentality.

One thing that makes us feel good about being here in Canada is that we understand and appreciate the importance of having safe communities and the role, which we see day in and day out in the United States, that weapons have in our communities.

We are talking about issues such as gang activities, and literally tens of millions of dollars, going into over \$200 million, have been invested through budgetary measures to deal with gangs. This is not to mention the other additional resources that the government, through infrastructure projects and through working with different levels of government, has been able to put into place, with programs aimed at reducing crime in our communities, especially with an emphasis on gun-related crimes.

Bill C-21, I believe, is legislation that has a wide level of support from the public from coast to coast. We might hear a great deal about gun crimes in some of our major cities, but I do not believe it is just limited to our major cities.

That is one of the reasons that the approach the government is taking today in Bill C-21 is the right approach. We see that in the support the legislation is receiving. The New Democrats are supporting the legislation. I understand that the Green Party is supporting the legislation. The Bloc party is supporting the legislation too. However, it is no surprise that the Conservative Party is not supporting the legislation.

• (1250)

That is why I posed a question to my friends in the Bloc earlier today. Their first speaker talked about how important it is that we get this legislation passed. She has been waiting for it for a number of years already, yet as we have witnessed over the last number of months, the Conservative Party, the official opposition, has taken the approach that legislation is not to pass inside the House of Commons as much as possible, and it will put up barriers to prevent that from taking place.

At times, the Bloc members have already recognized this, because there have been times when they supported time allocation. However, today, the Bloc party did not support the need for it, knowing full well, as members will find in the next number of hours of debate, that Conservative after Conservative will stand up in opposition to Bill C-21. As they have demonstrated on other pieces of legislation, the Conservatives will continue not only to put up speakers but to also move amendments.

An hon. member: That's our job.

Government Orders

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, as the member opposite says, that is their job as opposition. That is right. To a certain degree, though, there is also an obligation for members of the official opposition to actually work as parliamentarians and recognize that if they do not want time allocation on all things, they have to at least recognize that eventually legislation has to pass and go to the next stage.

A member from the Green Party posed a question earlier today. If there were a higher sense of co-operation in recognizing that members cannot indefinitely hold up legislation—

An hon. member: Yes, they can.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, no, members cannot, because if they do that for every piece of legislation, including budgetary measures, the government will not be able to do anything. As we have recognized in the last mandate given to us, we have to work with opposition members to do the things we want to do, as we are doing.

Fortunately, there is at least one opposition party that has recognized the value of co-operation, contributing to the debate and trying to effect change. That is in fact what Bill C-21 would do. It would provide a safer community for all of us. We talk about the issue of yellow flag and red flag laws through this legislation. Once passed, this will have an immediate impact. It is an aspect of the legislation that many advocates and different stakeholders recognize the value of.

Having a freeze on the sale, purchase and transfer of handguns has been called for for a while now. It has taken the government, through consultations, a great deal of effort to make sure that we get the legislation right. It is not about killing the air gun industry. It is recognizing that air guns that replicate real guns do have an impact. A law enforcement officer in an awkward or difficult position has no way of telling what is real and what is not because of the resemblance.

This legislation has been well thought out. There has been a great deal of consultation, and I believe this is reflected by the type of support, minus the Conservative Party, that the legislation is seeing. I would like to think that passing it to committee would enable Canadians to contribute more directly and listen to what the experts say, because I am sure it will be back come fall time for an additional lengthy debate.

• (1255)

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

What we just saw was what I would call feigned magnanimity. Quite candidly, this is the most divisive government I have ever seen, and we have the hon. member here waxing eloquently and even pontificating. Seeing as the Pope is coming to Canada, let us call it that. He is pontificating about the need to co-operate in this place, saying everybody should co-operate. There is such a disconnect between his government's words and his government's actions.

He said there has been an 81% in increase in crimes involving guns and said, "It is an issue the government has been familiar with

for a number of years." The government has been in power since 2015, when the Nur decision, which struck down the mandatory minimums in section 95, was decided, yet we have all of this rhetoric.

When will the government start cracking down on illegal guns, and why is that not in Bill C-21?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the government, virtually from day one, has been taking budgetary and legislative actions to make our communities safer, and we will continue to do so. Bill C-21 is yet another legislative measure that would have a profoundly positive impact, and I can cite it specifically. From the selling and purchasing of handguns to the idea of the yellow flag and red flag laws, these are issues that will provide a higher sense of security in our communities. The Conservatives will have to justify to these communities why they oppose that.

In terms of their overall behaviour with regard to all legislation, even legislation they support, they will go out of their way to filibuster in order to fill time and force the government to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to speak to the democrat and parliamentarian in my colleague and ask him whether he is not a bit embarrassed about the sad spectacle Canadians have been seeing in the House over the past several months. I am talking about the constant stream of closure motions on essential bills that will change Canadians' lives.

Since he has served in the House in previous Parliaments and has even served in provincial legislatures, is my colleague not a little upset about the absolutely degrading spectacle we have been seeing here in recent months?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, when Stephen Harper was the Prime Minister, I sat almost exactly where the member opposite is sitting in the third party, and even in the third party, I made it very clear that at times there is a need to bring in time allocation. When we do not have any sense of co-operation coming from opposition parties, we have to bring in time allocation as a tool. It is unfortunate.

Government Orders

It would be wonderful if there was more of a consensus on the programming that takes place so that it allows for legislation or opposition days. We see that today on private members' bills, we see that today on opposition day motions and we see that through emergency debates. There are limitations. It means that for the bills that are really controversial, we can maybe have more debate time, and for the bills that are not as controversial that everyone supports, maybe we do not need as much debate time. We need to recognize that there is only so much time in a day, in a week and in a year, and that is something the Conservatives fail to recognize.

• (1300)

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, during the 2019 election, the member's party promised to make sure that the CBSA had the resources it needed to detect and stop the flow of weapons at our borders.

Why has the Liberal government not restored the more than 1,000 positions cut by previous Conservative governments, which are required to stop the flow of weapons at the Canada-U.S. border?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, we realized that the Stephen Harper government did in fact make serious cuts, and as a result, it weakened our borders. We have invested heavily in borders virtually from the very beginning, recognizing that illegal weapons are a very serious issue. We will continue to look at ways to minimize illegal weapons coming into Canada.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very proud to rise in this House today, especially following my illustrious colleague, who never seems to run out of words and manages to fill the time slot all the time.

I represent a riding that, like many others in a large urban centre like Toronto, has a tendency to have a lot of violence, and the majority of that violence is gun violence, so I am very pleased that Bill C-21 is on the table.

The part that bothers me about Bill C-21 is the fact that we will not get it to committee and back before the House rises. I, and some of my colleagues, would have been more than happy to remain until the middle of July or the end of July to pass this bill, but it takes consent to do that, which was not available. We will get the bill as far as we can in this session, and as soon as we come back in the fall, I hope this will be the first item the committee deals with, understanding its importance. I wonder how many more lives could have been saved had we been able to get the bill through, but there are a lot of things that governments do, and there is a lot of legislation that is important. I am glad that we finally got as far as we have. Let us hit the ball home and get this through committee and back to the House.

We have a very close relationship with our neighbours to the south. Clearly, whenever we see what is going on there, we know it is going to happen here. It is just the way it is. We are a smaller country, and these things tend to be exposed later, but we follow the U.S. in so many ways.

I think I speak for all of us as parliamentarians when I say that we are sick and tired of turning on the news and feeling heartbroken at yet another act of gun violence. The common response from

all of us as elected officials is to send our thoughts and prayers. However, as time goes on and these instances of violence continue to occur, the overwhelming response is that thoughts and prayers accomplish nothing and that we need action. I have been hearing this in my community for the 30 years that I have been elected to office, and several members of my own family have been victims of gun violence. We have been waiting and pushing and asking when we are going to get tougher on illegal handguns.

This is certainly not about hunters, God bless them, who can go right ahead and do their hunting. I have family who hunt deer, moose and all of that, as well. That is not what we are talking about with this bill. We are talking about gun violence, handguns. That is what is doing the killing in my riding and throughout the city of Toronto.

Last Sunday afternoon, there were four separate incidents of gun violence. Thank God, none of it was in my riding, which is always my first thought, selfish as it is. It was in other parts of our city, but there is a lot of it. This bill is just one more tool that we have in the tool box. It will not do everything we want it to do, but at least it tries to address the number of guns that are flowing. There was a shooting yesterday from a car window, which missed the person evidently, but again, this is becoming just like in the U.S. Whatever we can do as parliamentarians here, and whatever our government has the courage to move forward on to try to tackle this issue, is what we are elected to do. We are elected to deal with the tough issues, and this is one of them.

I am very proud of the government, and while some may have wanted this legislation later, I would have liked to see it sooner. I am tired of responding with thoughts and prayers, of saying "I feel sorry for you." I am sorry for the families who have gone through this and yes, I will do what I can, but we do not do enough. Frankly, I do not know what is enough, but this is at least another step forward, which is why I wanted to make sure I had an opportunity to say some words today.

Since 2015, when our Liberal government came in, we have banned AR-15s and 1,500 models of assault-style firearms. These kinds of weapons do not belong in the homes or on the streets of this country, or any country, unless they are in a war, as in Russia or in Ukraine, but there is no reason for them to be needed on the streets of this country of ours.

Government Orders

• (1305)

Cracking down on illegal trafficking by investing in law enforcement and enhanced border security is another key part of it, because it seems that no matter how much more security we get at the borders, somehow the guns are getting smuggled in. They are coming from somewhere. We are not manufacturing all of these handguns here, so they are coming across borders and we are not doing enough to prevent that from happening. I know we have put millions more into CBSA, and here and there, but it never seems to be enough. This is, again, one more step to try to decrease the number of guns on our streets.

The other issue is, why do we have so much gang violence? In my riding, as in others, I deal with a lot of families that have had tremendous trouble, and we need to look at the root cause of why they would pick up a gun and decide to take somebody else's life. In a round-table session I had a few years ago with young men and women, I questioned them and said, "You know who these people are on the street. Why would you not discourage them from using a gun?" They said, "Why? You don't value my life, so I don't value your life." I never forgot that statement, because I do value their life, but they do not seem to think that we as a society value their lives. That is important because people need to understand that every life is valuable. Every life matters to all of us, but to think "I don't care about you because you don't care about me" leaves a real challenge.

Since I had that conversation, I have gone out of my way, to the extent possible, as an elected official to make sure that the people in my riding and everywhere else know that we do care and we are trying to help them, but they have to help themselves. This is not a one-way street, where we are out doing everything for them and they are waiting to see what we are going to give them. It takes all of us working together. If people are having issues, they should talk to somebody, reach out and get the help they need, just not think that their life does not matter.

The ability to trace guns is another issue we have talked about for some time, looking at how to better identify where those guns have come from. The red flag laws are another important thing that should have been on the books a long time ago. It is really important.

I have to thank my staff for putting a speech together that somehow I never got to.

I am proud that the government is doing this. We all need to work harder at decreasing gun violence in a variety of ways. This is one more tool in the tool box, and we owe it to the people who have sent us here to reflect their views and thoughts and do what is necessary to decrease gun violence. I hope we get this to committee soon, make some changes and improvements to it and move forward together on this legislation.

• (1310)

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member talked about military-style assault rifles. Could she provide me with the definition of what a military-style assault rifle is? She mentioned the AR-15s, which were banned by the order in council of May 1, 2020. Could the member please let

the House know how many crimes have been committed in the history of Canada with AR-15s?

The member talked about reducing gun violence. We have 100% agreement in the House that we all want to reduce gun violence. Could she tell me about the metrics within Bill C-21, specifically around handguns, that are going to do that, considering that all restricted firearms and handguns are registered so that the police are able to track exactly how many crimes have been committed? How many crimes have been committed with legal handguns?

Finally, the member talked about red flag laws. Would she admit that we currently have red flag laws in our legislation that help prevent this?

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Madam Speaker, unfortunately, whatever happens to the south of us ends up being duplicated here in Canada, whether it is a month later, six months later or two years later. When we look at the killings and those mass shootings in the schools, when there are 19 babies killed, those were not done with a handgun. We have already banned some of those, but the handguns we are talking about are the illegal handguns.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member spoke about people needing to take responsibility when referring to gang violence, about people helping themselves and about people caring.

I want to point to something very specific, indigenous women. Thousands have gone missing and been murdered. They are 12 times more likely to experience violence. We know all the stats. They are 4.5 times more likely to go missing or be murdered. This is not a feeling. This is an actual genocide that is occurring in this country. I found it a little out of touch and was a little put off by this kind of history, which the member acknowledged, of incremental justice, particularly when we are talking about femicide, which is most often experienced by indigenous women.

Why does the hon. member continue to have those views, knowing that her government has performed incremental justice that has cost the lives of indigenous women? I found it a bit callous and insensitive, and certainly not consistent with research and facts, and actually with positions that her own government—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give the hon. member the opportunity to answer.

The hon. member for Humber River—Black Creek.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Madam Speaker, I want to acknowledge the continued great work that the member is doing as a member of Parliament.

I was very focused on so many people in my particular riding who have been asking for such a long period of time for more to be done to eliminate handguns in our communities. If we did an analysis, we would probably find that one in four is carrying a gun in my riding of Humber River—Black Creek. That is very frightening. People are asking for action.

In the same way, we are moving forward and taking more action to protect more indigenous women, as well as all women in Canada. Indigenous women have certainly experienced a lot of sorrow and violence, and we are looking at trying to eliminate that as well.

• (1315)

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech and her testimony, knowing that members of her family have been affected by gun violence. The fact is that there are one million handguns circulating in Canada. That number increases by 55,000 every year.

What are my colleague's thoughts on the Bloc Québécois's proposal to create an optional handgun buyback program?

[English]

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Madam Speaker, when it gets referred to committee in the immediate future, there will be an opportunity at the committee level to discuss all the options on the table, including the issue of buyback.

Whatever we can do to get guns off the street is something I am very supportive of.

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am always grateful to stand up and represent my constituents of Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound. However, in this case, I am representing all legal firearms owners, our law enforcement, our military, our security forces around the country and even our Parliamentary Protective Service. I challenge every MP to talk to them and ask their opinions about this bill, as well as to get the opinions of sport shooters, hunters and the vast majority of my constituents in Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

I am disappointed that we are already curtailing debate on this important bill, especially considering that we have only had seven Conservative MPs speak to it, and that was only because we split our time.

On that note, I will be splitting my time with the member for Brandon—Souris.

I am going to focus on three key aspects in my speech. Number one is data and facts, number two is openness, transparency and honesty, and finally, number three is respect. The key to all of this, and the key to reducing gun violence in Canada, is education.

Let me speak first to the data and the facts. I asked the previous member speaking to define military-style assault rifles, which is a question I have been asking the government for almost three years now. The definition does not exist. I asked that question in a written submission to the government, and its response was to please check a commissioned report by Hill+Knowlton Strategies. If we read that report, do we know what it says? The government really needs to define what it means by assault rifles or military-style assault rifles. A definition still does not exist, and that adds to the confusion so many Canadians face when we are trying to deal with the important issue of reducing gun violence across Canada.

Government Orders

I am going to go back to the original, key piece of legislation in the past couple of years. It was from the last Parliament around the order in council that banned 1,500 so-called military-style assault rifles. In that document, there was actually no definition or criteria for what determines or establishes what is a military-style assault rifle. When I asked what criteria were used, I was told there were none.

The government used three principles. Number one is that the guns are semi-automatic in nature, with a high sustained rate of fire. That statement is a contradiction. If it is semi-automatic, the rate of fire is controlled by the shooter and not by the firearm, so whether someone has a slow finger or a fast finger determines whether a firearm should be prohibited or not. It does not even make logical sense.

The second principle the government used is that the firearms are of modern design. I asked what was meant by modern design. That means post-World War II. If the firearm was designed post the Second World War, we should be banning it.

Number three is that they exist in large quantities in Canada. Again, this does not pass the common sense test. Let us take firearm x as an example. There are 100,000 of them in Canada that have been used in zero gun crimes. Let us ban it. With firearm z, let us say there are only 10 of them in Canada and all 10 have been used in firearms crimes. It is good to go and will not be banned. Again, there is no logic behind the principles, and there are no criteria to determine that list.

I have been asking for evidence and data that support any of the firearms legislation the current Liberal government has brought forward. I submitted a written question to the government asking for any evidence or metrics behind how the government thinks any of this legislation is actually going to reduce gun violence. I received a response on January 29, 2020, that would only take me 30 seconds to read out. There is no evidence or metrics on how this is going to reduce gun violence in Canada.

The member for Winnipeg North stood and said that this has been broadly consulted on. It has not been consulted on in my riding. In the previous Parliament, the minister of public safety at the time came to my community and talked about Bill C-71 from the 42nd Parliament. I can guarantee he walked out of there and there was not a single person who talked to the minister during that consultation session who supported Bill C-71.

• (1320)

I will go back to my point around data. Where is the data that shows legal firearms owners are responsible for gun crime in Canada? I talked about education. I spent 25 years in uniform carrying all sorts of restricted and prohibited firearms, because I could as a member of the Canadian Armed Forces. I was an infantry officer. I walked around with a fully automatic firearm. That is what assault weapons are: fully automatic. They have been banned in Canada since 1977. During my last two deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq, I walked around everywhere with a handgun. Handguns do not kill people; people kill people.

Government Orders

To get to the point about education, despite all that, when I got out of uniform and became a civilian, I had to get a possession and acquisition licence and a restricted possession and acquisition licence, a PAL and an RPAL, in order to potentially buy a firearm or a restricted firearm. Those courses are extensive. Did I learn a lot about safety on those specific firearms? No. I was safe and had no problem passing the practical portions of both of those courses, but I did learn a lot about our laws. As I suggested in the last Parliament, it would benefit every member who wants to sit here and debate firearms legislation to do the PAL or the RPAL course because it would teach them a lot about our very restrictive firearms laws that currently exist in Canada.

To continue on education, when I was door knocking in 2019, I heard similar concerns that have been addressed by other members during the debate about why anybody would need that firearm. I was shown a picture from a Cabela's magazine or some other magazine that someone had received in the mail, and they asked me why anybody would need that. I looked at it and compared it with another firearm in the brochure. I pointed to the firearm that they thought was so scary and said I would walk 200 metres down the street and stand there. They could shoot at me all they wanted and I would not even move.

I asked if another firearm was okay, and they said yes. It was just a hunting rifle. I said that if I stood another few hundred metres away, as soon as someone started shooting at me with that firearm, I would take cover. Again, it is the lack of education in understanding firearms. Just because they look scary does not mean they are more dangerous. It is based on their capabilities and criteria.

I asked the minister, when he first introduced Bill C-21 in the House last week, about handguns in particular. As I mentioned earlier in my speech, handguns are restricted and they are registered. I asked a simple question about how easy it is for law enforcement to track how many gun crimes in Canada have been committed by legal firearms owners with legal handguns. He refused to answer that question. It was the same question I had asked his officials the week prior during the technical briefing. Again, I ask that they please get us the data. It would help so much.

I would point out that restricted firearms owners are the most law-abiding demographic in Canada. In fact, they are three times less likely to commit a crime than the average Canadian. I would argue, it is even less likely than that for the majority of the Liberal caucus.

Openness and transparency are key around all of this. Let us debate this. Everybody wants to reduce gun violence in Canada, but we need to do that based on data, based on evidence and based on statistics. Law enforcement demands this. One of the things that a lot of Canadians do not understand is that our law enforcement and security forces depend on these restricted firearms for their own safety and training. They do not get the time on the range to do this, so a lot of legal firearms owners are in law enforcement who own these firearms on their own. I get that Bill C-21, specifically on handguns, says that they would still be able to own them, but let us remove the politicization around this and talk about what is important to solve this.

My final point is on respect and trust. Let us respect parliamentarians in the House, let us respect legal firearms owners and, most of all, let us respect Canadians by talking about the real key facts.

In conclusion, there are data and facts, openness and transparency, and respect and trust. Let us educate Canadians on the root causes of gun violence in Canada, i.e., crime, drugs, the illegal trafficking of firearms and, most importantly, poverty instead of going after law-abiding Canadians.

● (1325)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to pick up on some of the closing comments from the member. He said that we should respect parliamentarians, respect the process and respect Parliament. We would not know that, coming from the way the member and his colleagues have been acting in the House over the past several months. They are refusing to let the bills they supported in their election platform go through the House.

The member talked about the limited amount of time people have had to speak to the bill. Has he had the opportunity to reflect on how much more time he would have had if the Conservatives had not been playing procedural games and delaying bills such as the fall economic statement to provide more supports to Canadians? Had they actually let that stuff go through as it should have, fairly easily, he would have had so much more time to speak to this and other bills that the Conservatives are genuinely passionate about.

Mr. Alex Ruff: Madam Speaker, I am not going to even provide a dignified response to that. The fact of the matter is that every member of Parliament should be able to speak to every bill at every stage, if it means something to their constituents. That is why we are here: to represent our constituents, whether we are Conservative members of Parliament or Liberal backbenchers. It would be nice if that member or the member for Winnipeg North would let somebody else in the Liberal caucus speak.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. What is the member implying when he says that I am not allowing other people to speak? Is he suggesting that I am suspending other people's democratic opportunities? He is implying that I am suppressing other people's ability to speak—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Indeed, we should not, in any way, make those kinds of accusations. I would invite the hon. member to perhaps reflect on his comments. We should not be assigning intentions to other members. I would really appreciate it if the hon. member would withdraw the comment.

Mr. Alex Ruff: Madam Speaker, I withdraw that comment.

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. He knows I love him. We were on a 12-day mission together not long ago and I had a great time. We had some great discussions, but we could not get away from debating guns. We disagree, and that is just the way it is.

I would like to know what he thinks about the Bloc Québécois's proposal to create a list of groups in our cities that stir up trouble with shootings all over the place. We would like to have a list of these groups, like the one we already have for terrorist organizations.

Mr. Alex Ruff: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I have a great deal of respect for him.

[English]

I have no issues with lists of criminal organizations right across this country. The challenge I have in my riding, as in a lot of rural ridings, is how we quantify that and get down to it, etc. I have no issues with criminal organizations being listed. I think that is important information that law enforcement should have if it can help, because I think it really gets to the root causes of gun violence in Canada: illegal crimes and gangs. Let us fix that.

- (1330)

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there is a lot in my colleague's speech I would disagree with. I spent a number of years chairing a public safety task force in the city of Calgary talking about guns, gangs and gun violence. Also, I was a member of the police commission in Calgary. My colleague talked about data and using data on gun crimes. In western Canada, in Calgary, it was identified that the majority of guns used in crimes were obtained through legal means: through legal purchases and ownership.

I would like to ask my colleague this. Knowing that data point, what can we do to make sure that those legally obtained guns are not used in a crime? Those were the majority of the guns in the data provided by the Calgary Police Service last year at the Calgary police commission. What can we do to prevent that from happening? What would he want to see in this or other bills to make sure that guns and gun owners' rights are—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give the hon. member the opportunity to answer. The hon. member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

Mr. Alex Ruff: Madam Speaker, as my first question, let us provide that data. I would love to see it. Please email me that data, because that data has not been tabled. I have been asking for the government to table any data around firearms crime that has been committed by legal firearms owners or by legal firearms, but the government has refused to table it and bring it forward.

I guess the best bet, going back to a previous speech and the amendment, which is what we are actually debating here, would be to refer this whole study to the committee of public safety and deal with it there. Then we can bring back legislation that actually makes sense and is informed, rather than being based just on political—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Brandon—Souris.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Madam Speaker, right off the bat, I want to point out that our Conservative team was willing to split this bill so that the House could swiftly pass the clauses on which we all agree. There are parts that we still need to debate, but we were prepared to make sure that the other elements could quickly proceed. We would have immediately sent on to the committee stage the elements of Bill C-21 that are focused on protecting potential victims of firearms crime and tightening up laws that address firearms smuggling. Those elements would have also included red flag provisions to allow law enforcement to remove firearms from dangerous domestic situations more quickly and to allow more severe penalties for criminals smuggling guns.

It was a reasonable proposal and it was disappointing that the government did not accept the offer. As with all firearms-related legislation, the government is far too comfortable with labelling those who disagree with it as firearms lobbyists. It is more than willing to disparage us and law-abiding firearms owners than to propose legislation that fixes the root issue of firearms violence. In the 2019 election, the Liberals tried to scare people into voting for them in our riding by sending out a brochure with firearms on it. It did not work, and they got 12% of the vote. The Liberals once again tried to scare people in the 2021 election, and the result was the same: 12% of the vote.

The good people of Westman are not buying what the Liberals are trying to sell. A couple of years ago, I took my RPAL, my restricted possession and acquisition licence, and went for training in the basement of the late Don Teale. Like hundreds if not thousands before me, I sat in his makeshift classroom in his home in Brandon with a dozen or so Westman residents who had signed up to take their firearms training. As I walked into the room, I could tell that a few of the other students were slightly perplexed about why I was taking the safety training with them.

Not long afterward, Don, who was a plain-spoken and straight-shooting veteran, told them how happy he was that a sitting member of Parliament was educating himself for the firearms act. Don was right. I was not in his basement because I wanted to purchase a firearm; I took the training to get a better idea of the rigorous process that Canadians must go through before they can get a firearms licence.

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As a lot of MPs might know, there was a movement a couple of years ago from law-abiding firearms owners urging legislators to get their PAL or their RPAL. They were tired of politicians getting up and speaking about the firearms act without ever reading or understanding it. They were upset that too many are quick to disparage firearms owners without understanding the law or the process.

There is no evidence to justify many changes found in the Liberals' firearms legislation. In fact, they are only further burdening law-abiding firearms owners, rather than actually going after the people who commit the crimes. I, for one, would prefer that our law enforcement agencies and our Government of Canada spend their time, energy and resources in cracking down on gangs and criminals.

Since the Liberals announced Bill C-21, I have received countless emails from law-abiding firearms owners who feel that once again the government is using them as a scapegoat instead of tackling the root of firearms violence in Canada. I have heard from retired law enforcement officers, veterans, competitive sport shooters and everyday Canadians who are tired of being blamed and shamed by the Liberal government. They are fed up with the Minister of Public Safety's gaslighting.

To give just one example, the minister said, "Bill C-21 doesn't target law-abiding gun owners, it targets handgun violence, it targets organized crime." Of course this bill targets law-abiding firearms owners. Suggesting it does not is an insult to the intelligence of those who have been following this debate. I am looking forward to watching the deputy minister appear at the public safety committee to inform the MPs that we have all just misunderstood the minister once again.

The reason firearms businesses have run out of stock is that as soon as this bill was announced, everyone with an RPAL went out to purchase a handgun before the freeze takes effect. Anyone who tries to phone the RCMP firearms centre right now will sit on hold for hours, as everyone is trying to purchase or transfer a firearm right now. How could the Minister of Public Safety go on national television and say something so erroneous? Does he actually believe what he is saying? He knows perfectly well that Bill C-21 is going to prevent Canada's RPAL holders from ever purchasing a handgun once this legislation passes.

• (1335)

The truth of the matter is that the Liberal government decided to target law-abiding firearms owners from the moment it came into office. The Liberals repealed various elements of the common sense firearms act that my colleague just talked about, Bill C-71. They deleted the sensible change of introducing an automatic authorization to transport firearms and they then removed any oversight of the classification of firearms.

Let us fast-forward to 2020, when the Liberals reclassified hundreds of firearms as "prohibited". With the stroke of a pen, they made millions of firearms illegal to use in Canada. Some of these firearms have been in people's possession for decades, and now the government is spending hundreds of millions of dollars to purchase them so they can be destroyed.

If those hundreds of millions of dollars were spent on policing, social programs or literally anything, there would be a much better chance of reducing crime. Once again the government has failed to make a serious case for one of its bills, and in doing so, it is unnecessarily going after millions of law-abiding firearms owners who have done everything by the book.

According to Brian Sauvé, president of the National Police Federation, "it is the experience of law enforcement that most of these guns are illegally obtained," and I would add, "from the United States".

As our Conservative shadow minister of public safety said in her speech, the committee recently studied guns and gangs and had a very robust debate. It had police and crime experts appear, and not one recommendation in its report was to ban handguns. That is because none of the experts, none of the police experts and none of the community anti-gang experts said that banning handguns would be a solution. All of them said that such an approach would not work.

In relation to some questions we just had, the committee heard from the Toronto police that over 85% of handguns used in violent crimes are smuggled in from the United States. From Quebec, Chief Inspector Benoit Dubé said that most firearms linked to crime seized in his province come from the United States. He said, "We need to focus our efforts on the borders between the United States and Canada." According to Chief Inspector David Bernard from the Montreal city police service, approximately 80% of illegal firearms seized in Quebec have been smuggled in from the United States.

To date, we have seen very little evidence from the government to suggest that law-abiding firearm owners are responsible for the rise in firearm homicides and shootings. What we do have is a gang and organized crime problem in Canada. On a weekly basis, we are hearing about deadly shootings happening across the country. All this violence has led to the tragic loss of too many, and it is having an impact on countless communities and neighbourhoods.

According to the latest Statistics Canada data, there were 8,344 victims of police-reported violent crime in which a handgun was present during the commission of an offence, which is a rate of 29 per 100,000 population. Since the Liberals were elected in 2015, gun crime has gone up steadily each year, and for residents in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg and other cities, gun violence is an everyday occurrence.

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I have always stood for common sense firearm safety and strong consequences for those who commit firearms offences. If the Liberals had proposed a bill that explicitly focused on guns, gangs and criminals, they would have found a much more receptive audience on this side of the House.

For years, we have been calling on the government to address gun smuggling and improve the ability of border agents to prevent the flow of illegal firearms into Canada. I cannot and will not support legislation that specifically targets law-abiding firearms owners and ignores the root problems of illegal firearms.

● (1340)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened to the intervention from the member and I could not help but reflect that he was here when the Conservatives were last in power. I realize that part of his argument, as it often is from the Conservatives on gun-related issues, is about cracking down on illegal guns that are coming across the border, but I cannot help but reflect on the previous government. He was part of that government, as he was a member of the Conservative Party when Stephen Harper was the prime minister, and that government actually significantly reduced funding that border services needed in order to crack down on this kind of stuff.

Can the member inform the House how he responded to that when Stephen Harper was the prime minister and he got to sit in a caucus meeting with him? Did he often and routinely raise the issue that the government of the day should not be removing money needed by border operations in order to crack down on this illegal activity?

Mr. Larry Maguire: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question, as ill-informed as it might be.

I just wanted to say, though, that for the last three elections, if he has been paying any attention at all, this side of the House has been calling for greater efforts to stop smuggling guns into Canada. All of the police chiefs and heads of police in the provinces that I just spoke of in my speech—and I know he was listening to it, because that was what he was referencing—show us that 80% to 85% of these crimes are caused by illegal guns that have been smuggled into the country, and that is where our focus should be. That is where the dollars can be spent the best to try to prevent the unconscionable street crime that we are seeing.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague from Brandon—Souris on his speech, and I have a message for him from the member for Jonquière, who wants to congratulate him on his hard work.

In Bill C-21, the government opted to include a list of prohibited assault weapons, specifying models. Our colleague from Rivière-du-Nord suggested a completely different approach, which is to precisely define what constitutes an assault weapon so that weapons can be prohibited if they meet the criteria in the definition, not just if they are a certain model. What does my colleague from Brandon—Souris think of that?

[*English*]

Mr. Larry Maguire: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Jonquière for his compliments on my abilities.

This is exactly the point that my colleague was just trying to make: The government has never come up with a definition of an assault rifle. My colleague, as we know, has gone to great lengths to try to find that in all of the debates and in all of the information that is available today. The government cannot even define it for us.

That is why this legislation is such a flawed piece of work. It needs to go to the public safety committee so that it can come back, as was indicated by the member and my colleague from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound here, with recommendations that will really help fix the problem, instead of blaming law-abiding firearms owners.

● (1345)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I always enjoy hearing the member for Brandon—Souris speak and I have enjoyed my conversations with him as we have travelled across the country back and forth.

He said that the Conservatives are anti-crime, and I believe that, but there is a question that perplexes me. He knows, as he has been in the House for a long time, that when the Harper government was in power, it destroyed, gutted, the crime prevention programs right across the country.

In British Columbia, we had a very active crime prevention sector. It was gutted and eliminated, and it does not make sense, because for every dollar we invest in crime prevention, we save \$6 in policing costs, in court costs and in jail costs. Putting in place effective crime prevention strategies and funding them adequately actually makes a great deal of sense.

Why did the Conservatives do that? Why did they gut crime prevention programs when we know they are very cost-effective and help to reduce crime?

Mr. Larry Maguire: Madam Speaker, I respect my colleague as well. We have had many of those good conversations.

I want to say that it is not the registration of a firearm but the licensing of it that will help prevent crimes. The only difference is that firearms should be licensed according to their function, not their form.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader is rising on a point of order.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

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

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(a) on the day the House begins debate on the second reading motion of Bill C-28, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (self-induced extreme intoxication), no later than the ordinary hour of daily adjournment or when no member rises to speak during the debate, whichever is earlier, the bill shall be deemed to have been read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole, deemed considered in Committee of the Whole, deemed reported without amendment, deemed concurred in at the report stage, and deemed read a third time and passed on division; and

(b) the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights be instructed to undertake a study on the subject matter of Bill C-28 when the business of the House resumes in September 2022, during the course of this study the Minister of Justice be invited to appear as a witness, and the committee report its findings to the House no later than Friday, December 16, 2022.

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

[*Translation*]

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

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-21, An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms), be read the second time and referred to a committee, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, today, I will be sharing my time with the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Before I start my speech, I want to acknowledge that today is June 21, National Indigenous Peoples Day. It is a day that I recognize with a lot of love because of my beautiful granny. She went to residential school in Lejac between the ages of four and 16, and her strength and integrity keep our family strong. I also want to acknowledge my Auntie Dean from Stellat'en First Nation. Her traditional name is Hatix-Ka'wah, which means peace within the frame of a house. Because of the day, I wanted to acknowledge her as the lead of our family before I started.

I am here specifically to speak to Bill C-21, an act to amend certain acts and to make certain consequential amendments in regard to firearms. I want to start by thanking the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford for his hard work on this file. It is not an easy one, and these discussions are always rife with conflict as we try to navigate our way around this issue. I will say that I am ready to support this bill getting to committee. I also recognize that I still have a lot of questions, and I am hoping the committee will be able to work through some of those questions to get me answers.

I represent a rural riding. I grew up in a household where several of my family members were legal gun owners. They followed the rules, and I was taught gun safety at a very young age as a matter of respect. I grew up eating wild meat, and hunting was a significant part of my family's life.

I have met with many legal gun owners in my riding who have talked about the frustration they feel about the rules always focusing on them, rather than addressing some of their legitimate concerns about illegal guns and how they get into our communities. That is an important part of our conversation today, and it should continue to be. Those conversations do concern me greatly. My riding also has a high level of people retiring from the military who maintain their skills as a commitment to their years of service. It is important for us all to recognize those who use firearms to protect and serve our communities.

I have also heard from constituents who are very, very concerned about gun violence in their communities and in our region. There have been, sadly, several examples in my riding over the past few years, which has resulted in my office receiving more concerns about gun safety than we have ever seen before. This is especially concerning when it comes to cases of domestic violence where guns are used. In 2020, 160 women and girls were killed in Canada. One woman or girl is killed every two and a half days in this country. Therefore, as Canadians are seeing an increase in gun violence across our country, I believe that all Canadians do want to see this addressed.

About three years ago, a constituent in my riding invited me to come to the shooting range with him. He wanted to showcase this for me, so I would understand the rules and how he followed them. I agreed so that I could learn more about the realities of these folks living in my region. Of course, he was also a retired service member for the military, and I always take an opportunity to spend time with people who served us, and who served us so well.

The first thing he told me was that I would have to come to his house and ride with him because he could not stop on the way through town to pick me up. The rules in Canada meant that he had to go straight from his home, not stopping for anything else, and go to the range. At his home, he was able to show me the way he stored his guns separate from ammunition, with everything locked away and secured. He also showed me how he transported the guns and how that was done safely.

I learned a lot, and I really appreciated his effort to take that time to educate me. He also shared that he was concerned about the gun violence in Canada and what that did for him as a legal gun owner and as somebody who was really practising safely. He knew of things that had happened across the country, and he knew that people were more fearful.

These are important conversations to have, especially at that community level where we can have those open conversations and discussions about how we can come together. My constituent did feel that the majority of gun owners followed the rules very carefully, but he was also concerned that there are legal gun owners who do not always follow the rules, and he wanted to make sure that those issues were addressed. Of course, he was also very concerned about the fact that we do have illegal guns in this country, and those folks can really make a bad name for people who are doing their best to be safe.

The facts are that, in Canada between 2019 and 2020, there were notable increases in rates of firearm-related violent crimes being reported, especially in places like southern rural British Columbia, which had an increase of 34%; the northern rural part of Ontario, which increased by 32%; rural Alberta, which increased by 32% in the north and 31% in the south; the Northwest Territories, which saw a 23% increase; and Nova Scotia, which increased by 22%. Handguns were the most serious weapon present in most firearm-related violent crimes.

• (1350)

Over my seven years here, I have heard two things repeatedly from constituents: one is that we need to look at gun policy in Canada, focussing on illegal guns and how they get to our country; and two is that we need more education in Canada about the strong rules that we do have and how they work. I believe these are important areas to discuss.

I have also heard a lot on this bill specifically about concerns from the airsoft community that Bill C-21 would prohibit imports, exports, sales and transfers of all replica firearms, which would include airsoft guns that are designed or intended to look exactly like or resemble a real firearm.

This does concern me, because there is the safety issue on the one side that we should consider carefully. We have heard stories of people using these to emulate real guns, and that is a safety concern for all people who are involved in that situation. We also hear the other side, and that it will impact paintball retailers and facilities, as most rely on income from both airsoft and paintball use.

I understand that in this country there are very few regulations, and I think it is something we need to look at. We have heard from this sector that they have not been meaningfully consulted. We want to make sure that when we further the discussions, we could address that.

I have learned that people have successfully altered airsoft weapons to hold real ammunition, and this really surprised me. I had no idea that that was even possible. Unfortunately it is, and it is a growing concern. We need to work with this sector to make sure that we look at the realities they are facing, and make sure the solution is workable, so they can continue their practice and not have a huge impact on their income. However, we also need to make sure the safety of Canadians is addressed.

Illegal guns are a huge concern for my constituents, as I mentioned earlier. This bill does not offer what I would like to see on measures for gun smuggling. I represent 19 Wing Comox. Its crews do tremendous work on our coastline to keep our community safe. They have found people trying to ship things illegally across our borders, whether it be guns or drugs, and they have stopped that. I really appreciate their work, but I am concerned there is not going to be the amount of support needed to continue that work and to expand that work.

We know that this bill would increase the maximum penalty for trafficking, smuggling and other firearms offences from 10 years to 14 years. It would require the commissioner of firearms to give the minister an annual report. It would allow proactive information sharing between the RCMP and local law enforcement agencies for

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the purpose of investigating or prosecuting firearm trafficking offences, and it would also provide eligibility for wiretapping on additional Criminal Code firearms offences.

What it does not include in a meaningful way is more support for the Canada Border Services Agency. We know that under the previous Conservative government, over 1,000 positions were cut. Under the Liberal government, some of those folks are back, but definitely not the number that is required to actually address the guns that are being smuggled into our country illegally.

We also know, as our leader wrote to the Prime Minister in 2018, that we need to see more changes within our policies in this country to support the root causes of gun violence in some of the more vulnerable communities. We need to address things such as poverty. I was at an event just a few days ago in my community, and I was very surprised by how many people talked to me about the increasing homeless population. They spoke of how more and more people are really struggling to make ends meet and how often they are going towards violence because they cannot feed themselves. They are not safe in their own area.

We need to make sure there are supports provided to our communities to address these key issues because the more poverty grows, and the more people are disenfranchised, the more violence is the result. We need to look at these things as correlating numbers.

I am here to discuss this. I hope that all of us in the House can have a meaningful conversation, because these things are important to our communities, and if we do not address them in an open and transparent way, it will lead to more conflict.

• (1355)

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was particularly interested in my colleague's comments on airsoft guns and the impact on that industry. It is an issue in my riding. I believe this is absolutely a good bill, but with airsoft guns, quite frankly, it overreaches. The problem is this: An airsoft gun that is a replica of a gun that is not banned would be banned, so we would be banning toys.

Does my hon. colleague have any concerns about that? Does she feel this is something that could be addressed through amendments at committee?

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Madam Speaker, I have spent a lot of time with the member in committee, and I always appreciate his feedback and his thoughts. In this case, I completely agree with him. These are very important questions because we know there are a lot of industries that use airsoft, and it is a toy. It is something people play with, but if it is used in the wrong hands, either changed so it can actually shoot or used to replicate something else, that is concerning.

Statements by Members

We have to look to our committee to do the work to make sure we offer a workable solution, so we would not only be protecting the industry but also making sure we are keeping our communities safe at the same time. That is why it is so important that we come together on the bill and have meaningful dialogue. It is because these are life-and-death situations, in some cases, both in terms of economics and in terms of safety.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[*English*]

ITALIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, during the beautiful month of June, there is a lot to celebrate. The sun is shining, the ice cream trucks are back and there are numerous cultural heritage months to acknowledge, but in my riding of Richmond Hill there is one occasion we are especially excited to celebrate.

June marks Italian Heritage Month, a time to commemorate all of the contributions of our neighbours, friends and fellow community members of Italian descent. I am proud to represent a riding that is made more vibrant and inclusive thanks to community-led organizations such as the Golden Age Italian Social Club, the Richmond Hill Social & Bocce Club, and the Richmond Hill Italian Community Club, all of which work to connect and engage seniors.

To all Italian Canadians in my community and across Canada, I wish them a happy Italian Heritage Month, and if this happens to be the last time I speak in the House before the session ends, to all my constituents in Richmond Hill, I wish them a most pleasant and healthy summer.

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UKRAINE

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC): Madam Speaker, for the last two months, several members' offices, including mine, have had the opportunity to have Ukrainian interns working with us as part of the Canada-Ukraine parliamentary internship program. During this time, we have had the chance to gain insights as to what is happening on the ground and in the everyday lives of the Ukrainian people. I am proud to say that Canada stands with Ukraine, and it is vital that we continue to provide our support through our welcoming of refugees and our military aid to those in Ukraine.

Every day, we learn about atrocities being committed in Ukraine. The brave young women and men of Ukraine, including those who have been with us on the Hill, need the continued support of Canada so they may be the leaders, doctors, lawyers, professors and artists of Ukraine's future.

Victory for Ukraine is victory for democracy. I urge all Canadians to continue to stand with the Ukrainian people, and I would like to commend the brave young women of the internship, who have been tremendous advocates for their country. I wish them my continued support as many of them head back to Ukraine at the end of this month.

Slava Ukraini.

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CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, each year businesses and not-for-profits in my riding of Oakville North—Burlington look forward to participating in the Canada summer jobs program.

This program provides them the opportunity to create employment opportunities for young people 15 to 30 years of age. Since I was elected, I have worked hard to grow this program in our riding. This year, 71 businesses and not-for-profits in my riding are creating over 400 jobs for youth in our community in a variety of fields, ranging from sports and recreation to computer sciences and more. These positions will provide not only meaningful work experience for young adults, but also a much-needed boost for small businesses and not-for-profits still recovering from the effects of the pandemic.

I look forward to spending time in my riding this summer visiting some of these organizations, meeting with the youth and employers, and learning more about the impact being made in our community.

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[*Translation*]

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise on this 21st day of June to honour National Indigenous Peoples Day.

May this, the brightest day of the year, serve as an opportunity to showcase the full spectrum and richness of indigenous language and culture. On this special day, let us become better acquainted with and learn about the diversity and wealth that offer so many pathways to a greater understanding of each other through theatre, knowledge, music, craft, literature, tradition and visual art.

May this day to celebrate the robust identities of indigenous peoples foster respect, dialogue and equality among nations. Today, Quebec as a whole salutes indigenous peoples' heritage and contributions going back thousands of years. They have left their mark on our land and on our existence through the centuries and do so to this day.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I want to thank my brothers and sisters of the Abenaki, Algonquin, Atikamekw, Cree, Maliseet, Mi'kmaq, Huron-Wendat, Mohawk, Inuit and, of course, Innu and Naskapi nations for glowing so brightly and generously sharing their light with us.

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[*English*]

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES IN ORLÉANS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this week marks the beginning of graduation for our grade 12 students, and I want to take a moment to congratulate the 1,745 graduates from Orléans's 10 high schools.

Statements by Members

• (1405)

[Translation]

This year, I am pleased to be attending several grade 12 graduation ceremonies in Orléans. It will be an opportunity to once again celebrate the students' accomplishments with their friends and family.

[English]

I cannot express enough how, in the past two years, I have witnessed their strength, resilience and community spirit.

[Translation]

It is always a great honour for me to personally sign the diplomas of each of our graduates every year and to wish them well in the future. They have accomplished so much and are now starting a new chapter in their lives.

[English]

No matter what path they decide to take, now that they have completed high school, I know they have enough tools and supports to achieve anything they put their minds to.

[Translation]

Congratulations to all graduates of 2022.

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*[English]***WESTMAN FARMERS**

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Westman's farmers and ranchers. Despite the challenges Mother Nature has thrown at them, they press on each day. A Colorado low hit in late spring that hurt the livestock producers as calves were being born. A constant barrage of rain delayed seeding and turned fields into mud. A late frost bit canola and other crops just as they were peeking out of the ground, and now flea beetles are running amok. Somehow, our farmers pushed through. They persevered. They are out there as we speak, producing the food on which the world relies.

As the illegal Russian invasion of Ukraine continues, many are worried about the price and quantity of food in the year to come. Our farmers can help. Now more than ever, we need them to succeed.

I salute all those men and women working around the clock doing what they do best: growing and raising the food we eat every single day.

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NATIONAL SICKLE CELL AWARENESS DAY

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Madam Speaker, over the weekend we celebrated National Sickle Cell Awareness Day in Canada, and today I am rising in honour of those affected by sickle cell disease and to honour the incredible organizations and volunteers who work so hard to support people living with it.

When I first joined Senator Jane Cordy and sponsored Bill S-211, the National Sickle Cell Awareness Day Act, I had the honour of really getting to know the incredible advocacy organizations across Canada. Groups like the Sickle Cell Disease Association of Atlantic Canada, the Sickle Cell Association of Ontario and the Sickle Cell Disease Association of Canada were doing everything they could to raise awareness. They knew that with greater awareness come more support, more research, better treatments and possible cures for this disease.

I am so thankful for the privilege to work with the sickle cell community, and I ask everyone in this House to please rise and join me in honouring those who live with sickle cell disease and the incredible organizations across Canada that support them.

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NETIVOT HATORAH GRADUATES

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (York Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the last two years have been hard for many Canadians. As a mother, like many parents, I have had concerns about how my two daughters, among millions of kids across this country, have navigated their studies, their social connections and their emotional well-being. Our educators in schools large and small, from day care through high school, have nurtured and cared for our children, making sure they received not only the educational tools and resources they needed, but emotional and resilient support while navigating the challenges they faced.

This June has brought with it graduations from coast to coast to coast for students and the resumption of grad trips, which are part of the milestones of exploring our wonderful country.

Today, I and colleagues from across this House welcomed Netivot HaTorah middle school graduates to West Block to see and learn how their House and the democratic institutions we cherish work, and that the diversity of this place reflects our Canada.

As a mother, it is not every day that I get to welcome my kid into this place. I congratulate the graduates, including my daughter, Eden. Their future is bright and we are proud of all they have accomplished and all they will do in their future.

Yasher koach.

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EDWARD ALVIN ODISHAW

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Madam Speaker, on June 3, Conservatives lost a truly remarkable and long-time activist, Ed Odishaw, at age 86.

Statements by Members

Edward Alvin Odishaw was born and raised in North Battleford, earning his law degree from the University of Saskatchewan. In 1973, he moved to Vancouver, where he practised corporate law with Swinton & Company and then Boughton Law.

As a friend of my older brother, Greg Findlay, I first met Ed when I was a teenager.

From the age of 26, he spent five years as executive assistant to Premier Ross Thatcher. Later, his love of politics flourished within the Conservative Party. He first served the leader of the official opposition, John Reynolds, and then proudly worked with Prime Minister Harper. He mentored me and so many.

Ed was eloquent, genuine and true to his word. Ed loved Canada and lived his life with integrity and dignity. He leaves behind an enormous legacy of friendships, and his loving wife of 40 years. I offer my condolences to Theresa and extended family. Devoted husband, wise colleague, trusted friend and a true patriot, Ed was one of the good guys.

* * *

● (1410)

RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the career of Deb Harvey, the executive director of the Grand Theatre in London. She is retiring after 23 years, coming from Nova Scotia on a six-month contract when the theatre was at serious risk of closing due to significant debt.

Since taking the helm, Deb has led the theatre to two decades of surplus, only having a small bump in the road due to COVID-19. Deb is deeply respected in our community. She has been unwavering in her desire to ensure the Grand is a teaching theatre, one that mentors students and apprentices. Deb was instrumental in leading the \$9-million Reno2020 project as well, ensuring a safe, new, welcoming space for artists, patrons, staff and volunteers. Undoubtedly, Deb's departure marks a significant loss for the arts community in London and leaves very big shoes to fill.

I congratulate Deb on a truly successful career. It has been a pleasure to work with her, and our community owes her an enormous debt of gratitude. We wish her nothing but the best in her retirement.

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MONEY LAUNDERING

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is a money-laundering paradise. The Cullen commission, a British Columbia inquiry into money laundering, just released its final report. It details significant gaps and concerns with our money-laundering laws and regimes in Canada. Canadians have heard stories of hockey bags full of \$20 bills going into casinos to come out laundered. The Cullen commission even questions whether B.C. should start its own reporting regime and have its own commissioner of money laundering.

Global criminals are flocking to our shores, using our country and institutions to finance drugs, human trafficking and other

crime. This activity also increases the demand for housing, pushing up real estate prices for Canadians across Canada. The government must step up and take responsibility. We now have facts that can no longer be ignored. Anything else would mean being willfully blind.

Of course, the beneficial registry in my private member's bill is a small step, but there is much more to be done. That is why I am calling on the government to launch a national commission and inquiry into money laundering across Canada and give Parliament tangible calls to action to stop this activity and say no to global criminals.

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THORNHILL ATHLETE

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not another Raptors NBA championship, but it is worth celebrating. Last week, Andrew Wiggins was instrumental in the Golden State Warriors winning their fourth NBA championship in eight years.

He is a Thornhill boy and that is why it matters. He went to Glen Shields Public School and then Vaughan Secondary School, where he became the world's top-ranking high school ball player. From there, Andrew pursued a college career in the United States, where he flourished too. After just one year, he was drafted first overall in 2014.

In the final game of the championships, Andrew lit it up, scoring 18 points with six rebounds, five assists, four steals and three blocks. Andrew Wiggins is a great example of all the talent in my community and what we have to offer Canada and the world. Buckle up, Canada, because Wiggins is just getting started. When people watch Wiggins fly, they should just remember that it all started in Thornhill.

I say, "Bring the trophy home, Andrew."

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[Translation]

CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a hundred or so businesses, organizations and municipalities in the riding of Châteauguay—Lacolle will benefit from the Canada summer jobs program again this year.

I am happy for the opportunity being given to some 400 young people in the region to acquire work experience, often related to their field of study, through the Canada summer jobs program.

Oral Questions

Our government is committed to not just celebrating National Indigenous Peoples Day, but continuing to co-develop legislation that will improve the quality of life for indigenous people across Canada.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*English*]

SPORT

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we learned that government officials were made aware four years ago of reports of sexual assault by players at Hockey Canada. They did nothing and no one was held accountable. The only thing the Liberals did was give Hockey Canada another \$14 million.

For a Prime Minister who claims to be a feminist, there seems to be a pattern of covering up and rewarding bad behaviour. It seems women really do not matter to the Prime Minister. How could he have let this happen?

• (1420)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a government, we have continually stood up to push back against sexual misconduct and harassment in organizations and workplaces across the country, and Hockey Canada is no different. Organizations and people in leadership positions must do their utmost to take decisions to end this culture and the trivialization of sexual violence in sport. It is why we commissioned the financial audit to shed light on the use of public funds. We want to get to the bottom of this, and all options are being considered to determine the next steps. This behaviour is unacceptable.

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COVID-19 RESPONSE MEASURES

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a repeat pattern and the Liberals are either complicit or incompetent. Either way, women are being harmed.

Now the NDP-Liberals are going to force a continuation of hybrid Parliament for another year. The Prime Minister and his Liberal ministers can travel around the world and the NDP can go on junkets, but they do not want to show up here to work. They want to collect a full-time paycheque while doing part-time work.

It is true the Prime Minister does not want to be here because he is afraid of accountability, but the New Democrats do not want to be here because they are afraid of hard work. Is that not the truth?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that this pandemic has created hardships in workplaces around the country, but indeed people adapted. That was one of the innovations we brought in with a hybrid Parliament. IT allowed people suffering from COVID, while public health measures kept us safe, to be able to work.

I know there are many more people who continue to benefit from being able to do work remotely. We need to understand that this is a workplace, like others, and ensuring that there is an ability to do

this work in responsible ways, while adjusting to the realities of the future, is something we will continue to do.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, gas station attendants, factory workers, nurses, janitors and farmers all show up for work, but the New Democrats, with the help of the Liberals, want to work from the comfort of their homes. How entitled are they? The New Democrats should be ashamed of themselves for propping up the Liberals and even more ashamed of themselves for not wanting to come to Ottawa to do their job.

Will the Prime Minister do the right thing and put an end to the hybrid Parliament so that we can all be here in Ottawa doing our jobs for Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, how we work in Parliament is determined by parliamentarians working together to determine the Standing Orders and how best to represent constituents and to be there for Canadians to debate, talk about and pass important legislation. We have seen the Conservatives consistently use obstructionist tactics to try to slow down gun control measures, to slow down child care and to slow down supports for Canadians in every possible way they can.

We will continue to do our work, to be accountable and to engage with Canadians in every way possible.

The Speaker: Before we go to the next question, I just want to remind everyone that we want to hear the questions and the answers. I want to make sure that everybody calms down. I know everybody is excited because next week we will be in our ridings and we are looking forward to being with constituents. However, right now we are representing them here in the House and we want them to be proud of us.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

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PASSPORTS

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only one here making it harder for Canadians to travel is the Prime Minister himself. The only thing preventing Canadians from having access to a document as important as the passport is the Prime Minister's incompetence.

The passport situation is a national crisis. According to columnist Mario Dumont, who spent the night at the Guy-Favreau complex to get a passport for his daughter, people in line are being treated like cattle. That is not true. Cattle farmers never leave their animals without water. There is a big difference.

How can the Prime Minister be so bad at delivering services from his government?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that this is a difficult, stressful and completely unacceptable situation. Canadians have started travelling again and we are seeing an increase in the number of passport applications.

We have created new centres to increase processing capacity. We have hired 600 new employees and will be hiring 600 more. We created a new online appointment tool and we will continue to work night and day to get more passports out to Canadians. We recognize that this is a problem and we will fix it.

• (1425)

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have been getting the same answer for three weeks, yet absolutely nothing has been done. Canada normally processed 90,000 passports a week before COVID-19. Now it cannot manage to process 48,000 a week. What is the problem?

Everything this Prime Minister touches goes wrong. All he has to say in response to the passport issue are the same talking points he was giving us two or three weeks ago. The Prime Minister has never had to line up for a passport. He does not need to wait when he returns to the country from a vacation.

Why is he okay with making all Canadians wait?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are doing everything we can to ensure that Canadians can get their passport on time.

We have issued more than 360,000 passports since April 1. Fully 100% of passport office counters are open. Employees continue to work overtime every day and on weekends to process applications and we are getting help from staff at Employment and Social Development Canada on the weekends.

We will continue to do everything necessary to resolve this situation for Canadians.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as we have said, it is chaos. There are people sleeping outside for three nights and paying the price for delays caused by the government. Journalists are even being removed from passport offices under police supervision.

Can the Prime Minister show some courage, get a backbone, as they say, and tell the House that he is responsible for this fiasco?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand that there has been a surge of passport renewal applications since travel restrictions were lifted, which is why Passport Canada staff have been working day and night to issue passports to Canadians.

We understand that people are facing unacceptable delays and an extremely difficult situation, but we are continuing our work every day to resolve this situation, and we will resolve it.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, he was the only one who did not realize that there would be a surge of applications.

When the Prime Minister travels, he has a chartered plane paid for by taxpayers, and someone takes care of his passport. He even has friends who invite him to the tropics, all expenses paid.

When ordinary taxpayers travel, they save up to be able to go on vacation or to try to reunite with their family. They submit their passport application, and the Prime Minister tells them they might not be able to go.

Before leaving on his trip this week, does the Prime Minister want to try sleeping in the rain for two days?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in January, we began hiring hundreds of new employees for passport services, because we saw this coming.

Workers are swamped. There is a huge number of passport applications, and we are increasing the number of employees and resources, and accelerating solutions for passport delivery so that Canadians can travel this summer and see their families. That is exactly what we want to do for Canadians, and that is what we are going to fix.

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[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, over 10,000 days have passed since the people of Neskantaga have had clean drinking water. That is over 10,000 days without something that people count as normal in communities across this country. The people of Neskantaga have not had clean drinking water for over two decades. This is a complete and abject failure of leadership.

The government has to acknowledge that this failure must be remedied. When will the government ensure that the people of Neskantaga and all first peoples of this land have access to clean drinking water?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Leader of the NDP for asking a question on indigenous issues on this National Indigenous Peoples Day.

It is extremely important that we deliver clean water to people right across the country. That is why we made a commitment on ending long-term boil water advisories. When we got into office in 2015, there were 109 in place. We have now lifted over 120, but there are more to do. I can assure members that in every community where there is a long-term boil water advisory, there is also a plan, a project manager and the resources in order to lift that drinking water advisory for good.

We will continue the work to make sure we are creating real opportunities for indigenous peoples across this country.

• (1430)

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, yesterday the government announced billions for Arctic defence. Arctic sovereignty is always colonial and patriarchal. The High Arctic relocates who live in Grise Fiord and Resolute can attest to being sent there without the resources they needed to survive and thrive.

Oral Questions

Investments in the north need to help northerners access safe housing, clean drinking water and fresh food. Current investments are not working. How will Nunavummiut benefit from the billions being invested in Arctic defence?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that protection of sovereignty in our Arctic happens and passes through the people who have lived there for millennia.

That is why, in our investments in northern security, in our investments in NORAD modernization, the Nunavummiut, the Premier of Nunavut P.J. Akeegok and others, including Natan Obed and the ITK, have been involved in these discussions. We know that as we build infrastructure for safety and protection in the north, we need to be hand-in-hand with the people who live there and create benefits for them as well as we invest in safety in the north.

That is what we will continue to do, hand-in-hand, in the true spirit of partnership and reconciliation.

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THE ECONOMY

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has continually gotten inflation wrong.

First she said deflation was the concern. Then she said inflation was transitory—wrong and wronger. Now she says she is considering cutting taxes at the pumps. Good. When Alberta did this, it reduced its inflation rate as higher energy prices drive inflation.

Every G7 country is doing something on gas prices. When will she start fighting inflation and give Canadians a break at the pumps, or is she that content to be the wrongest person in the room at the next G7?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me just point out that, when Canada meets our G7 partners, we are the envy of our peer countries.

The IMF, the OECD and Moody's have all pointed out that Canada is expected to have the strongest rate of growth this year and next year in the G7, and we have the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7 and the fastest rate of fiscal consolidation.

When it comes to affordability, our government is taking meaningful steps, starting with the OAS benefit going up this summer.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these speNDP-Liberals love warning labels so much, there should have been a mandatory “this product causes inflation and will be harmful to your economy” sticker on the last budget.

This Minister of Finance is fond of saying that her government “can walk and chew gum at the same time”. Okay, then, could she explain to the House how she can inject a post-COVID-19 stimulus of \$100 billion into the economy and fight inflation at the same time?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the verdict of

some objective experts when it comes to Canada's government policy.

I am going to start with S&P, the ratings agency whose job it is to judge fiscal responsibility. After I tabled the budget in April, S&P confirmed Canada's AAA rating with a stable outlook going forward. Let me also point out that Canada, today, is tied with the U.S. for the fastest rate of fiscal consolidation in the G7, that means bringing down the deficit. That is fiscal responsibility, and it is appropriate.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the current NDP-Liberal budget spending is the most outside of a crisis in three decades. It is driving runaway costs of living and rising inflation. Food is up 9.7% since last year, the biggest jump since the eighties. Gas is a record high, over \$2 a litre across Canada. It is almost \$3 a litre in big cities like Vancouver and Montreal. It is hard in rural areas too. Since last year, fertilizer is up 44%, feed is up 8% and farm fuel is up 32%.

Why do the Liberals not care that Canadians are really struggling right now just to get by?

● (1435)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government absolutely understands the challenges Canadians are facing today with the cost of living, but let me actually remind the member opposite of a statement that one of her colleagues made during the private members' statements just a moment ago. One of her colleagues pointed out that higher food prices today are being driven by Vladimir Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine. We have to remember who is responsible for the challenges that Canadians are facing today.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals racked up more debt than every other government before it, combined. That puts all Canadians on the hook and they are worried whether they can make it. Scotiabank says the Liberals “are doing nothing of any significance to slow inflation at the moment” and “missed their chance to nip it in the bud”, the inflation they caused. RBC and BMO predict tomorrow's inflation to be 7.4%, over double from May last year. Liberal spending caused this skyrocketing inflation and is forcing Canadians to choose between heating and eating.

Why do the NDP-Liberals always make things so much worse for working everyday Canadians?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me take another opportunity to point out to Canadians listening to us that Canada is tied with the United States in the G7 for the fastest rate of fiscal consolidation and the fastest rate of bringing down our deficit.

Canadians know inflation is a global phenomenon. It is driven by Putin's war in Ukraine. It is driven by China's COVID-zero policies. I will give some numbers to back that up. Our latest inflation number is 6.8% in Canada. That is lower than the U.S., which is at 8.6%; Germany at 7.4%; the U.K. at 9.0%; and the OECD average of 9.2%.

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[Translation]

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Radio-Canada's Daniel Leblanc reported this morning that the Canada Revenue Agency closed the criminal investigation into a tax evasion scheme by KPMG a year ago. At noon, KPMG confirmed that it had been cleared of any wrongdoing.

Members will recall that in 2017, the Minister of National Revenue stated, and I quote, "We're going to get to the bottom of this, and we're going to catch them. When everything comes out publicly, it will be easier."

I have a very simple question for the Minister of National Revenue. She has known for a year that this case was closed, so why did she not speak to anyone about it?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased and very surprised to my colleague opposite's enthusiasm for tackling tax evasion.

He knows very well that I cannot comment on specific cases. Furthermore, my colleague should know that the Canada Revenue Agency conducts its investigations independently. I do not intervene in investigations, nor do I conduct them.

We will continue to work hard to address tax evasion in Canada and abroad.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is the same minister who, weeks ago, kept telling us that the net was tightening. The reality is that she is the one getting caught up in the net.

In 2017, she said that she was going to make this public and that the whole truth would come out. The investigation has been over for a year and the minister said that once everything was public, it would all become clearer and they would comment on it. Now, for a whole year, she has said nothing.

Why, once again, is the government refusing to get to the bottom of this? Why, when it is time to talk, do its representatives have nothing to say?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, I cannot comment on specific cases.

Oral Questions

My colleague should know that the Canada Revenue Agency is independent, and that we do not interfere with or direct investigations.

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PASSPORTS

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the situation at passport offices is getting out of hand. According to TVA, at the end of the ordeal, the lucky ones who do get their passports at Guy-Favreau complex in Montreal are still being charged extra fees. Despite the minister's instructions today, people are being charged \$110. Despite the minister's instructions, the federal government is making Quebeckers and Canadians pay for its mistake. The minister has no control over her department.

When will she finally ensure that people can get their passports without extra fees?

• (1440)

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, I will tell my colleague that the instruction given to all Service Canada employees is that if passports are issued outside the standard service times, there is no additional charge. We will say it again. It is clear and the directive has been given across the country. We are going to make sure it is enforced on the ground.

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, nothing is clear these days. People are being treated like cattle at passport offices. Instead of managing the crisis effectively, security officers at the Guy-Favreau complex reportedly threw out a journalist who was reporting on the line-ups.

If things are so bad that they cannot be shown on TV, the answer is not to kick out the media. The answer is to do a better job of managing the crisis.

When will the government extend hours of operation, reassign public servants, treat citizens with respect and ensure that everyone gets their passport?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the situation in Montreal is completely unacceptable. I have heard about this situation and it is clearly not what should be happening.

I assure my colleagues that anyone in Montreal who is travelling in the next 48 hours is getting their passport. Applicants are being triaged in line. Senior management is on the ground to help manage the situation, and although the volume of applications has skyrocketed, this situation is unacceptable.

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AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Minister of Finance once again made an announcement about inflation without giving one cent to our farmers.

Oral Questions

She has been warned for months that agriculture is at risk. Inflation strikes farmers three times, not just once. The price of fuel, fertilizer and animal feed has skyrocketed and added \$1.5 billion to their costs.

If Ottawa does nothing, producers could go bankrupt and the price of food will continue to rise. Farmers submitted specific requests to the minister. When will she finally support them?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, I agree with my colleague that our farmers work extremely hard and that, just like society as a whole, they are faced with very high prices right now for food, inputs and energy.

That is why we are helping them in different ways. Last year, the Department of Agriculture had its largest budget ever, with \$4 billion for the agricultural sector.

I assure my colleague that we are working on different options to see how we can provide our farmers with more assistance.

* * *

[English]

PASSPORTS

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the utter chaos experienced by Canadians simply trying to obtain a passport from their own government is a crisis solely of the Prime Minister's making. A summer that should have provided much-needed relief after two years of significant stress has instead turned into an endless nightmare of dangerous passport office all-nighters and infuriatingly long hold times, often ending in abruptly dropped calls. A year ago, as this fully predictable situation was brewing, the Prime Minister called a completely unnecessary election.

Will he now admit that he was wrong to put his political interests ahead of the Canadians he was elected to serve?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have mentioned several times in the House, we are experiencing an unprecedented volume in terms of passport applications. We have, in fact, been planning for this surge and that is why 600 employees were hired since January. Another 600 are in the process of being hired. We are re-arranging and reallocating resources within Service Canada and also within other government departments. We understand the situation. We understand the frustration of Canadians, and we will continue to do everything that we can to support Canadians in getting their passports in a timely fashion.

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Sally still has not received her new passport that she applied for in March. She needs it next week. The government says that she can now travel five hours to the nearest passport office to get an emergency passport printed. It told her to line up at 4 a.m., but will not guarantee that she will get served that day. It has also said that she must not arrive at the passport office sooner than 48 hours before her flight time in order to qualify for the said emergency printing.

Why does Liberal incompetence mean that Sally is forced to drive five hours one way to stand in line all night with no guarantee that she will have her passport by the time her flight leaves?

• (1445)

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are currently triaging people in line because of the unprecedented volume to ensure that people do not miss their flights. We have ensured that, when people get to the passport office, they are receiving their passports. The member opposite can certainly work with my office to support that constituent. I have been pleased to work with many members opposite to support their constituents and make sure that they can get their passports on time. We will continue to support them and Canadians as we go through this surge in volume to support Canadians with their passports.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the passport crisis is quite simply shocking and unacceptable.

Mario Dumont, the well-known TVA host, said that the government is treating Canadians like cattle. Let us think about that. People are exasperated and desperate, but the minister says that everything is fine and has been repeating the same platitudes from day one. She needs to get every employee back in person, and open passport offices evenings and weekends, not just by appointment.

When is the minister going to fix the problem?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand Canadians' frustration. We are doing our best to fix this situation.

I have to correct my hon. colleague. All the employees who work on passports at Service Canada are in the office, and have been for months. When he talks about public servants working from home, they are working. They are the same public servants who got the Canada recovery benefit out to Canadians. In all, nine million Canadians received benefits thanks to the hard-working employees of Service Canada.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, wherever we look these days, we see the NDP-Liberal government in chaos. If it is not chaos at our airports, it is chaos at our passport offices. Every week, dozens of constituents call my office looking for help. People have been waiting since January, with little to no response. People are lining up overnight just to get to the office. Some are even being turned away and asked to come back another day after waiting for hours.

What other G7 countries have their citizens sleeping on the ground overnight in order to receive basic government services?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague points out, this is not a situation unique to Canada. In fact, people in the United States, the U.K., France, Australia and Sweden are waiting for 10, 11 and up to 27 weeks. This is precisely something that is happening right around the world. It does not make it acceptable here, and that is exactly why we are throwing everything we have to fix this situation and to ensure that we can do this better, but almost all of our peer countries are going through the exact same thing.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, KPMG literally counselled the wealthiest Canadians to use offshore tax havens. It told Canadians to put their money and their assets into the Isle of Man tax-free haven and that it would help them recover them, tax-free. It sounds pretty shady to me. It also sounded shady to the CRA, so it launched a criminal investigation, which found that there was no wrongdoing, which clearly means that we need to change the laws.

When will the government finally change the laws to make sure that the wealthiest Canadians are not able to use offshore tax havens and avoid paying their fair share and actually contributing fairly like the rest of Canadians do?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just love my colleague's enthusiasm for tackling tax evasion.

They Canada Revenue Agency is fighting tax evasion in Canada and abroad. We have a solid network of tax agreements. Our investments are bearing fruit. It is getting harder and harder to hide money abroad.

I have a simple message for everyone considering tax evasion: The CRA will find them no matter where they are.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, KPMG did in fact counsel the wealthiest Canadians to use tax loopholes. That is unacceptable.

The government has the power to repeal the laws that allow this.

Will the government at long last amend the legislation to make the ultrarich pay their fair share like everyone else?

• (1450)

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want my colleague to know that the CRA is independent. I do not intervene in investigations, nor do I conduct them.

Ongoing work to address tax evasion is a priority for our government. That is why we invested over \$2 billion. We will keep working to tackle both tax evasion and tax avoidance.

* * *

*[English]***NATIONAL DEFENCE**

Mr. Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of National Defence announced our government's plan to modernize our continental defences, including replacing the North Warning System. Through this plan, our government will invest in state-of-the-art capabilities so that we can modernize and enhance our ability to defend Canadians against new and emerging threats. This modernization will benefit all Canadians and all North Americans.

Can the minister please outline the importance of moving forward with these investments, as well as the importance of doing so in partnership with northern and indigenous communities when investing in the defence of the north?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday our government announced the largest investment in continental defence and NORAD in four decades. As part of that, we will ensure that we partner with indigenous communities in multiple areas, including in the area of infrastructure. We need to make sure they are together with us in terms of the investments we will make to keep Canadians safe and to ensure that our Canadian Armed Forces have the resources and supplies they need. The safety and security of Canadians is our top priority.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government continues to interfere with democratic process. There was the SNC-Lavalin scandal, and now we see, based on the Mass Casualty Commission, that the then public safety minister and the Prime Minister put pressure on Commissioner Lucki.

Why did the Prime Minister and the public safety minister use the death of Canadians to advance their political agenda?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, I want to express on behalf of the government and, I hope, all members of this chamber, our sympathies and our condolences to the families of the victims. I had the—

Oral Questions

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am just going to make a comment. It is shameful that I cannot hear what is being said, so I just want to remind everyone to keep their voices down so we can hear the answer.

From the top, minister.

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for creating some pause in this chamber as I express, I hope on behalf of all members, our condolences and our sympathies to the families of the victims, some of whom I have had an opportunity to meet. This continues to be a very difficult moment for them.

In the interim, we know the public commission is doing its important work independently of government. There needs to be due process; there needs to be a trauma-informed process to this, and at the end of the day, we will do whatever we can to support that process, so that there can be justice for the families. They deserve it.

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is very clear from recent news reports that the Mass Casualty Commission confirms that the Prime Minister and the then public safety minister interfered with the release of numbers of casualties. We know that what the quote says is that, in reference to victim numbers, it was 100% Minister Blair and the Prime Minister.

Is that not true?

The Speaker: I just want to remind the hon. members, when referring to someone else in the chamber, to refer to them using their title, not by their name.

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to advise this House that this issue has already been dealt with by the Mass Casualty Commission. The commissioner of the RCMP has confirmed for the commission that no such direction or pressure was ever exerted by me or by any other member of this government. Among the important work of the Mass Casualty Commission is examining a number of the significant communication challenges that that event involved—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am going to have to stop the minister. I am having a hard time hearing, and I am about 20 feet away from the minister, so I am going to ask everyone to be quiet and ask the minister to take it from the top, because I missed most of that.

The hon. minister.

● (1455)

Hon. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to advise this House that this matter was dealt with a number of months ago. The commissioner of the RCMP has confirmed for the Mass Casualty Commission that no such direction or pressure was ever exerted by me or any other member of this government. Among the important work of the Mass Casualty Commission is to examine the important communication challenges that were evident during this tragic event.

We look forward to fact-based findings and recommendations for improvement.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is critical, because, according to the commander's notes in the Mass Casualty Commission report, Commissioner Lucki promised the Prime Minister's Office and the public safety minister's office that they would release the information in an active investigation that she was discussing.

It would appear that somebody from the Prime Minister's Office and the public safety minister's office was directing Commissioner Lucki to interfere in an active police investigation, when the investigators on the ground said they did not want to.

Who in the PMO and the public safety minister's office directed Commissioner Lucki?

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to confirm that no one in the Prime Minister's Office or in the public safety office exerted any pressure or direction on the commissioner of the RCMP. The commissioner of the RCMP engaged with our officials, and she has already confirmed for the Mass Casualty Commission that no such direction or pressure was ever given by any member of this government.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is contradictory evidence, according to the commission's report. According to the commanders on the ground, Commissioner Lucki became extremely upset that the commissioners were not releasing the information in an active investigation, despite the fact that the commanders on the ground said they were not willing to do it because it would compromise the investigation.

Again, I ask this: Somebody in the Prime Minister's Office and somebody in the public safety minister's office directed Commissioner Lucki to get that information. Who was it?

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the commissioner of the RCMP, in the operations of her police service, is entirely independent of government. I can confirm for the House, as the commissioner has also confirmed, that no such direction or pressure was exerted by any member of this government to influence the commissioner's exercise of her authorities over her police service.

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if someone owes the Canada Revenue Agency \$20, the CRA will hunt them down to the ends of the earth, but not so for companies like KPMG, which helps millionaires hide their income in the Isle of Man tax haven. Today we learned that KPMG has been cleared by the Canada Revenue Agency. In contrast, in 2005, the United States fined KPMG for the same financial arrangement and filed criminal charges against nine of its executives. In Canada, it did not get so much as a slap on the wrist.

Why is the minister giving a free pass to executives and companies that promote the use of tax havens?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will say it again to my colleague opposite. Since 2015, we have invested over \$2 billion to fight tax evasion. If my colleague wants to contribute directly to the outcome of the investigations, I would be pleased to write him a letter of recommendation and send him to work for the RCMP as an investigator.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in 2017, when the minister was asked if charges would be brought against KPMG, she said: “Yes, because setting up schemes is criminal too.”

Today, the Canada Revenue Agency is letting them slip through the net. After clearing the fraudsters, the minister is clearing KPMG. It is unacceptable. Under the law, the minister can order a new investigation and require a third party to direct this investigation to get to the bottom of the matter.

Will she personally order this investigation, or does she plan to accept the tax avoidance scheme orchestrated by KPMG?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, fighting tax evasion and tax avoidance has always been a priority for our government. For the information of my colleague across the way, who is new, the Canada Revenue Agency is independent, and I do not manage or direct investigations.

* * *

• (1500)

[English]

SPORT

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday at heritage committee it was revealed that in June 2018, a senior official at Heritage Canada was made aware of the allegations of sexual assault at Hockey Canada, yet for four years the government continued to give Hockey Canada millions of taxpayer dollars while no action was taken to hold anyone accountable or address the dangerous culture that enabled harassment and assault.

For four years, Hockey Canada continued to receive millions. Why?

[Translation]

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Sport and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when Hockey Canada reported one case in 2018, it told Sport Canada that the investiga-

Oral Questions

tion had been handed over to the London police. Now that we are aware of these allegations and there has been an out-of-court settlement, I have commissioned a financial audit to ensure that no public funds were used to cover up this story. It is an appalling story, and this is not the end.

[English]

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday at the heritage committee, when they were asked questions about the cover-up culture that is so a part of their institution, a Hockey Canada official said, “we’re on a journey”. Specifically, they were being asked questions about an alleged sexual assault case involving a gang rape by eight players. The response, “we’re on a journey” seemed trite and altogether inappropriate.

I simply would like to know this from the minister: Are you happy with the response that was received yesterday? If not, what tangible actions will be taken immediately?

The Speaker: Before I go to the hon. minister, I would like to remind everyone in the House to put their questions through the Chair and not directly to each other.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Sport and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like all Canadians, I am disgusted and horrified by this situation, and I am not satisfied with the explanation from Hockey Canada yesterday. This is why we will conduct a financial audit to make sure that no public funds were used. I am looking at all the options to move forward in this case.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, we heard damaging testimony from Hockey Canada in relation to the horrendous allegations of an alleged sexual assault that happened some four years ago. Hockey Canada needs to own this. My fear is that someday some of these players will become coaches. The department was notified some four years ago of these allegations. Why did the minister continue to issue funding to Hockey Canada for the last four years?

[Translation]

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Sport and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said recently, there will be a financial audit to ensure that no public funds were used to cover up this story. Like all Canadians and like my colleague, I am horrified by what we heard yesterday, and we are going to ensure that Hockey Canada is held accountable for what happened.

*Oral Questions***CANADIAN HERITAGE**

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this weekend, the G7 culture ministers concluded their first meeting to discuss issues and challenges related to culture and media—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I must briefly interrupt the hon. member.

[*English*]

There is a shouting match going back and forth between a couple of MPs. I do not want to point them out, but I do want to ask them to control their emotions or, for lack of a better word, their anger.

[*Translation*]

I will ask the hon. member for Laval—Les Îles to ask his question again.

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury: Mr. Speaker, this weekend, the G7 culture ministers concluded their first meeting to discuss issues and challenges related to culture and media. This was a very important meeting, allowing the G7 countries to work together to protect and promote our cultures and democracies.

Could the Minister of Canadian Heritage tell us how Canada is a world leader on these issues?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is a great question and was far better than any of the questions from the opposition. I congratulate my colleague on the excellent, or even extraordinary, work he is doing. I am happy to hear that the opposition appreciates him.

Our G7 allies are very interested in what Canada is doing in matters of culture and democracy, especially with respect to Bill C-18, which would require that the web giants compensate Canadian journalists. Countries around the world are experiencing the same problem. The web giants use our journalists' content and often do not compensate them. This needs to change and we will make these changes with our allies.

* * *

• (1505)

[*English*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there can be little doubt that there was political interference from the Prime Minister's Office and the then public safety minister's office because of the handwritten notes by Darren Campbell, a superintendent in the RCMP in Nova Scotia. In his notes, he wrote, "The Commissioner said she had promised the Minister of Public Safety and the Prime Minister's Office that the RCMP...would release this information."

To release information in an active investigation could have jeopardized the investigation. Who in the Prime Minister's Office, and who in the public safety minister's office, authorized Commissioner Lucki to speak to the RCMP?

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, the answer is no one. Second, perhaps the

member opposite is not aware that the Commissioner of the RCMP is the Commissioner of the RCMP and does not require any authorization from anyone else to speak to her own organization. What is also clear, and what the commissioner has made very clear to the Mass Casualty Commission, is that no pressure, no direction and no orders were given to her by any member of this government about doing the job of running her organization.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is not funny, because in his notes, in particular, the Nova Scotia RCMP superintendent said that Lucki had accused them of disobeying her instructions to include specific information about the firearms used by the perpetrator. In his notes, Campbell also wrote that he had told the RCMP strategic communications not to release information about the perpetrator's firearms out of concern that it would jeopardize the investigation.

The RCMP commissioner said that she had received instructions from the Prime Minister's Office and Mr. Blair's public safety office—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, they were from Mr. Blair's public safety office to interfere—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: When it happened once, we brought it up, which is nice. However, when it gets brought up again, I understand that drama is good for TV, but it is not good for this chamber.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very apparent that the House leader of the opposition is more interested in drama than in truth.

There is a fact here. The commissioner has confirmed that no direction and no pressure was given by me or by any member of this government to direct her in any way. This is a line of which I am most familiar, and no direction on an operational matter was given to the commissioner of the RCMP by me or any member of this government. She has confirmed the truth of that.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, but this is not drama. This is about a police commissioner actively—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I do apologize, but this is not drama. This is about direction to a commissioner of the RCMP to actively be involved in a case, an ongoing investigation in Nova Scotia, from the Prime Minister's Office and the then public safety minister's office.

That is the accusation that has been made in this case, so this is a serious matter. The police were actively investigating something, and they were being told by the Prime Minister's Office and the public safety minister's office that the commissioner was to interfere. Who told them?

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times already today, and I will say again, no one told the RCMP commissioner or gave her any direction or exerted any pressure.

The conversations that the commissioner has with her subordinates in her organization is entirely independent of government, and the commissioner is doing her job, but she has already confirmed for the Mass Casualty Commission, a public inquiry intended to get to the facts of this matter, that no such direction was given by any member of this government.

* * *

● (1510)

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is a trading nation and a strong proponent of the international, rules-based, multilateral trading system. That being said, Canada is always driving forward to find solutions, even at a time when global trade is facing unprecedented challenges, especially at the World Trade Organization and with Canada's leadership with the Ottawa Group.

As the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development just returned from the WTO last week, could she give us an update on the outcome of the 12th ministerial conference?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is indeed a trading country. One out of six jobs depend on international trade.

I just returned from a historical ministerial conference at the World Trade Organization, where we reached several multilateral agreements with all 164 member countries unanimously. I will give members a couple of highlights.

We worked to adopt a response to the COVID-19 pandemic so that the WTO can be more resilient in future pandemics, including reaching a consensus on the TRIPS waiver. We also reached an agreement so we can work on the impasse of the appellate system, which Canada and our companies depend on so much.

This is multilateral trading at its best, and it is a good day for—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' failure to fund a single new shelter or transitional home since announcing their violence prevention strategy in 2020 is putting indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse people at risk. This inaction is costing lives. We need oversight.

Call for justice 1.7 of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls calls for an independent ombudsperson and tribunal to ensure accountability. When will the minister implement this call for justice?

Tributes

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, addressing the ongoing violence against indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQ+ is a whole-of-government approach that requires living up to our goals as a country and all the calls for justice. That is why budget 2021 put \$2.2 billion over five years to address the violence toward missing and murdered indigenous women.

We will ensure our initiatives are trauma-informed and focused on those who are still suffering in silence, as well as those who are courageously speaking out to put an end to this tragedy.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government says that housing is a human right, but in my riding of Edmonton Griesbach, the lack of housing is an emergency. In the last three years alone, 453 people have died on the streets of Edmonton because they did not have shelter, many of whom were indigenous.

Under the Liberal government, the issue is getting worse. The Liberals are more interested in big developers' profits than putting a roof over people's heads. People in Alberta Avenue and across my community are not seeing results. When is the government going to drop the talking points and build homes for people who cannot afford them?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's concern on this issue. We have invested in the rapid housing initiative, for example, a program that is aimed at the most vulnerable. The member's city of Edmonton has actually benefited, to the tune of hundreds of permanently affordable new homes for the most vulnerable through our investments in the co-investment fund and our expected investments through the housing accelerator fund. We are even bringing future money to this year to get more money out the door, to the tune of 22,000 new affordable homes for the most vulnerable.

There is more work to be done, but we have made a lot of progress.

* * *

HON. MEMBER FOR PORTAGE—LISGAR

The Speaker: It being 3:14 p.m., pursuant to an order made on Monday, June 20, there is an agreement between the parties to have some brief statements at this time.

Tributes

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am truly honoured to rise today to say a few words in the House about our leader, the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada and leader of the official opposition.

[*English*]

The Winnipeg Free Press has described her as “Arguably one of the hardest-working MPs in Canada”. Without a doubt, she is one of the hardest-working MPs in Canada. That is exactly why the member for Portage—Lisgar successfully rose to the challenge of interim leader of the Conservative Party of Canada as the short leadership race began that will allow members to choose a new leader on September 10.

The member for Portage—Lisgar has shown us that she is not only a hard worker, but that she is a principled woman of values who knows how to listen to others and, above all, knows how to make decisions while respecting the differences of each of the other members of the team.

• (1515)

[*Translation*]

It was no accident that Candice was able to take up the responsibilities of leader of the official opposition with such ease. Over the years, she has gained experience that few of us on either side of the House will ever get the chance to match, no matter how much we want it or how skilled we are.

Candice was elected as the member for Portage—Lisgar in 2008, after being a Conservative Party supporter for years. She is a principled woman, as I mentioned earlier. One thing that made her get into politics as a supporter was the then Liberal government's spending spree. It is funny how times never change. She chose to take the bull by the horns and became the Manitoba campaign manager for the leadership bid of the man who would become Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Hon. Stephen Harper.

She did not want to sit on the sidelines. She had a desire to serve the people in her riding and all Canadians. As I mentioned, she was elected in Portage—Lisgar in 2008 by an overwhelming majority. Not only did her constituents and the people of Manitoba choose a strong voice to defend their interests, but Canadians quickly came to know her and, more importantly, to recognize her as a woman with an infinite amount of love for the great Canadian family.

In 2011, she was appointed as the parliamentary secretary to the then minister of public safety, the Hon. Vic Toews. In her role as parliamentary secretary, she had the opportunity to work alongside the minister of public safety, notably on Bill C-19, the ending the long-gun registry act, which came into force the following year, 2012.

In 2013, the Right Hon. Stephen Harper recognized the undeniable talent of the member for Portage—Lisgar and, most importantly, her immense compassion for Canadians who were suffering and needed a strong voice to represent them. Candice became the hon. member of Parliament for Portage—Lisgar and entered cabinet as minister of state for social development. During her tenure, she

worked hard to improve Canada's efforts to combat homelessness, as well as provide better support for people with disabilities.

In September 2016, Candice broke the glass ceiling by becoming the first woman in the history of the Conservative Party of Canada to hold the role of House leader. Conservative leader Rona Ambrose recognized her as a strong woman who could make quick decisions and a team player who could organize the work of the official opposition to ensure that the voices of all Canadians would continue to be heard and relayed in the House of Commons.

She does her job brilliantly. The Liberal government's first years were not a walk in the park, far from it. Candice was able to use all parliamentary options to make the government understand that it did not have carte blanche to turn the House into a tool to do its bidding.

The new party leader, the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, also recognized the spirit and talent of the member for Portage—Lisgar, and asked her to continue serving the country as the House leader of the official opposition. With all this experience, it is no surprise that she became the deputy leader for the member for Durham, the leader of the Conservative Party. All our party leaders under whom she served her country as an MP entrusted her with important responsibilities because she is a woman who can be trusted.

In February, the Conservative caucus also recognized her ability to bring people together. We knew she was a true-blue Conservative. Most importantly, we knew she was capable of taking the helm following what had certainly been a tumultuous time.

Having watched her work so hard for so long, her peers elected her to serve as official opposition leader. Let us not think of her as a temporary or interim leader. She is the interim Conservative leader, but she has never, ever taken the job for granted. From day one, she set to work fulfilling her mandate, which is to lead the Conservatives during a leadership race, present a strong and united opposition to the Liberal government and speak on behalf of every single Canadian.

On behalf of all my colleagues, I am confident in saying that she has succeeded across the board. She really is the leader of all Conservatives and she has made us all forget her interim status.

Now I would like to talk about Candice as the woman who rallied Conservatives during tough times. I have to admit that, before I began spending time with her on a daily basis, when she gave me the tremendous privilege of serving alongside her as deputy leader, I was aware of her talent as a politician and her skill as a parliamentarian, but I did not really know the reasons for her success.

• (1520)

[*English*]

I have been in politics for almost 25 years, and I was intrigued by the path of my colleague from Manitoba. Today, I will share a secret with Canadians. The secret to the success of the MP for Portage—Lisgar, the leader of the official opposition and the Conservative Party, can be summed up in three words: respect, values and principles.

Candice is a woman of faith and the youngest of eight children. She grew up in a family with Mennonite roots.

[*Translation*]

As the baby of the family, she surely had to learn at an early age to listen to others. She has applied the lessons her family taught her throughout her life, both personal and professional. She believes that every member of the caucus deserves to be heard and that all points of view deserve to be considered.

I truly believe that she sees the caucus as her family. She understands and accepts differences. She may tolerate some misbehaviour, but she will do everything she can to keep the family together at all times. Where conflicts may arise, she will build bridges. She will push each member of her caucus to use their skills for the good of the team. Like the family values within her, she wants to instill in each of us the conservative values that unite us and make us who we are.

She does not give in to every little whim. She will defend her principles and her convictions tooth and nail, while recognizing that her colleagues might have opinions that differ from her own, and that is one of her greatest qualities. She is not afraid to take a stand, even though that can be hard at times, because she relies on her convictions and values in doing so. She will work to find whatever unites people, rather than trying to be right at all costs. She asked us, her leadership team, to demonstrate the same openness and to listen to our colleagues, and she did so with an iron will.

She is a strong and proud mother who wants the best for everyone in her family. I truly believe that she considers each of us as part of her extended family. I think I speak on behalf of all my colleagues and all members of our party when I say this: Thank you for accepting us as we are. Yes, we do have some faults, but we also have all our good qualities.

Before I conclude, I have to mention one important part of our leader's life. She is very proud of the family values that were instilled in her by her parents, including her mother Anne, whom she regularly visits in Morden. Her children are a big source of inspiration for her and will always come first. Luke, Delaney, who is here in Ottawa, and Parker can be unbelievably proud of their mother. She is unbelievably proud of them.

I do not think that Candice, the mother, would mind my saying that she is also the proud grandmother to two grandchildren, Arcydia and Lance, whom she loves a lot. There is also her husband, Michael, her partner on this great political adventure, who sometimes joins her in singing and playing music as a form of relaxation and, perhaps, to offer an occasional reprieve from the little squabbles that can come up within our political family.

Tributes

I thank Michael and Candice's children and grandchildren for sharing her with us.

I think I speak for all members in the House when I say that the leader of the official opposition is an extraordinary person.

[*English*]

She is respected. She has devoted much of her life to public service, to defending the people of her riding of Portage—Lisgar and to wanting to improve the future for all Canadians.

On behalf of all my fellow Conservatives, I want to thank Candice for leading our party and caucus in a strong yet gentle way, showcasing everyone's strengths and respecting everyone's opinions. Candice showed us that we can be proud of who we are. She gave us back the pride of being united as a team. She taught us the pride of being Conservative in 2022.

• (1525)

[*Translation*]

The House will soon rise for the summer, but I would like to tell the Liberals one thing: Candice is still our leader until September 10, so they should not expect to have a quiet little holiday before Parliament resumes this fall.

[*English*]

Thank you, Candice, for having trusted us.

[*Translation*]

Thank you for your hard work on behalf of the Conservative Party of Canada.

[*English*]

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a privilege for me to rise in this House to speak, and today it is on behalf of the governing benches and the Liberal Party about a woman who has my appreciation.

I know that my colleague across the aisle was elected back in 2008 for the very first time, and she has served her riding of Portage—Lisgar ever since. It is actually not that long ago that the same member and her party occupied the seats on this side of the House. The member for Portage—Lisgar served as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and then went on to serve as Minister of State for Social Development.

Tributes

Then in August of 2016, I was honoured to be named as the first and, to this day, only woman to serve as government House leader, and nearly a month after, the member for Portage—Lisgar was named the official opposition House leader, as the member for Mégantic—L'Érable shared, the first Conservative woman in this role named by one of the many former opposition leaders in this House, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle. I, for one, cannot remember which sequential leader, interim or otherwise, he is, as since 2015 alone, the Conservative Party has gone through so many leaders, but I do know that he is one of many, as is my colleague and friend from Portage—Lisgar.

Though most would not know this based on my deliberations or debate with her in this place or in the media, and though our politics do not align and though we often agree to disagree, and to be fair even our initials are opposite, but all of our differences aside, I can say that she has served our country with conviction. I, for one, know that she respects this institution, because when two women were involved in running this House, the Order Paper was cleared at the end of the session. I, for one, can say that I knew this member and her work before she took on the very esteemed role of the interim leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

While I believe that my colleague across the way, rightfully, was honoured by this responsibility and all the glitz and glamour that it comes with, I, for one, can say that I may not have been as eager to move into Stornoway as perhaps she was. However, now with this experience, I would welcome her thoughts and any additional insights on public or government-funded housing.

I cannot say I miss her as an adversary, as she was a formidable one, but I know that even despite our differences, we will continue to work towards the same goal, and that is leaving this place and our country better off. I know that she has worked hard for her constituents, her family, including three children who never stop making her proud, and her two grandchildren whom she loves unconditionally. From this side of the aisle, I know that Liberals look forward to seeing what comes next, and we know she will serve well in whatever she continues or takes on.

To my colleague and friend opposite, I thank her for her service to Canadians during her time as interim leader of the official opposition. We thank her family for sharing her time and talents, and we wish her all the best in her endeavours. Keep well and safe.

• (1530)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to acknowledge the last speech by the member for Portage—Lisgar in her capacity as the interim leader of the Conservative Party.

We know that being the interim leader of a political party in the midst of a leadership race is a challenging and sometimes thankless role. It is an exercise that definitely requires tact, balance, and the ability to proceed with caution and to avoid committing the party to positions that are not official and that can change quickly. All of that must be done while also keeping the troops happy and united. It is all the more difficult when these concerns are not shared by the warring parties in the leadership race, who confront one another as

ferocious adversaries and sometimes ignore the future consequences.

The member will undoubtedly agree with the great Jacques Parizeau, who said that politics is a “sea of toes” which one must avoid stepping on. Let us salute her efforts to navigate this stormy sea.

The member for Portage—Lisgar did an excellent job in her role as interim leader. She was at the helm of her party during the storm, without losing sight of the priorities of the people of Manitoba who put their trust in her. We wish her a good summer break. It is well deserved. We look forward to seeing her in her new parliamentary role, which will no doubt be a reflection of her dedication.

All the best to the leader of the opposition. See you in the fall.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to recognize the contributions of the member for Portage—Lisgar.

The hon. member's record is an enviable one. Elected in 2018, the hon. member was re-elected in 2011, 2015, 2019 and 2021. She has also served in her time here in this place as the parliamentary secretary to the minister of public safety, as the parliamentary secretary to the minister of state for social development, as the shadow minister of natural resources, as the opposition House leader, as deputy leader of the Conservative Party and of course now as the interim leader of the Conservative Party and Leader of the Opposition.

It is a tremendous record, and I am sure she is not done yet. Of course, these important roles do not cover her many other contributions to this place. One only has to learn about her family life and her motivation in entering politics to understand her drive to contribute to this place. She has also been an effective defender of her constituents' interests.

While we fundamentally disagree on many issues, I have much respect for the opposition leader. This place, and every other legislative body in this country, has a long way to go before being truly representative of Canadian society. In fact, the 2021 election was a record year for female members of Parliament, with 103 women elected to the 338-member House of Commons of Canada, and yet that is still just 30% in this chamber.

It is 30%, but I thank the member for her incredible work of showing leadership in what women in this place can do. I hope that as part of her ongoing legacy she would encourage more women to run in her party. We all would like to see them here in this place in every party. It is my hope that with every election, this chamber will become more representative of the communities we are elected to represent. I am sure the hon. member will continue to contribute in this place, if in a different capacity.

Tributes

I would be remiss if I did not also thank her family, her spouse, her three children and two grandchildren for their capacity. We know how much they give to allow us to be here to do this work. It is a type of work that does not give us a lot of time, and I know the many sacrifices she has made, but I also know her dedication and her love for her family.

We cannot do our jobs effectively if we do not have the people who love us standing with us. I know she respects and honours their contribution to her place here in this House.

On behalf of all New Democrats, we thank her and wish her all the very best in the future.

● (1535)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I want to say a hi and give an affectionate hug to the hon. member for Portage—Lisgar. Some in this place may be surprised by that, but when I was first elected in 2011, I remember exactly the moment I first hugged the hon. member for Portage—Lisgar. It was right after I had said that we were all going away for Christmas now and preparing for the birth of our Lord, and there was a very genuine affection between us that was immediate.

We do not have anything else in common—yes, we do. We have something else in common that I want to mention.

I also hugged her on another occasion. We hug a lot. It was when the Conservatives succeeded in passing a bill I did not want to see passed, a bill that killed the long-gun registry. I ran over to congratulate the hon. member for Portage—Lisgar because she, unlike so many in this place, did not go into politics because she had been a career door knocker, a political nerd wanting to someday be an MP. Her career path was more like mine. She cared about issues and she let caring about those issues bring her into politics to make a difference.

I know how devastated the hon. member for Portage—Lisgar must have been back in the 40th Parliament when her private member's bill, Bill C-391, failed. It would have gotten rid of the long-gun registry, but it came back once the Conservatives had a majority. There is something about commitment and persistence that resonates with people, whether they agree with the goal or not. I respect the persistence. I respect the integrity. I respect the fact that the hon. member for Portage—Lisgar is here because she cares about issues, not because she seeks personal power. I reflect on that with genuine care and affection and hope that someday she will agree with me on climate change.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that was very, very nice. It is amazing how when we want to be kind in this place, we can be very kind. It is just a little dig. I got that one.

No, that was really kind of everyone, and I do want to thank my deputy leader. I want to thank the leader of the Bloc Party. I want to thank the member for North Island—Powell River and the House leader for the Green Party and the member for Waterloo for those very kind comments.

Elizabeth, we did hug another time, one that you do not remember. It was in the studios at CTV. I think a pipeline had just been approved, so it must not have been under the Liberal government, but a pipeline was approved and Elizabeth came in and she was devastated. I was pretty happy, but she saw me and she said “I need a hug. I can't believe this pipeline was approved.” Remember that one? Yes, so we may have hugged another time.

I am very humbled and I am grateful for all of the kind words. It has really been an honour of my life to lead my Conservative colleagues and our party over the last several months, and it is not over yet. As the deputy leader said, I am still the leader until September 10, but I know this part of my leadership is coming to an end here in the House of Commons.

It has been not only an honour; I have also really enjoyed it immensely. It has been incredible to work alongside each one of these amazing MPs around me to make decisions that we believe are the best decisions for the people of Canada and our party, and we have done that together.

The last several months have been very gratifying as I have watched our caucus and our party heal some rifts and come together and be in probably one of the strongest positions that we have been in for a very long time. We are over 600,000 memberships strong. As I said to my caucus many times, we are not always uniform in our ideas and our perspectives, but we are genuinely unified in our goals.

This caucus has been an incredible group to lead, and I want to thank them for putting their faith in me. I was not expecting to be the leader of the party and it all happened very fast, literally over the course of a few hours, and there was no recess or riding week to get ready.

The House of Commons sat the next day, and I and the people around me stepped into our roles without missing a beat, or at least trying not to miss a beat, during a bit of a tumultuous time in our caucus and actually in our country. It was a pretty difficult time in the country. I want to take a moment, if I could, to thank a few people who were especially helpful during that time.

First of all are my whip, my House leader and the leadership team around me who stepped into their roles and were just amazing and so supportive, and they are very good friends. They have been servant leaders. We hear that term “servant leadership”; I would say these individuals around me have been true servant leaders to our caucus and I am so grateful for what they have done.

I also want to say a big thanks to three of my Hill office staff members, Neal MacDonald, Kim Baker and Grace Gallien. They were not hired to work for the leader of the Conservative Party, but when that happened overnight, all three of them just stepped into these roles and were amazing, and I am just so grateful. I know they sacrificed a lot.

Government Orders

I also want to thank my riding staff, Deb Giblin and Colleen Kyle, who have not seen much of me in six months. They have kept things going very successfully in the riding, and I am very grateful for them.

I thank as well William Stairs, my chief of staff, and Nancy Hepner, my director of communications. William actually came out of retirement to, as he said, make sure the ship stayed afloat; Nancy left her family and her home in Saskatchewan to be here for the last six months, and that is a real sacrifice. I am very grateful for what they have done.

As members of Parliament and as leaders, we get the credit a lot. We are in the limelight, but it is these people, our staff members, who put up with a lot and work hard, and I want to make sure that they get the credit today that they deserve.

I do want to thank my family. My leadership came as a big surprise to my kids. They are not watching question period or the news all day every day, so on February 2 in the evening, they turned on the news and saw that their mom and grandma was the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada. My children have sacrificed a lot over the last 14 years, but I know that they would say they gained a lot. Luke, Delaney and Parker are the very best kids in the world, and I am so grateful for their love and support. They are always proud of me and show it, and I love them very much. I thank them very, very much for being my kids.

● (1540)

I give a big thanks to my husband, my love, Michael, who has been a partner and my partner in this every step of the way. He has helped me be a better member of Parliament and a better leader because of his wisdom, his sense of humour and his support.

Although I will not be the leader after September 10, I know I still have a lot of work to do as a leader within our caucus and within our party and our movement. I am looking forward to working with our new leader and Conservatives around the country to do just that.

To close, as members know, and as the member for Waterloo mentioned, Michael and I did move into Stornoway and we will be there until the new leader is chosen. We have enjoyed being able to use it as a working house and a place for colleagues and others to gather, meet and talk about important issues facing our country.

Members will be interested to know that I am getting some mail at Stornoway addressed to past opposition leaders who lived there previously. Actually, I have gotten some mail for some of our previous leaders, and I plan to give it to them the next time I see them. However, if anyone on the Liberal side happens to know where Michael Ignatieff is these days, I think he may have won a prize in the lottery or something, because I got a piece of mail for him. Perhaps we can wait until after the next election, when the Liberals will be taking over Stornoway again. Maybe Michael Ignatieff will come back to visit and one of them can give him that piece of mail.

● (1545)

Mr. John Brassard: Leave it on the desk.

Hon. Candice Bergen: I will leave it on the desk.

All joking aside, again, I thank everyone for their kind words. It has been a fun six months and it has been an incredible session. Our work is not over, but I know we will all finish strong because that is the kind of people we are.

I thank everyone here, including all members of Parliament, all of the support staff and the Speaker. We are getting ready to rise and go back to our ridings, so I wish all members a wonderful summer as we head back and work for our constituents.

Godspeed to everyone in the days ahead and God bless Canada.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

ONLINE STREAMING ACT

The House resumed from June 20 consideration of the motion that Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment.

The Speaker: It being 3:45 p.m., pursuant to order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment to the motion at third reading of Bill C-11.

[*Translation*]

Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

[*English*]

The Speaker: The question is on the amendment. May I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of amendment to House*]

● (1600)

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 163*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
Albas
Arnold
Barlow
Benzen
Berthold
Block
Brassard
Caputo
Chambers
Cooper
Dancho
Deltell
Doherty
Dreeshen

Aitchison
Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett
Bergen
Bezan
Bragdon
Calkins
Carrie
Chong
Dalton
Davidson
d'Entremont
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)

Government Orders

Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Findlay
Généreux
Godin
Gourde
Hallan
Jeneroux
Kitchen
Kram
Kurek
Lake
Lawrence
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lobb
Maguire
Mazier
McLean
Moore
Morrison
Muys
O'Toole
Perkins
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Ruff
Schmale
Shields
Small
Steinley
Strahl
Thomas
Tolmie
Van Popta
Vidal
Viersen
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Ferreri
Gallant
Gladu
Goodridge
Gray
Hoback
Kelly
Kmiec
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Lantsman
Lehoux
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
MacKenzie
Martel
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Melillo
Morantz
Motz
Nater
Patzner
Poilievre
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Rood
Seheer
Seeback
Shipley
Soroka
Stewart
Stubbs
Tochor
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien
Vis
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams
Zimmer — 116

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Ali
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Bains
Barron
Battiste
Beech
Bennett
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blanchet
Blaney
Boulerice
Brière
Cannings
Chabot
Chahal
Champoux
Chen
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier
Dabrusin
DeBellefeuille

Alghabra
Anand
Angus
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Baker
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bendayan
Bérubé
Bittle
Blair
Blanchette-Joncas
Blois
Bradford
Brunelle-Duceppe
Casey
Chagger
Champagne
Chatel
Chiang
Collins (Victoria)
Coteau
Damoff
Desbiens

Desilets
Dhaliwal
Diab
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Fillmore
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Fry
Garneau
Garrison
Gazan
Gill
Green
Hajdu
Hardie
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Idlout
Jaczek
Joly
Jowhari
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Larouche
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maloney
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Morrice
Murray
Ng
Normandin
Oliphant
Pauzé
Petipas Taylor
Powlowski
Robillard
Rogers
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Singh
St-Onge
Tassi
Thériault
Thompson
Turnbull
Van Bynen

Desjarlais
Dhillon
Dong
Dubourg
Duguid
Dzerowicz
El-Khoury
Fergus
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gaheer
Garon
Gaudreau
Gerretsen
Gould
Guilbeault
Hanley
Hepner
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Ien
Johns
Jones
Julian
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lametti
Lapointe
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lemire
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mendicino
Michaud
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
O'Connell
O'Regan
Perron
Plamondon
Qualtrough
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sajjan
Samson
Savard-Tremblay
Schieffe
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sinclair-Desgagné
Ste-Marie
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Therrien
Trudel
Valdez
van Koeverden

Government Orders

Vandal
Vignola
Virani
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi— 209

Vandenbeld
Villemure
Weiler
Yip
Zarrillo

Gazan
Gill
Green
Hajdu
Hardie
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Idlout
Jaczek
Jones
Julian
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lametti
Lapointe
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lemire
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
May (Saainch—Gulf Islands)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mendicino
Michaud
Murray
Ng
Normandin
Oliphant
Pauzé
Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski
Robillard
Rogers
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Singh
St-Onge
Tassi
Thériault
Thompson
Trudel
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Villemure
Weiler
Yip
Zarrillo

Gerretsen
Gould
Guilbeault
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Ien
Johns
Jowhari
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Larouche
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maloney
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
O'Connell
O'Regan
Perron
Plamondon
Qualtrough
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sajjan
Samson
Savard-Tremblay
Schiefke
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sinclair-Desgagné
Ste-Marie
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Therrien
Trudeau
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Vignola
Virani
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi— 208

PAIRED

Members

Genius

Miller— 2

The Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.

The next question is on the main motion.

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.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded vote, please.

● (1610)

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

(Division No. 164)

YEAS

Members

Aldag
Ali
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Bains
Barron
Battiste
Beech
Bérubé
Bittle
Blair
Blanchette-Joncas
Blois
Bradford
Brunelle-Duceppe
Carr
Chabot
Chahal
Champoux
Chen
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier
Dabrusin
DeBellefeuille
Desilets
Dhaliwal
Diab
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Fillmore
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Fry
Garneau
Garrison

Alghabra
Anand
Angus
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Baker
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bendayan
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blanchet
Blaney
Boulerice
Brière
Cannings
Casey
Chagger
Champagne
Chatel
Chiang
Collins (Victoria)
Coteau
Damoff
Desbiens
Desjarlais
Dhillon
Dong
Dubourg
Duguid
Dzerowicz
El-Khoury
Fergus
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gaheer
Garon
Gaudreau

Aboultatif
Albas
Arnold
Barlow
Benzen
Berthold

NAYS

Members

Aitchison
Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett
Bergen
Bezan

Government Orders

Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Calkins
Caputo	Carrie
Chambers	Chong
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
Deltell	d'Entremont
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferri
Findlay	Gallant
Généreux	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	MacKenzie
Maguire	Martel
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Moore	Morantz
Morrice	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	O'Toole
Patzer	Perkins
Poilievre	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Rood	Ruff
Scheer	Schmale
Seebach	Shields
Shiplay	Small
Soroka	Steinley
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vis	Vuong
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Williams	Williamson
Zimmer — 117	

PAIRED

Members

Genuis

Miller— 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-21, An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms), be read the second time and referred to a committee, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this place to speak to Bill C-21. I am going to try to deal with a number of complex issues in a short amount of time and hope it works.

It relates to Bill C-21, and that is the use of firearms. I want to comment on some of the discussion during question period about the Portapique shootings. I think it is important to reflect on what I take away from the news media at this time, when I have a moment to say it. There is no chance of interrupting question period to put it into perspective.

As a Nova Scotian originally, I was devastated, as we all were, by the shootings at Portapique. The RCMP officer who was killed, Heidi Stevenson, was a friend of mine and I know her mother well.

It was awful to watch what happened. We will see what the Mass Casualty Commission produces as a result, but it is pretty clear to me, and I want to speak clearly to this, that the RCMP in Nova Scotia failed the public badly. I know a commission is looking at this, but the RCMP had information that was not shared. It failed to put out a warning and 22 people were killed. I know this inquiry is very important to all the families who lost loved ones.

There appears to me to have been an uncalled-for assumption by some members in question period, who put into question the integrity of the Minister of Public Safety and the Prime Minister's Office. I am not an apologist for the Liberals, but I thought that was not what the evidence revealed. When I look at the CBC reports of what they found out, it appears to me that in the aftermath of the shooting, the Nova Scotia RCMP was all too quick to try to obscure facts from the public, rather than reveal them.

It appears to me that the RCMP commissioner, Brenda Lucki, provided more transparency and provided real information. If anyone in PMO instructed her anything, it seems to me that it would have been to tell everybody what has happened and just be transparent. I am very concerned that we let any false rumours or assumptions to besmirch the reputations of others, including Brenda Lucki, be spread in this place.

It appears to me, as in a number of other shooting incidents, that sometimes the police get it wrong. They did not move in Uvalde, Texas, when they should have, to save those children. There is a common denominator that I discern, which is that when the RCMP is slow to move or the police are slow to move, it is because the people they would have to deal with are heavily armed. I do not find the police slow to move against unarmed protesters. I do not find the police slow to move against indigenous people. However, they delay when they are at risk for their own safety, all too often. It is not always, but all too often.

In the case of the Nova Scotia shooter, we know his name. I do not want to repeat it, because of the crimes he committed. However, he was well known to the RCMP and in the early hours after the shooting, the Nova Scotia RCMP, not the commissioner, put out false statements that he was not known to them. He was known personally to them. They had warnings about him.

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This goes to make the bridge and the connection to Bill C-21. This goes to a number of the provisions of Bill C-21 that, if Bill C-21 had been law at that time, could have saved lives. The neighbours of the multiple shooter in Nova Scotia, and we can just call him the evil dentist for the time being, reported him to the RCMP on numerous occasions, but no action was taken. Neighbours were so frightened of him that they literally sold their dream home and moved away, yet nothing was done to even conduct a search of the property or even to inquire why he is buying a car that looks just like an RCMP vehicle. Why does he dress up like an RCMP officer? These details were known in the community, and a number of them were reported to law enforcement authorities.

Could this bill have made a difference? I think it could have, but only if the RCMP or local police are prepared to use the information that comes to them. That is why one of the provisions in this bill that I particularly like is the ability to seek an *ex parte* motion on the strength of concerns from people who are concerned that some person may be threatening others, not just with firearms, by the way, but with crossbows or with explosive substances. This is really important. This is found under “Application for emergency prohibition order” in clause 4 of this bill, which would amend section 110 of the Firearms Act.

• (1615)

It is really important that we recognize what an *ex parte* order is. That means that people can go to the court without notifying the person they are scared of that they are going to court, and there can be an emergency search and seizure without a warrant. This violates every instinct of my being, searches without warrants, because I am a civil liberties lawyer, but there is a history of violence by people in the community, people we know.

There is a lot about this law that I hope we will have time to study thoroughly, and I want to speak to that. There are the red flag and yellow flag provisions, the ability to go to a judge without fear of retribution from someone who is well armed or who has crossbows. It may be in cases, as we know all too frequently, of intimate partner violence. It may be in cases of the random and reckless killing of others, as in the case of Portapique or the desperately sad case of Lionel Desmond, who killed his wife and mother and kids. He was, of course, suffering from PTSD from his service in our armed forces and did not get the help he needed, even though he had gone to a hospital the day before. There are many and varied circumstances when the presence of firearms in a home makes the difference between life and death, and where the provisions in Bill C-21 would indeed, I hope, save lives.

I want to turn to a process question at this point: Why rush this bill? I am very concerned that we just invoked time allocation on a bill that we had only had before us for debate for three hours. This bill is complex. It has many moving parts. The government itself has changed its views on key aspects of this bill between its version last year, which was also Bill C-21, and its version this year, which is the current Bill C-21. The Liberals changed their minds, and wisely, on the question of voluntary versus mandatory buyback. They changed their minds, wisely, on the question of any jurisdiction other than the federal government regulating guns. Those were wise choices, and this bill has changed in that way.

Bills get better when they are studied. Any attempt to achieve consensus will improve a bill. A decision on the government side that the Conservatives are only going to obstruct and delay and filibuster is entirely a justified conclusion, given conduct so far in this Parliament, but that does not excuse shortening the time for debate, shortening the time for study and shortening the time to try to find consensus in this place, which is possible.

I want to put forward some of the things that would help achieve consensus. One is to observe the rules, which are our rules. It does not take changing the Standing Orders to ban the practice of reading a speech. How does that connect? When a whip or a House leader in a party knows that they can rally however many MPs they have, like cannon fodder, and give them a speech to deliver in 10 minutes, they can clog up the works of this place with people giving speeches.

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

If the rules prohibited members from reading a speech and required them to express their thoughts in their own words, there would be fewer members rising to speak during a debate on a bill.

[*English*]

We need to get control of this so that we can have real debate among fewer MPs, because fewer MPs would be able to stand up and speak without a written speech.

The next thing we need to do is consider how many days we sit in this place. We have this panic this time of year, every year, as though a disaster will strike if we do not adjourn on a day that is set. We could sit for more days. We sit for far fewer days than the U.S. Congress, and even fewer days than the British Parliament.

I voted against time allocation, because this is a complicated bill and we should take the time it needs, to respect each other and come up with the best bill.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for her thoughts and reflections on this.

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I have a question regarding her criticism of the requirement for time allocation. I know she spends a lot of time in the House and is certainly aware of what goes on in this House. I am sure she is aware of the fact that on numerous occasions the Conservatives have been continually using any tactics possible to literally make the government grind to a halt. They do not even pick one or two issues that will be the hills they die on, but seem to just be willing to do anything at any point to stop debate.

Given the member's comments and concerns with respect to time allocation, I wonder if she can reflect on that.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I have seen that. Some time before the 2019 election, I remember we had a quick move by a Conservative, who was very pleased with it, to hoist a motion on a private member's bill to declare a Canadian day to acknowledge our Spanish heritage, and he managed to have a mandatory debate that lasted five hours. People were running out of things to say. They were saying that they liked sombreros and they made gazpacho, but there was nothing to say. Everybody was in support of the motion. It was clearly a delay tactic.

We have to work harder to preserve our basic core principles and values in this place, which are that every MP should participate in reasonable debate, within which we respect each other. It is not just the Conservatives; in another Parliament it will be somebody else. We cannot allow the worst conduct of any particular Parliament to drive lesser rights for members of Parliament in the next Parliament.

• (1625)

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Madam Speaker, I think there are some really germane facts about the Mass Casualty Commission that people need to understand, since the member brought it up. Certainly, that action was perpetrated by illegal guns, not by a legal gun owner, so I think that is important to point out.

The other important thing to point out here is that what we need to talk about in this House is so important that we should all get a chance to do it. The time allocation that the government has brought with respect to this bill is absolutely ridiculous. When we continuously see ministers misleading the House with information, it is very clear. We now know that we cannot trust anything they say, so how can we expect to move these bills forward? That is the point of debating this at the current time.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I would say this to the member for Cumberland—Colchester, in whose riding these killings took place. The Mass Casualty Commission has revealed some things and we have to wait for its final conclusions. I think it was a mistake not to require all of the RCMP officers who participated in the events to be part of the inquiry and to testify. I know some of the families have even withdrawn participation because they are so disappointed with the path of the inquiry. What I will say is this. Whether the guns were legal or illegal, many neighbours tried to tell the RCMP they were scared of this man and nothing was done.

Bill C-21 will help deal with that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I take issue with the same things that the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands does: the time-wasting tactics and the reduced time for debate prevent us from getting to the bottom of things.

I would like to know whether my colleague was as bothered as I was when we were called to vote twice instead of once to decide which Conservative member would speak. I cannot get over it and I would like to hear her thoughts on that.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I thank my Bloc colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé.

I think that closure, or time allocation, is wrong and undermines our democracy. We need to take the time to really examine the issues.

Bill C-21 is important. I think I support it, but it raises a number of issues on which I may want to see amendments, particularly regarding law-abiding citizens who use recreational firearms.

We must make every effort to come up with solutions together. That is why I oppose closure motions.

[*English*]

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I very much appreciate the opportunity to speak on Bill C-21, an act to amend certain acts and to make certain consequential amendments regarding firearms. I am proud to support such crucial legislation, which is going to make a real difference in keeping communities like mine safe and free of gun violence.

Gun violence is on the rise in Canada. It presents a serious and significant threat to communities across the country, in the streets and at home. Every six days, a woman is killed by an intimate partner. This is not just an urban statistic but a rural one. Women in rural Canada are particularly vulnerable to homicide by firearms. When it comes to domestic violence, shotguns and rifles, usually legally obtained and commonly kept in rural homes, have been called “weapons of choice” by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. In violent homes, these guns are the tools of choice to intimidate and control women living in rural Canada.

The data is clear. Since 2009, violent offences involving guns have increased by 81% and 47% of Canadians say that gun violence poses a serious threat to their community.

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There are going to be those who argue that if we regulate guns, we simply penalize law-abiding citizens and gangsters will still get their guns. That is simply not true. Most Canadian mass shooters did not have criminal records and got their guns legally. Let us recap: Fredericton, 2018, no criminal record, four dead; Danforth, 2018, no criminal record, two dead, multiple wounded; Quebec City, no criminal record, six dead, multiple wounded; and the Moncton shooter, 2014, three dead, multiple wounded.

Let us not pretend it is only gangs and illegal weapons that are the problem, because that is simply not true. Here is a sobering stat. The reality is that 75% of gun fatalities have nothing to do with gangs or criminals. It is because they are suicides.

When it comes to kids, let us look at facts. According to the Canadian Medical Association, one child in Ontario is hurt by a gun or firearm every single day, with 7% of those kids ending up dead.

This morning I woke up to an email from Susan, who is from my riding. She wrote me the following email: “Good morning MP Taleeb. Strongly recommend Bill C-21 to be given Royal Assent and pass in Parliament during this session. My brother was shot in his living room several years ago while writing a letter to me that was never completed.”

Susan is a real human being whose family has suffered the real consequences of firearms. This is why we must act. Gun violence affects people in all of our communities, whether rural, urban or suburban and all socio-economic backgrounds. We need to do more. We need to do more to protect our kids, our parents, our neighbours and everyone in between.

Every Canadian deserves to live without fear of violence. We know that inaction on gun control has real consequences. This is why, through Bill C-21, we are taking a national approach to protecting our communities from the harmful effects of gun violence.

Let us be clear about a couple of things. The bill is focused on putting a stop to tragedies, preventing gun crime and keeping our neighbours safe. It is a complex issue that requires a multi-faceted approach. That is exactly what we are doing through Bill C-21, through robust, direct action in key areas that puts in place a diverse strategy on this issue from all sides.

Action on handguns cannot wait. We are putting a national freeze on handguns to address the alarming increase in gun violence to allow a rapid and effective response. This means that, going forward, no one would be able to sell, purchase or transfer handguns by individuals within Canada or bring newly acquired firearms into the country. I want to stress this, because people are going to make a point about this. Legal gun owners would continue to possess and use their registered handguns, and could sell or transfer their registered handguns to exempted individuals or businesses.

The other key pillar of the bill centres on addressing the tragic trend between gender-based violence and guns. We see this link in our workplaces, communities, at home and online. This trend continues to persist. Protecting the safety and security of survivors of violence, particularly intimate partner violence and gender-based violence, is paramount. Victims need to feel heard and supported when they reach out for help.

That's why we are introducing red flag and yellow flag laws and expanding licence revocation. Through red flag laws, survivors can make an application to the courts for an emergency weapons prohibition order to immediately remove firearms for a period of up to 30 days from an individual who poses a danger to themselves or others.

● (1630)

[*Translation*]

It is also essential as a preventive approach, to ensure that victims of domestic and gender-based violence feel safe, to ensure protective intervention for those experiencing a mental health crisis, and to be able to intervene in cases where people are showing warning signs of violence.

Through yellow flag provisions, an individual's licence can be suspended for up to 30 days.

Combating gun trafficking and smuggling, and strengthening law enforcement to tackle gun violence are key aspects of our multi-faceted solution. With Bill C-21, we are working to increase the maximum penalties for firearms offences from 10 to 14 years in prison to keep our communities safe.

[*English*]

Taking the necessary steps to ensure we eradicate gun violence across our country will help build safer communities for generations to come. Through Bill C-21, we would ensure kids feel safer walking home from school, women will feel safer when dealing with violent partners, and racialized communities will worry less about being murdered while praying. That is what this bill would do.

This is legislation that might well have prevented the Quebec mosque shooting, the Danforth shooting, and the Moncton and Fredericton shootings. For the victims of gun violence, thoughts and prayers cannot be the best we have, but preventing the next attack by making it harder and harder for firearms to enter our communities would ensure the deaths of those who have passed would not be in vain.

● (1635)

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Madam Speaker, coming from a rural riding, I feel like I am probably a bit more well versed in what rural people think about guns than someone who comes from an urban riding.

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That being said, I would like to update the House on what the CMA policy says around the prevention of firearm violence. What it says is that they recommend guidance on the prevention of firearm violence, education for the safe handling of firearms and the regulation of firearms, while also identifying areas for further research. Recommendations include creating evidence-based education programs to prevent firearm violence, improving access to publicly funded mental health services and requiring strong record-keeping for firearms retailers, distributors and private sellers to help prevent the illegal acquisition and use of firearms.

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: Madam Speaker, it is striking the member quotes the CMA and he quotes the importance of being able to register and regulate firearms, yet it is curious his party has consistently opposed any efforts to register firearms. It has opposed firearms registries and pretty much everything, so I am glad he is looking at the research put out by medical professionals, who have said that, in fact, gun violence kills or harms one child every single day in the province of Ontario. That should mean something.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am not sure I understood. Perhaps something was lost in the interpretation. I do not know, but I am going to ask my colleague to clarify what he said.

He is telling us that it is all right if Bill C-21 does not address street violence, because statistics show that there are more gun deaths related to suicide than to street violence.

Is the member seriously comparing those two concepts?

Why did he give such a frivolous example?

[*English*]

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: Madam Speaker, I would not call it a futile example, because it is at once important for us to recognize that guns kill people, whether it is in the commission of crimes or when people are taking their own lives. Our obligation to protect Canadians is to make sure that we make it as difficult as possible for crimes to be committed and for people to use guns to take their own lives. We have an obligation to protect one another and to take care of our communities. This and mental health are all important elements that go into protecting society, but taking guns out of people's hands where violence can occur is a critical component and responsibility of the House.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I agree with much that was stated today, and for all those reasons, we need to see action happening around this issue. We know that 99,000 Canadians were victims of intimate partner violence, predominantly composed of women. Of those, in 500 incidents of intimate partner violence in that same year, 2018, firearms were present.

What does the member propose to tackle the increasing rates of intimate partner violence using guns?

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: Madam Speaker, through the use of the yellow flag and red flag I think we would start to move in that direction, but there is a lot more we need to do. Working together with organizations that have been advocating for us to do better, we will continue to do so. I think that means doing everything, includ-

ing ensuring people who pose a threat or risk to their partner cannot get their hands on guns. That is a very important step, and by passing this law we would make it harder for those who choose to engage in partner violence by taking that option off the table for them, which is critically important, because we have to protect our families, our communities and people in our society.

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, I just want to know how long the member researched that speech. Did he in fact make a material contribution or was it prepared for him?

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is more than welcome to come over here to look at my notes and look at my computer, if he would like.

● (1640)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, Correctional Service of Canada; the hon. member for Spadina—Fort York, Taxation.

[*English*]

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, as always, it is an honour and a privilege to be able to enter into debate on the important issues that are facing Canadians.

It is interesting. I have been listening closely to the debate that has transpired over the course of today. Contrary to the government's justification for moving closure, the only three hours and 26 or 24 minutes of debate that has taken place on a previous day on what is a significant piece of legislation that impacts millions of Canadians, millions of law-abiding firearms owners, failed to actually address the lofty submissions that the government has tried to make clear.

I am proud to be a member of Parliament who represents a large rural area. I have spoken to numerous constituents over the last number of days and weeks since the most recent iteration of the Liberals' attack on law-abiding firearms' owners and it fails to address the real problems that are leading to a significant increase in violent crime in our streets and a troubling and alarming increase in crime in rural areas. It fails on both those fronts.

I have spoken with many constituents, young, old, professionals, those who have grown up using firearms and those who came to use them later in life. Notably, two stuck out from my calls over the past couple of weeks. One was a retired school principal and his wife, who came into the hobby of sport shooting. They called and asked me to reach out to them to discuss Bill C-21. They pleaded with me to try to bring some sense to the debate that is taking place regarding firearms in this country, to which I promised that I would try. Unfortunately, it seems that politics and rhetoric have blinded those on Canada's left to actually having a constructive dialogue.

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I spoke yesterday with a 24-year-old man who is very concerned about how this would impact his ability to participate in his favourite hobby. He is a young, budding electrician, just finishing up his time at a polytechnic in Alberta, who is excited to get to work and start being able to invest in his hobby, yet the Liberals are taking away those opportunities.

Here we are again. Time and time again, when the Liberals dive in the polls, we can expect this sort of legislation to come forward. We see the importation of wedge issues into discourse within our country. We have seen it time and time again, certainly over the course of the time I have been elected. As I look back over my involvement in politics, this is the exact way the Liberals approach these issues.

Whether it be firearms, the issue of abortion or vaccines, an issue that was not controversial up until our Prime Minister decided to run an election campaign on it, that sort of wedge politics does not actually result in good public policy, and we see that being the case here today.

I did want to share a couple of statements that I think, hopefully, the governing Liberals would take seriously: “The long-gun registry, as it was, was a failure and I’m not going to resuscitate that”. Do we know who said that? It was the Prime Minister.

He went on to say, “I grew up with long guns, rifles and shotguns”. The Prime Minister said that, and then, going on, he said, “Yes, the RCMP guarding me had handguns and I got to play with them every now and then”, adding that the RCMP were very responsible around him and his siblings.

The now Prime Minister, then individual who was running to be Prime Minister of the country, went on to say:

I was raised with an appreciation and an understanding of how important in rural areas and right across the country gun ownership is as a part of the culture of Canada. I do not feel that there’s any huge contradiction between keeping our cities safe from gun violence and gangs, and allowing this important facet of Canadian identity which is having a gun.

• (1645)

“Having a firearm is ‘an important facet of Canadian identity.’” That was said by the then leader of the Liberal Party when he was running for office and needed some rural votes to build a coalition that obviously was calculated at the time to be successful. He did win the 2015 election, but how things have changed since that point in time. I can only come to the conclusion that it is a flip-flop, like many issues on which the Prime Minister takes a position. When things change, in terms of the political benefit or strategy of the day, that position in many cases takes a 180°. We see a backdoor gun registry: It is not a government-administered centralized gun registry, as we have seen in the past, but we have seen the Liberals implement that.

I have heard some of my colleagues talk today about some of the challenges when it comes to indigenous peoples, the reality of the indigenous way of life and the importance of firearms ownership that the Liberals may be taking away from them. I am a rural member of Parliament and a firearms owner. Having gone through the significant process, I will take a brief moment to say that all members of Parliament in this place, whether they own guns or not, should take the time and put in the effort to get their possession and

acquisition licences. I suggest they would be very pleased with the fact that we have a strong suite of rules and structures that ensure there is safe firearms ownership in this country. I find the lack of understanding with regard to that very troubling, when it comes to making public policy and the legislation we have before us.

We have a significant issue when it comes to rising crime rates. There is no question. Conservatives even endeavoured to split this bill. We brought forward a motion to see parts of this bill go forward, but the Liberals said no because it did not fit their political narrative. We see a significant issue when it comes to illegal guns. We see a significant issue when it comes to mental health. We see a significant issue when it comes to rural crime and the challenges with law enforcement in many areas of our country. Bill C-21 does not address those things. It is pure and simple: It does not.

It is unfortunate that while there are several million gun owners in this country, there are many people who have not had the opportunity to understand that firearms, in many cases, are tools. This would be no more evident than when I had a dialogue with the then minister of public safety in the last Parliament. We had a discussion in the aftermath of a very tragic circumstance. I will get to some recent revelations about that in just a moment. Firearms can be used as weapons, as can anything else used with the intent to harm. A firearm is also a tool. It is something that any rural individual who has farmed, ranched, hunted or whatever the case may be has used as either a weapon or a tool. I would suggest the Liberals should be very cognizant of that reality in this place.

I would simply highlight that the allegations made today in a published article related to the shootings in the Maritimes cannot be understated. The Liberals seem to dismiss how serious the possibility of political interference in an investigation is. As I read this article just prior to question period, I was astounded by how it appears there was blatant political interference in what was an absolutely tragic circumstance. It is something that should never have happened. The fact that the government, at least according to the allegations, would go to those lengths to try to leverage a tragedy such as that for its political benefit speaks to how all Canadians and all legislators in this place should be very hesitant about passing a bill when they are willing to go to those lengths to deceive Canadians.

• (1650)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Is the member not doing the exact same thing, Madam Speaker? He is literally doing what he is accusing the government of. He says that the government is using a crisis, an extremely horrendous event, as a political opportunity, but the Conservatives are doing that today by bringing this up during this debate and during question period. The member is doing it right now. He is using that incident as an opportunity to promote his political agenda.

I find it very rich and ironic that he would stand there and suggest that this side of the House used an opportunity when the Conservatives are the ones politicizing it right now.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, as I have referenced before, and many Conservatives have said, the government does not actually like it when there is an opposition party in this place. Liberals would rather have an audience. They will only accept criticism when it aligns with their narrow ideological and political perspective.

That member has audacity to suggest that Conservatives are endeavouring to bring what are incredibly serious allegations to the cornerstone of Canadian debate and democracy, when it is that party that is in government and when it is alleged that there are members of that cabinet, up to the Prime Minister's Office, involved in political interference in an RCMP investigation. The fact that they would suggest that somehow Conservatives bringing it up is political posturing is absolutely despicable behaviour—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: At this time, yes.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I expect better from any person who has the honour of sitting in this place.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. parliamentary secretary knows full well that he has had an opportunity to ask a question and he should hold off with any other comments until I recognize him.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Mirabel.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, there are a lot of good things in the bill and we will have the opportunity to propose amendments at committee.

However, the bill will not allow for the seizure of weapons being used to commit crimes. We know that the weapons being used right now in Montreal are, in many cases, being wielded by criminal groups and that they have been smuggled across the border illegally.

For several weeks, and even months, the Bloc Québécois has been calling on the Minister of Public Safety to create a registry of criminal organizations, so that police officers can apprehend their members and better fight crime in Montreal.

I wonder if my colleague agrees with the suggestion to create a registry like this as quickly as possible, so that we can rid Montreal of these weapons.

[*English*]

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, he is absolutely right. We need to ensure that law enforcement has the tools required. Whether on the streets of Montreal or on the gravel roads in Battle River—Crowfoot, law enforcement needs the tools that are required to ensure that the law can in fact be enforced.

When it comes to a gang registry, that is a very interesting idea that could very well have some merit. It also needs to expand to the fact that we have a problem with illegal guns coming over our borders. Border enforcement agents have shared with me how there is so little enforcement that they do not even know the half of many

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of the illegal activities and contraband items, including firearms, that could be coming across our borders.

It is somewhat rich and tragic, I would suggest, that instead of addressing the illegal firearms, and admittedly it would be a challenge to do so, they are targeting law-abiding firearms owners who are not the problem.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, the massacres that took place in Quebec, like the ones at the École polytechnique in Montreal and the mosque in Quebec City, were committed with assault weapons, not hunting rifles. Handguns, not hunting rifles, are what are being used in the shootings in the streets of Montreal.

Is it not true that the first thing that should be done is to restrict some people's ability to get their hands on these extremely dangerous weapons?

[*English*]

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, as is the case with any tragedy, and the member is right, law enforcement needs the resources to be able to get the job done. When it comes to those who are vetted through the regulations and structures that we have in this country, generally Canadians are pretty happy with them. They generally do a pretty good job of ensuring that firearms are well regulated, that there is safe structure and a system that works.

We need to address, however, all those who commit crimes, who smuggle those guns, and who are exposed to extremist ideologies and would perpetrate hate crimes. When it comes to those who are law-abiding firearms owners, that is not the problem. Let us deal with the hard, challenging issues to reduce crime on our streets and on gravel roads across the country to ensure that Canadians are actually protected.

• (1655)

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Madam Speaker, after being elected to Calgary City Council in 2017, I promised my constituents I would always fight for safer communities. Since my election to the House as a member of Parliament, I have not wavered on that commitment.

As we witness horrifying gun violence south of the border alongside a steady increase in crime involving firearms across our country, it could not be clearer that at this time we need decisive action. I am honoured to rise in the House of Commons today to speak in support of Bill C-21, our Liberal government's firearms legislation.

It is a privilege to be part of a government that understands and acknowledges the extent of the problem caused by guns in our communities. I am proud that our Minister of Public Safety has brought forward this robust piece of legislation.

Today, I am speaking to Canadians whose lives have been forever changed by gun violence and am sharing why I support our government's steps to create safer communities.

Government Orders

Gun violence is on the rise across Canada, whether the opposition would like to admit it or not. In my time serving on Calgary City Council, I recognized the urgency needed by all levels of government to tackle gun violence. This is why I brought forward Calgary's public safety task force and served as its chair.

We brought together stakeholders from the community, academia and law enforcement as well as three levels of government to engage with those who are most affected by gun violence. We acknowledged the problem, we listened to those affected and we proposed common sense steps our city government could take to address gun violence. We did not find all the answers, but we collectively acknowledged the need for a multi-faceted approach.

Today, I am fortunate to sit on this side of the House, where the urgency needed to address the fight against gun violence is matched by meaningful action. Illegal firearms are a significant threat to public safety in Canada and worldwide. The numbers do not lie. Violent offences involving guns have increased by over 80%. The proportion of homicides that involved a firearm rose from 26% of all homicides in 2013 to 37% in 2020. Specifically, handguns were the most dangerous weapon in 60% of firearm-related violent crimes between 2015 and 2020. A multitude of statistics point to the following conclusions: Gun crime is rising across Canada, and handguns are involved more often than not.

It is not strictly an urban issue, either. Data from Statistics Canada shows that gun crime rates are high and trending upward across rural Canada. Gun violence affects all Canadians, regardless of their postal code. We have seen too many horrific crimes at the hands of guns. Countless lives have been lost and families have been torn apart due to gun crime.

It is time to deal with this. When policy-makers talk about gun violence, we often get caught up in the statistics, trends and numbers. The numbers mask a harsh reality. Gun crime destroys lives and communities.

● (1700)

I hear stories on a near weekly basis about gun violence impacting Calgary, my home.

On May 10, Angela McKenzie, a mother of five beautiful children, was murdered by a man with a gun in the northeast quadrant.

On May 18, a student brought a handgun to Bowness High School in northwest Calgary. Thankfully, nobody was hurt that day. A few days later, a shooting in the quiet southwest Calgary neighbourhood of Acadia sent an 18-year-old to the hospital.

Last week, a man was shot in southeast Calgary. He passed away in the hospital on Wednesday.

On Friday, 25-year-old Autumn Levi Cross Child was killed by a man with a gun in northeast Calgary.

The victims are so much more than numbers in a police report. They are real people with names, families, friends, hopes and dreams. From January until last week, only a little more than halfway through the year, Calgary has seen 66 shootings. The effect that each of these shootings has had on the broader community is immeasurable. We must do better, and our government's proposed

amendments to the Criminal Code and Firearms Act are a massive step in the right direction.

The thing is, our Liberal government knows what we need to do and we are not afraid to do it. While opposition members close their eyes and pretend that gun violence is not an issue or say that we are simply punishing law-abiding firearm owners, on this side of the House we prefer to face reality and deal with the problems head-on. We are dealing with these problems through Bill C-21 because we cannot allow Canadian communities to continue to be irreparably damaged by criminals with guns.

This issue is personal to me. Like many Canadians, I have lost friends and loved ones in firearms-related incidents. I have seen the devastating impact that gun violence has brought upon communities. It is one of the reasons I put my name forward in my first election. As a Calgary city councillor, I was grateful for the opportunity to chair our city's public safety task force, serve on our police commission and learn more about gun violence.

We looked at studies and statistics and engaged with relevant stakeholders, including the Calgary Police Service, the Calgary Police Commission, community members directly impacted by gun crime and community leaders. Throughout our meetings, interviews, round tables and research, there was a recurring theme: We need to do more to keep guns off our streets.

Our government is following through on one of our public safety commitments to Canadians with Bill C-21. Bill C-21 would provide our government with several tools to reduce gun crime. It would implement a national freeze on the sale, purchase or transfer of handguns. Handguns are the preferred weapon of criminals, and action to keep them off of our streets cannot wait. They simply have no place in safe communities.

Our government is taking an evidence-based approach that would target illegal gun and gang activity. We are not targeting law-abiding gun owners with these measures. We are taking immediate action against the criminals who use guns to disrupt law and order and commit violent crimes by capping the market for their weapon of choice. This bill would directly result in fewer illegal handguns on Canadian streets.

• (1705)

Bill C-21 also proposes a red flag provision that would allow anybody to apply for an emergency weapons prohibition. This would immediately allow authorities to remove firearms from an individual who poses a danger to themselves or someone else—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member's time is up. I am sure he will be able to add more during questions and comments.

We have a point of order from the hon. Minister of National Revenue.

* * *

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to order made on Monday, May 2, I request that the hour of daily adjournment for the next sitting be 12 midnight.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to order made on Monday, May 2, the minister's request to extend the said sitting is deemed adopted.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-21, An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms), be read the second time and referred to a committee, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the citizens of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

I will look directly at the member and say that on this side of the House, we care about gun crime. I spent three years of my life invested in doing everything I could with respect to my job when it came to gun crime, and I believe that my colleagues share that same sentiment. We do not want to see another shooting.

My question is twofold. First off, I am sorry, as I noted the hon. member spoke about the people in his life who have been impacted by gun crime. That is horrible and we do not want to see it. However, the member cited a number of cases, and I am wondering if he knows whether the guns used were legally or illegally obtained, and why we are not going after illegal guns in Bill C-21. Second, how does he reconcile this speech with the fact that we have lowered sentences with conditional sentence orders in Bill C-5?

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo for his heartfelt comments.

Government Orders

To address his question, I can tell him that the Calgary Police Commission provided data several years ago on guns used in gun crime. The majority of them were legally obtained. That is an important statistic for the House to know, and we need to make sure we take action on that.

Guns are smuggled across the country, as we know, and that is why our government has taken strong action in supporting CBSA to ensure that we combat smuggling with stricter penalties.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot has a point of order, and I hope it is not a point of clarification.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, it is a point of order related to the motion the Minister of National Revenue moved. As agreed to by the House, there is the requirement that another House leader concur with the government, and certainly—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): As the hon. member knows full well, I have ruled on this on a number of occasions, especially yesterday. I will remind him that as the Chair has previously pointed out, the motion adopted on May 2 simply states that a minister must have the agreement of another House leader. It does not require that the parties to the agreement communicate to the House, and it is not my responsibility to judge that. Therefore, I remind the member, and any other members who wish to stand on this, that I will not accept any other points of order on the motion the minister has tabled.

The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

• (1710)

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, we are currently discussing a bill that would strengthen gun control. We are prepared to study it and analyze it in committee.

However, as the Montreal police have fully shown and documented, most gun violence is committed with illegal weapons, contraband weapons.

Why is it that the government is not taking steps to stop this smuggling, despite all the pressure we have been exerting for a registry of criminal organizations and more measures at the border?

[English]

Mr. George Chahal: Madam Speaker, this bill does address some of the issues on smuggling at the border that have been brought forward by my colleague.

I also want to acknowledge that in urban centres, our government has supported municipalities through the building safer communities fund by providing Canadian municipalities with \$250 million for crime prevention. It is money to make sure youth in our communities, the kids who are vulnerable, do not get involved in this type of activity. I would love to work with the members across the aisle to ensure that we learn from each other to see what is working well across Canada and to make sure we support each other in our communities.

Government Orders

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member mentioned the red flag provision, which is an important provision. Community members are saying, though, that the process the bill outlines is an onerous one because people have to petition the courts to put it in place.

How would the government address this issue? We need quick action when it comes to saving lives.

Mr. George Chahal: Madam Speaker, we want to bring forward red flag and yellow flag provisions to make sure we avoid some of the challenges and make sure that when folks who should not have guns pose a threat to their partners, their guns can be taken away, as needed.

We need to continue to work with many of our stakeholders. I spent a lot of time as chair of the public safety task force in the city of Calgary. I worked with community members. I heard from community leaders and stakeholders who really wanted us to move on these issues, and I am happy that we have addressed them in Bill C-21.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, from time to time, I have been critical of the record of the Liberal government when it comes to fiscal matters. It has consistently shown that it has no clue how an economy works and what policies are good for Canadians.

In fairness though, I feel I must congratulate the Prime Minister and the Minister of Public Safety for their unintentional boost to the Canadian economy with Bill C-21. It is so rare that a Liberal policy is designed to provide economic stimulus that I feel this is worth noting.

Maclean's magazine's Ottawa bureau chief Shannon Proudfoot featured an interview with gun shop owner Ryan Simper. He said that after this bill was announced, his store sold every handgun it had in stock. Apparently, there is no better stimulus for the economy than scarcity of a product.

Maybe if the Liberals truly want to stimulate the economy, they should try other bans and see if that helps. I encourage them to look for areas where there may be an abundance of supply and lagging sales, and see if they can help those sectors of the economy. Maybe if they banned broccoli, for example, it would help vegetable sales. In the absence of a true economic plan, such acts would at least show them to be doing something worth while.

Handguns are already well regulated in this country. Anyone who wishes to own one legally must take a safety course and undergo background checks. It is an extensive, time-consuming process, and one that gun owners understand is there to provide reasonable protections for society.

However, those protections, like this bill, do nothing to stop the flow of illegal handguns in Canada. Gun violence and gun crime problems in Canada do not come from those who have taken a firearms safety course and have been cleared for gun ownership after their background check.

Responsible handgun owners, the ones targeted by this bill, are collectors or target shooters. They are not criminals. Those who want to join their ranks should not be prohibited from doing so

merely because the government does not know how to deal with crime and the flow of illegal firearms being smuggled into Canada.

To me, it seems that the government, not knowing how to deal with the problem, wants to pretend to show the public that it is doing something. This bill will not help, but the government will not admit that. I think everyone in the House can agree that both gun violence and gun crime are not acceptable in Canadian society. Where we might differ is how to best deal with the issue.

It has been my experience that the Liberals are so blinded by their ideology that suggestions for improvement to their legislation fall on deaf ears. Nevertheless, I would like to offer them some ideas to accomplish their goal of reducing gun crime in Canada.

The idea of strengthening border controls and authorities to combat firearms smuggling, trafficking and related offences is something we can all agree on. I call on the government to make that the focus of this legislation. Drop the attacks on legal, law-abiding gun owners and concentrate on those who are already breaking Canadian law.

I should also point out that there are contradictions in this piece of legislation. There are some individuals who will be exempted from the provisions and would still be allowed to purchase handguns. That includes elite sports shooters who compete or coach in a handgun discipline recognized by the International Olympic Committee and the International Paralympic Committee. The exemption makes sense.

We Canadians are proud of our Olympians, and we have had some success at pistol shooting competitions. In 1984, Linda Thom won the gold medal in pistol shooting at the Los Angeles Olympics, the first Canadian woman to win an individual gold medal in the summer Olympics since 1928 and the first Canadian to win a gold medal in the summer Olympics since 1968. She was given the honour of carrying Canada's flag at the closing ceremonies.

As an elite shooter, she would still be allowed to purchase a handgun if this legislation were to pass unchanged. However, what about those who want to follow in her footsteps?

• (1715)

I cannot think of any sport where one becomes a world-class athlete overnight. It takes hard work, dedication and training, usually for years. Wayne Gretzky had to learn to skate before he could even begin to put a puck in the net. How will the next Linda Thom become available, or a future Canadian Olympian become an elite shooter?

Government Orders

Even members of the government must understand that it requires practice, practice and more practice for a shooter to reach the level necessary to compete at the Olympics. Under Bill C-21, new participants in this sport would not be allowed to purchase a handgun to practice with. Apparently, the Liberals have decided that this is one sport they do not want to see Canada excel in.

The Conservatives have always stood for common sense firearms safety and strong consequences for those who commit firearms offences. We do not understand why the government wants to punish law-abiding firearms owners and make it difficult, if not impossible, for those who might want to take up a sport such as pistol shooting.

The government was first elected in 2015, and gun crime has gone up steadily each year, despite its arbitrary bans and its complicated and expensive buyback program. This increase in gun crime is not because those who own weapons legally are suddenly turning to lawlessness, but because illegal weapons are being smuggled into Canada and used by criminals. It has taken seven long years for the government to understand that there is a problem.

This belated realization comes only after it blocked a Conservative bill to toughen consequences for gun smuggling. If only it had concentrated on crime and criminals, I could have applauded its better-late-than-never efforts. Instead, it is once again targeting responsible gun owners who have committed no crimes, which makes us wonder how serious it is about really being tough on crime. After all, this is a government that intends to remove through other legislation mandatory minimum sentences for robbery with a firearm, weapons trafficking, discharging a firearm with intent, using a firearm in the commission of offences, and possession of a firearm knowing its possession is unauthorized, and more.

Members will forgive me for thinking that this new revelation that gun smuggling needs to be dealt with is just a lot of words. There are already laws on the books to deal with such acts if the government has the will and the police have the resources to enforce them. If it were serious about crime, it would not be trying to target responsible gun-owning Canadians who have followed all the rules and restrictions that come with gun ownership. Of course, they are an easy target for a government that does not seem to know how to address the issues of most concern to Canadians.

Canadians are tired of false promises from the government. This bill once again proves that the Liberals do not understand where they should be focusing their efforts in order to protect the people of Canada.

• (1720)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, if we want to know how seriously the Conservatives are taking this particular issue, we need look no further than that last speech when the member compared purchasing a gun to purchasing broccoli.

Nonetheless, I found his speech very interesting when he was talking about how the Conservatives have always understood the need to stand up against illegal gun use, the need to strengthen border measures, and the like. He sat on this side of the House when

Stephen Harper was the prime minister, and he had a lot of opportunity to ask him why he was massively reducing the resources at the border to help deal with these issues.

Why is the issue of illegal guns coming across the border suddenly so important to the Conservatives now, when the member clearly did not raise the issue when he sat on this side of the House?

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, from time to time, it is nice to correct some of the facts. I am not sure if the member remembers this, but I was not here before 2015.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is now more of a debate happening between members, as opposed to the hon. member answering the question. I know he is able to answer the question without any help.

The hon. member for Edmonton Manning.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, I will forgive him because of his short memory. They are known for their short memories on the other side. I will also forgive him for not understanding the difference between broccoli and firearms.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. parliamentary secretary is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I do want to apologize to the member. That was my error. He conducts himself so well in the House that I assumed he had been here for a very, very long time. I apologize.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague the following question.

Bill C-21 is a half measure, because it will have no real impact on organized crime and illegal weapons. With regard to organized crime, the Bloc Québécois has introduced Bill C-279, which aims to create a list of criminal organizations.

Would the member agree with this kind of crackdown?

• (1725)

[*English*]

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, the focus of my speech and those of my colleagues is on being tough on crime, and on making sure the borders are protected and smugglers do not bring illegal guns to Canada. Any effort that goes in that direction is well supported by us.

That should be the spirit of any bill brought to this place, or to be brought to this place in the future. This is the only point that we disagree with the Liberals on because they are not focusing on where the problem is. They are going after law-abiding Canadians, which is something we do not like to see and we do not support.

Private Members' Business

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, as my colleague knows, there have been shootings in the streets of Montreal for several weeks. There are neighbourhoods where children are afraid to go home after school. They hear bullets whistling through the air. Reducing access to guns, which are dangerous and are killing people in our streets, would be a good first step with Bill C-21, which is not perfect and we must improve.

Would it not be a good idea to ban assault weapons and reduce access to handguns?

[English]

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, we would like to see a complete solution to a big problem that is facing Canada and Canadians. We do not want to see any crimes happening in any part of Canada, whether in an urban city or in rural areas.

We believe that this bill is falling short in dealing with the problem and bringing the remedy needed to make sure that we have solutions to the big issues we are facing.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was really interested in what the member said about exclusions. He said there are exclusions for an elite shooters or marksman.

What I am wondering about is this: If someone is not already an elite marksman, how does one learn to become one without access to the equipment needed to learn the skills?

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, it is a question of fairness too. That is why I said that this bill is falling short on so many fronts. One of them is this point.

The government should have thought about it longer and deeper to do a better job of bringing a good piece of legislation forward that would really help Canadians.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my speech will be interrupted and I will resume after Private Members' Business.

First of all, I would like to preface my remarks by saying that the gun owners I know, and I suppose out of all the people I know, I do not know who owns guns, but of those that I know who own guns, I can say they are sterling citizens. I am thinking of a couple of individuals in particular. They are pillars of the community and are constant volunteers.

It is very important that we do not impugn legal gun owners because they do take their responsibilities seriously. As a matter of fact, I was on the phone with a constituent today who is a gun owner. He was not happy with all aspects of this bill, obviously. However, he was quite happy to conform to all the responsibilities of gun ownership that are conferred on him by the government.

Also, I would like to say that I understand the cultural value of hunting. As a matter of fact, many years ago I had the opportunity to travel to Rouyn-Noranda in northern Quebec during moose hunting season. I was able to see first-hand how deeply ingrained the practice is in the community. Moose hunting is something that

brings the community together. There is a deep reverence for the animal. I remember actually attending a moose calling competition in a church basement and people took it very seriously.

However, I will come back to that after Private Members' Business.

● (1730)

The Deputy Speaker: It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

AN ACT TO CHANGE THE NAME OF THE ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF CHÂTEAUGUAY—LACOLLE

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.) moved that Bill S-207, An Act to change the name of the electoral district of Châteauguay—Lacolle, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I just want to say what an honour it is for me to sponsor Senator Dalphond's Bill S-207 in the House. The bill would change the name of my riding from Châteauguay—Lacolle to Châteauguay—Les Jardins-de-Napierville.

I would like to remind the House why this bill was introduced. The name Châteauguay—Lacolle is a historical error dating back to the previous electoral redistribution. The name of the municipality of Lacolle is in the riding name, but the city of Lacolle is not in the riding. A correction is therefore in order, and the best name is Châteauguay—Les Jardins-de-Napierville because the vast majority of municipalities in the RCM of Jardins-de-Napierville are in my riding and the other municipalities in the area I represent makeup the greater Châteauguay region.

The simple fact that the municipality of Lacolle is not in my riding and that this bill would result in a complete representation of my riding should suffice to convince my hon. colleagues here in the House that this name change is necessary.

However, some of my colleagues might be surprised that I am once again introducing this bill. Some may have thought that the issue was resolved because the House unanimously agreed to pass the bill in 2017. I will explain why the House needs to pass the bill again, after it already had the support of all members of Parliament.

This bill was first introduced in the 42nd Parliament as Bill C-377. It was unanimously supported by the House of Commons, made it through committee without amendment, was passed at third reading and then sent directly to the Senate.

The bill was sailing from one legislative step to the next. However, the Senate committee was just preparing to study Bill C-377 as the 42nd Parliament was drawing to a close, so there was a race against time to get the bill passed. Unfortunately, the Senate committee did not have time to study the bill before Parliament was dissolved. This meant that the bill, which my constituents had been waiting for, died on the Order Paper right before the finish line.

Today, I am continuing what the House started four years ago by introducing Bill S-207. The bill has already been approved by the Senate, and once approved by the House, it will pass at last.

I would like to remind my colleagues in the House why this bill is crucial to the residents of my riding. I will tell the story behind it, which speaks to its fundamental necessity.

This name change has been close to my heart since the beginning of my political career. I committed to getting the name changed the first time I spoke in the House of Commons in 2015.

Since being elected, I have always encouraged achievements that benefit the people of Châteauguay—Lacolle. Whether it is through investments in local infrastructure that have a direct impact on my constituents or through financial assistance to help many farms in my region go green, I have long been at the service of the people I represent on a daily basis. Today, by introducing this bill, I am again at their service.

• (1735)

I could go into much more detail about the circumstances that led to my constituency being misnamed. However, as my time is limited, I am counting on the goodwill of my colleagues here in the House to support Bill S-207, a crucial bill for my constituents.

[English]

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, why now? With the redistribution that is happening, is this an important time for this to be coming up?

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Mr. Speaker, it was actually a question that I faced back in 2018. It is because it is important to my constituents. It does have to do with this error in the fact that there is a municipality that finds itself in my name that is not in the riding. Yes, there is a separate process going on, but that is something that is separate from this House. As Senator Dalphond graciously had Bill S-207 adopted in the Senate, I am seizing on this opportunity to make this happen and I count on the member's support.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. She represents a region that is dear to my heart. My grandfather was from Saint-Édouard, just outside Napierville.

However, I find it hard to understand why we are using time in the House of Commons to talk about this issue when there are other tools and processes for achieving this goal.

Is there not something more fundamentally important we could discuss, something that could directly help the people in her riding?

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague. Saint-Édouard is in my riding and is one of the muni-

Private Members' Business

palities in the RCM of Jardins-de-Napierville. It is truly a cornerstone of the region.

Frankly, my constituents have been asking me for this name change since my first election campaign. It was the late mayor of Napierville, Jacques Déglise, who first suggested it, and this bill is, in part, in honour of the late mayor, who was highly regarded and respected in the region.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the 2015-19 Parliament, my predecessor attempted, by similar means, to change the name of my riding, Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, to Saint-Hyacinthe—Acton, so that all constituents would feel represented.

Unfortunately, the bill died in the luxurious sleepy hollow known as the Senate. I do not want my colleague's bill to meet the same fate. I am going to try to take advantage of the current redistribution process to also propose changing the name of my riding.

However, if I were to propose a bill to change the name of my riding, could I count on my colleague's support?

• (1740)

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I do remember the very good discussions I had with my colleagues about the fact that it is important for constituents to feel represented by the name of their riding. It is not a frivolous matter. It is truly symbolic.

My colleague can count on my support if he ever introduces a bill on the same subject in the House.

[English]

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, although I share my colleague from Peace River—Westlock's curiosity about why this would take priority at a time when there are so many important issues facing our country, I want to ask a question more broadly about the need for democratic reform in this country.

Alberta is significantly under-represented, both in this place and in Canada's Senate. I am wondering if the member would agree that this is an inequity that needs to be addressed. Although the most recent redistribution does take a small step in the right direction, the current inequity is not wholly addressed. Would the member agree that it needs to be?

Private Members' Business

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his thoughtful question, and it can be answered in part by the question that was asked earlier. There is a process going on now that is the thoughtful place for that kind of discussion, where MPs indeed can present their views in front of the commissioners. This was not done, unfortunately, in this case. This was an omission that occurred in the last redistribution. That is why I am here today: to correct a wrong.

* * *

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that messages have been received from the Senate informing the House that the Senate has passed the following bills, to which concurrence of the House is desired: Bill S-4, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Identification of Criminals Act and to make related amendments to other acts, COVID-19 response and other measures, and Bill S-9, an act to amend the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act.

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AN ACT TO CHANGE THE NAME OF THE ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF CHÂTEAUGUAY—LACOLLE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill S-207, An Act to change the name of the electoral district of Châteauguay—Lacolle, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am a bit out of breath after running over here from the all-important operations committee.

I am pleased to rise on this private member's bill. I want to address all my comments to the bill itself. I am sure the member who presented it is a wonderful parliamentarian. I served with her on OGGO, but I have to say I am not a big fan of this bill. It is almost like it is “bad private members' bills” week. Earlier, I had to speak to Bill C-245, which was talking about bringing the \$35 billion in the wasteful infrastructure bank over to be \$35 billion to add to the wasteful infrastructure department.

I have to say that with this bill it is like “déjà vu all over again”, to quote Yogi Berra. I recall actually speaking to this bill about four years ago in the 42nd Parliament. I was not a fan of it then, and I am not a fan of it now. The big reason is that I have to wonder, of all the things going on in Quebec right now, or in Canada or around the world, if this is what we should be discussing in the House of Commons and taking up two hours of our time.

For example, I look at issues in Quebec right now. I think in the member's own riding we have an increase in problems at Roxham Road again. We have heard from the Government of Quebec of the incredible strain on its social services from these illegal or irregular crossings, however we wish to term them, but I think that is a bigger, more important issue we should perhaps be debating right now.

Of passports, we hear repeatedly in the House from across the country. In Edmonton, people are actually lining up at 12:30 in the morning to get passports, so that is not quite a day in advance, but it is the same problem in Quebec. We actually heard from Trois-

Rivières that calls for help from citizens at the Trois-Rivières constituency office were increasing. They have been approaching decade highs daily for three weeks now. Why are we not talking about a private member's bill addressing that issue?

There is a labour shortage. I recall, actually now for several years, hearing about the labour shortage in Quebec. It is hurting productivity. It is hurting the economy of farmers, retail and aerospace. We cannot get workers in that province. Again, this is directed at the PMB. I would think it is a much more important issue we should be chatting about right now, as well as hurrying up the access to foreign workers.

Of course, there is inflation. It is 6.8%, and we will be hearing new inflation numbers tomorrow. My guess is that it is going to rocket past 7%. We hear in Quebec, again, about the shortage of bodies that is going to be driving wage inflation and making the inflation issue more troublesome. One would wonder if that is not a more important issue to be debating right now than a name change for a riding.

There are border issues and the ArriveCAN app, or “Arrive-CAN'T” app, as we call it. This is a quote from the newspaper:

It's time to bid farewell to the ArriveCAN app, say border-city mayors, tourism industry leaders and others who complain Canada's stringent COVID-19 rules for international travellers are encouraging would-be U.S. visitors to spend their tourist dollars at home.

Estelle Muzzi, mayor of the Quebec border community of Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle, says that the rules are a drag on border crossings that are vital for the local economies. I think that mayor might actually be in the member's riding. Here we have the mayor saying she has issues with ArriveCAN and passports, and we have to wonder why we are talking about a riding change, especially right now.

With the redistributions, the ridings are going to change completely in Quebec, probably. My own riding is getting split into Edmonton West and Edmonton Winterburn. It would be strange for me to perhaps change the name of my riding right now to “Edmonton West Edmonton Mall” or “Edmonton Kanye West”, as I jokingly call it, knowing that in two years the riding was going to change to Edmonton Winterburn.

Again, we have a lot more important issues we can talk about. I want to give some examples of some PMBs that have come through the House recently from my Conservative colleagues that, perhaps, are better examples of how parliamentarians should be spending their time.

Bill C-296, which is from the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, is a PMB to amend the criminal code to find the person convicted of abduction, sexual assault and murder of the same victim in respect of the same event—

• (1745)

The Deputy Speaker: The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I think we have to be somewhat cautious when we say, “We do not like this bill, and here are all the alternatives”, then list off a bunch of other issues. I am just suggesting that if we were to apply that principle, we could really be off topic on a wide variety of things, so this is more of a caution.

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, I would just point out that, typically in this type of debate, members are provided broad latitude. On the particular matter, as the member for Winnipeg North often points out, I am sure that the arc of the member's speech will eventually come back to why the bill ought to have been replaced with something more meaningful, as the member for Edmonton West is trying to point out.

The Deputy Speaker: I welcome the member's input on this matter. I will also caution folks that we need to stick to the bill as best we can, but we do provide a lot of leeway in those discussions.

The hon. member for Edmonton West.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, I understand that the member for Winnipeg North has to get his comments in. I think it has been probably 35 seconds since he actually last spoke in the House, so even when it is nonsensical, he has to get a word in.

These bills I am talking about are much like the other issues I spoke about earlier, which have perhaps more importance to the people of the riding than the one we are talking about. It is unfortunate that the member for Winnipeg North has to stand and try to deflect from what I said is part of a bad private member's bill. Rather than actually discussing the merits of it, he has to try and interrupt me.

Getting back to the example, I am sure it would be something that people in the riding would probably care more about. We know that there is a crime issue: We hear it non-stop in the House. On gun crime in Quebec, we have heard of it in Laval and of shootings in Montreal. The bill perhaps could have been addressing these issues, as well. There is denying parole for persons involved in the crimes of sexual assault, abduction and murder. They would perhaps get 25 years without parole.

Another one that could have been considered instead is from the member for North Okanagan—Shuswap. We have a bill that would amend the Criminal Code by replacing the term “child pornography” with “child sex abuse material”. It would take away the word “pornography”. Why that is important, as the member explained, is that pornography, by and large, whether one is for or against it, generally is done legally and with consent, whereas child pornography, of course, is a disgraceful, disgusting and horrific crime and should not in any way be used with any wording that implies consent.

The member for Simcoe North actually brought forward an important bill. We hear about the housing crisis in Vancouver, and al-

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so in Quebec, that is out of control and is being pushed by money laundering. The bill put forward would have tackled the money laundering issue.

From the member's home riding, Senator Housakos brought in Bill S-203. Rather than the bill before us, this is something decent from the Senate. It is a bill that provides for the development of a federal framework designed to support autistic Canadians, their families and caregivers. This is an example of a bill brought through by someone from Quebec into the House that would have tangible, material benefits for the people of Quebec. We have been trying to get a national framework for autism in the six and a half years that I have been in the House. The member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin has brought it up several times in a private member's bill that was voted down by this government. This is a perfect example of something that would be fulsome and a help to the riding itself.

The member for Lévis—Lotbinière has a bill that would bring changes to the EI Act and increase from 15 to 52 weeks the maximum benefits paid because of illness, injury or quarantine. This is an issue that affects all Canadians. In my previous life, as we call it, before I got into this, I was in the hotel business. I also had a side involvement as an employment insurance appeals commissioner: We would hear appeals for EI. I did this for two years, and it was very enjoyable. We would hear from people who came before the tribunal who had been cut off from EI, or were not eligible for EI, and were suffering from cancer, MS or ALS. They were from all walks of life. Here is a bill being brought forward from a member from Quebec. It is something that would have helped everyone in the riding who had been sick.

I realize that I am running out of time, but I have a lot more examples of what I consider better bills. Again, I served with the member on the all-important OGGO committee, and these criticisms are directed specifically at the bill and not at the member. I understand her reasons behind putting the bill through.

• (1750)

I just think that when a member has a once-in-a-Parliament chance to bring forward a bill that would be helpful to the members of her community, it would be something different from this. It should be something meaningful to the people in the community and help people, as opposed to something as relatively meaningless as a name change.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to talk about the issues and priorities that matter to Quebecers.

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The bill we are debating this evening is a unique one, given that it has to do with changing the name of a riding. I sympathize with the idea and think the new name is quite lovely. “Les Jardins-de-Napierville” has a nice ring to it.

However, as other members have mentioned, the problem is with the decision to prioritize this issue over other challenges faced by families, workers, seniors and students in our communities.

Time in the House is limited, and this time is a precious commodity used for advancing issues that are important to the people we represent, our constituents. I am sure that the people of what is currently known as the riding of Châteauguay—Lacolle are very happy about this initiative and will be happy with the new name, but we are spending a lot of time to change a name that could have been changed through other means, for example, through the Commissioner of Canada Elections.

There are many people who are struggling and suffering right now. There are plenty of challenges that I think deserve, as a matter of priority, the benefit of the House's time and the potential debates between parliamentarians.

I met with representatives of the Unifor union recently, and I would like to talk about a problem that affects a lot of people, namely, offshoring of jobs. It affects several sectors but is particularly prevalent in the telecommunications sector. This is related to something that is very topical and that may even affect people in my Liberal Party colleague's riding. For the first time in its history, the union representing Bell Canada clerical workers has a strike mandate. A total of 4,200 people in Ontario and Quebec are going to engage in a labour dispute, perhaps for the first time, because they are fed up with seeing their jobs sent overseas. A few years ago, this unit had 15,000 clerical workers at Bell Canada. Has there been less work to do at Bell Canada in the last 20 or 25 years? Of course not, but the jobs are being moved to the Philippines, Morocco and Tunisia. These people want to have the means to continue working here in Canada, at home, because it is still necessary.

The most infuriating thing about this is that companies like Bell Canada get federal subsidies to cover part of their development and infrastructure. They owe nothing in exchange, and jobs are being relocated to other countries. I think that this is an issue we as parliamentarians should address and find solutions for.

Unifor has proposed a solution that would not necessarily entail obligations to keep jobs in Canada right away. I personally would be prepared to go there, and I believe the NDP would as well. At the very least, we must demand transparency from companies that receive tax dollars and then send jobs offshore. Transparency would reveal information about which jobs have been offshored and details about contracts and why those jobs did not stay in Canada.

I would like to draw the attention of the House to this possible imminent labour dispute, which could start in about two weeks and will affect thousands of people in Quebec and Ontario. Offshoring jobs is a serious issue that I think deserves our time, as well as solutions and ideas from members of all parties.

As we are speaking of the federal government's role, we could also spend more time talking about the quality of the federal government's services overall. In many respects, quite a few govern-

ment organizations and departments have become dysfunctional and completely inefficient.

I spoke about this another time, but I want to come back to this subject. There is a woman in my riding who qualified for employment insurance and has been waiting for her cheque since February. It is now June. That is a rather long time. She has been forced to borrow money from friends and family and to rack up debt on her credit card to pay for groceries and rent. These are ineffective strategies. I believe that, as parliamentarians, we have a responsibility to put pressure on a government to provide its services. I am not telling my colleagues anything new. The passport delays right now are absolutely appalling. It is a catastrophe.

● (1755)

People are waiting in line for 24 or even 36 hours. They are becoming frustrated and anxious. It is not simply a matter of saying that they are just travellers and vacationers anyway, so it is no big deal. First of all, they have a right to this service. The government is failing to deliver on time. Second, after two years of the pandemic, many people have saved up enough money to be able to afford a dream vacation for their children and their family abroad. Now they are losing the thousands of dollars they invested in that trip. They are being robbed by a government that cannot meet the demand, when this situation was foreseeable.

I was absolutely astonished to hear the Prime Minister tell us, in response to a question today, that he saw this coming. He obviously did not see it coming, because if he had, he would have prepared for it and put some resources into it. What we are seeing now is horrible. People are shouting at security guards. The rules are chaotic and contradictory, and they differ from one office to another. The police have even had to intervene.

These are all key issues.

The government's failures are affecting the businesses in my Liberal colleague's riding. All the delays at Immigration Canada are causing major problems, whether they have to do with permanent residency applications, work visas, student visas, temporary worker permits or other things. I am sure that there are many family farms in her riding that are unable to keep up because they need these temporary workers. It is taking a long time. We are experiencing a labour shortage and these businesses do not have the means to quickly find workers for the upcoming summer and for the harvest at the end of the summer, in August and September.

The labour shortage is causing major challenges, and the government is unable to make these services essential for economic development, but also out of respect for the people who are waiting for these documents and whose applications are getting lost in a federal bureaucracy that seems rather disorganized these days.

One major issue that I am sure also affects people in the Châteauguay and Napierville region is the housing crisis. Rent prices are ridiculously high. I am very proud of the NDP's negotiation with the minority government. The agreement contains a new definition of affordable housing. Real affordable housing will be built through projects funded by the CMHC. I am very proud of that, and this will make a difference in the future. It will help my constituents and my colleague's constituents as well.

People who are looking to buy their first home or who are wondering whether they will be able to keep their homes, in light of what is going on, also have concerns. We could have used this time today to talk about the solution, about support for homeowners or potential homeowners who have concerns. What are they concerned about? They are concerned about the high likelihood of an interest rate hike.

According to a recent survey, one in four homeowners is genuinely worried that they will have to sell their home if interest rates go up slightly. We are not talking about a 5% increase, but a few percentage points. These interest rates would look like ones we have seen before—

• (1800)

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: I believe we have a point of order from the hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of the chamber that I do not believe we have quorum here in this place and online. While it is not quite 6:30, we are in fact required to have more than 20 members in this chamber, and at my count we do not.

The Deputy Speaker: Let us give it a second to make the count.

And the count having been taken:

The Deputy Speaker: I see quorum.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I was talking about homeowners who are concerned about the likely rise in interest rates. I think it is our responsibility to look at how we can help these people so that they do not have to sell their homes or lose the property that they have invested so heavily in. This goes back to the issue of cost of living and inflation, which is hitting workers and families very hard right now.

I think we should discuss the NDP proposals being put forward. We demanded that a special tax be imposed on the excess profits of the big banks and oil companies, which are making record profits these days, and that those funds be used to double the GST tax credits, which really helps the poorest people in our society. We also suggested increasing the Canada child benefit, which is a good way to redistribute wealth and really help families who are struggling with the rising cost of gas and groceries.

Those are all concerns that I think Parliament should be addressing.

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• (1805)

[English]

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to add my voice to this debate on changing the riding name.

Given that we are talking about riding names, I often talk about my riding and the beautiful riding that it is. Peace River—Westlock is the name of the riding. Although the name includes two of the towns in my riding, it does not necessarily do it justice, in the sense that I represent over a sixth of the province of Alberta in terms of land mass.

I usually tell people that the land mass my riding represents is the size of a mid-sized European country. I also always tell all my colleagues in this place I represent the promised land. Most of my colleague members of Parliament are usually quite certain that they represent the best part of Canada. That might be true, but I represent the promised land.

In order to prove that, I have evidence. I point out I represent the honey capital of Canada and I also represent 7,500 dairy animals, so the riding is literally flowing with milk and honey. That is my first point for the fact that my riding is the promised land.

The second point is that I represent the municipal districts of Peace and Opportunity, and that is a promising name as well. I also represent an area that was settled on a promise called Treaty No. 8. If those are not enough arguments for my riding to be known as the promised land, I do not know what is. That is northern Alberta.

I have put in recommendations to change my riding name to the “Promised Land” in previous Parliaments when we had a bill to update the names. I also would have liked the name “Peace and Opportunity”, which are two municipal districts in my riding, as I said, and being the member of Parliament for Peace and Opportunity would be great as well. If that were not enough, I also have the opportunity to perhaps rename the riding to “Northern Sunrise”, as there is a municipal district called that. It would be a great riding name, and it would be fantastic to be the member of Parliament for Northern Sunrise.

Mr. Speaker, I did not start my clock. How much time do I have left?

The Deputy Speaker: The member has seven minutes and 29 seconds remaining.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, the other thing I would like to talk about in my riding in particular is this. Where I come from, we do basically three things, forestry, farming and fracking, the three Fs, as I like to call them. They are exciting things that happen in northern Alberta. It is a very diverse part of the province, with extremely fertile farmland, the boreal forest that covers the majority of the riding, and the oil sands, with conventional oil and coal mining, just on the edge of the riding as well. Bringing energy, food and shelter to the world is what we do, so the prevention of poverty starts out in northern Alberta and in my riding of Peace River—Westlock.

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The opportunity to speak about my riding in particular, and riding names and what they symbolize, does not come up often, so I am very excited about this debate today.

One of the other things we have in Peace River—Westlock is the largest lake in Alberta. Slave Lake is located right dead centre in the middle of the riding. It is one of the lakes in the country where, in the past, commercial fishing has thrived. We hope one day it will be rejuvenated in Slave Lake, as a number of years back it nearly ran out of water. Over the last 10 years though, it has been raining so much that the lake is full of water again. It is so full in fact that many people are complaining about their beaches. As the water in the lake went down, of course their beaches got larger. They developed them and built fancy pergolas, gazebos and things like that out on the beach. As the water came back, those things ended up in the water, so there are some complaints about the fact the water level is so high. Nonetheless, it is the biggest lake in Alberta.

A lot of people do not realize this, but the centre of Alberta is not Red Deer but actually where I live, near a little community called Fort Assiniboine. The geographical centre of Alberta is in fact in the riding of Peace River—Westlock. I always tell the folks in my riding that they in fact live in central Alberta. No matter what the people from Red Deer say, we live in central Alberta. I can see the member for Battle River—Crowfoot shaking his head at me, but I can assure him that my riding is the true centre of Alberta, “the promised land”, as I like to call it.

I am not sure if members are aware of this, but there is one bill that comes up at the beginning of a parliament after the redistribution, where all of the naming opportunities for all of the ridings come into play and there is a negotiation that happens between all of the parties as to which names go forward and which do not. I remember the member for Winnipeg Centre put forward the name “the heart of Canada” for his riding, which, as the member of Parliament for the centre of Alberta, I could commensurate with that renaming opportunity for sure.

I think mine being “the promised land” and his being “the heart of Canada” were the two that were negotiated against each other and in the end neither went forward, which was too bad. The member for Winnipeg North may have been the one who negotiated to get rid of those names, because I think that would have been right next door to where he is at and perhaps he was concerned about all of the excitement there would be for this new riding called “the heart of Canada”. Nonetheless, I digress.

● (1810)

I am not sure if the actual geographical centre of Canada is Winnipeg, as I am not sure exactly where it is. I do know that the centre of Alberta is in Peace River—Westlock and the centre of the country is not Toronto. That is for sure.

An hon. member: It is Provencher.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, the member behind me says that the centre of Canada is Provencher. I can be certain that it is not, because I think that from Provencher someone could spit and hit the American border. Given the fact that my riding, Peace River—Westlock, is in northern Alberta and the centre of Alberta is a seven-hour drive from the American border, I can assure colleagues

that the geographical centre of Canada is definitely not in Provencher.

That said, I have very much enjoyed speaking about the promised land, Peace River—Westlock, as I like to call it, but there are a host of other things that we could be discussing in this place as well.

The member for Edmonton West did speak about some of these things already, but I wanted to highlight some of the other private member's bills that have come forward from folks in our caucus, particularly Bill C-228, from the member for Sarnia—Lambton, which amends the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act to ensure that folks are able to collect their pension funds over time. I want to reference Bill C-240, from the member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, which amends the Income Tax Act to ensure that capital gains exemptions are granted to those whose estate goes to a charity. The member for Essex also has an amendment to the Income Tax Act to allow trades persons to deduct amounts for travelling.

That is some of the amazing work that our caucus is doing and I just wanted to highlight some of that.

● (1815)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, having had the choice to continue to listen to Conservatives or to myself, I have chosen myself. I hope members do not mind.

I want to defend the member for Provencher. There is a valid argument to be made that the centre of Canada is in fact in the riding of Provencher, just east of the city of Winnipeg. If members do not believe me or the member for Provencher, take a drive. It is beautiful country and they will see a lot of sweet things. It is the promised land of sorts, and I am sure the member for Provencher would concur with that, and there is a marker that clearly identifies that it is the centre of Canada.

I want to take this opportunity to stand up and appreciate the fact that my colleague and friend has brought forward this legislation. As members will attempt to bring up other issues, I would suggest that names really do matter. There is no absolute guarantee that the next election will have new names or, in fact, a guarantee of boundaries. This is something we suspect because of agreements that are in place, but there is no absolute guarantee. I know, through the campaigning that I have done over many different elections, that people often ask about the name of a riding because it does matter. If something is included or excluded, it is often an issue that is raised with local members, whether at a provincial level or a national level.

Therefore, the member who has agreed to bring forward this legislation, not as part of the draw that MPs are talking about but rather as a Senate bill that has been brought forward by the member, still continues to have her draw at some point in time, but recognizes that here is an opportunity to get a name change. I would hope that members opposite would recognize that what we are talking about is private members' hour. It is not an opposition day motion or a government piece of legislation. It is someone who has identified an issue as a member and has seen an effective way of seeking a change in the name. It is not taking away from the member's own personal draw, if I can put it that way, but rather it is something that has come through the Senate.

I listened to a member from the Bloc, who indicated, as did the member from the New Democratic Party, the importance of the name for that particular region. I might not necessarily be overly familiar with that region of the country, but I do know that people take it very seriously in regard to, as I pointed out earlier, what is in and what is out and why it has a specific name. I thought it was quite nice to hear the member make reference to a local mayor, who has passed, as someone who has raised the issue, and there are others, no doubt.

I want to take the opportunity to applaud the member in recognizing something that is important to her and her constituents. I do not believe it takes away from other issues that could be debated. I have seen many debates, in particular opposition motions, that I would suggest are questionable at the best of times. In fact, in listening to the debate, because of your ruling, Mr. Speaker, we have seen ample other issues raised during this debate of a wide variety, whether it is an economic or a social matter. In the most recent debate a member was able to reflect on his own constituency and talked about using the terms the "promised land" and "milk and honey" and I thought he presented a pretty sound argument.

Many of my colleagues, in particular those from the province of British Columbia, are very proud of the mountains. When we start to look at our rural communities, we see a great deal of beauty.

● (1820)

I represent Winnipeg North, an area that I am very proud to represent. It is a working-class community, an area that is very reflective of Canadian society and how we have ultimately evolved. I look at the many contributions of our Ukrainian heritage community and our Jewish community. About 100 years ago, they came in and built the CP track, or the great divide, if I can put it that way, between Winnipeg North and Winnipeg Centre.

Our nation is built not only by nature but by people, and there are many aspects to Winnipeg North. There is natural beauty. We have the Red River, which flows through it. At times, it can pose a challenge because of flood-related issues, but let there be no doubt that our rivers draw people to the riverbanks. The impact, whether at Kildonan Park or The Forks, is quite significant.

We can take a look at our industrial zones in Winnipeg North that contribute immensely to the development not only of Winnipeg North but of our country. We can take a look at our long-haul truck drivers, or the backbone of our health care system, our health care workers, like our nurses. There is no shortage of labour coming out

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of Winnipeg North to support our country. There is also the production of widgets and consumption of honey and milk.

No matter where members of Parliament represent, whether it is urban, rural, in the mountains, in the flatlands of the Prairies, at the Great Lakes, on the cliffs of the Atlantic Ocean or up north, we all have a sense of pride in the communities we represent. We all want our riding names to reflect what we believe our constituents want as a name. It does matter. It is taken into consideration in communities, both large and small.

The people who live in Garden Grove are very proud of the fact that they have a wonderful, beautiful and unique community. I can talk about the Point Douglas area or we can go to the far north end of Winnipeg North where we have the newer community of Amber Trails, which is growing rapidly. Whether it is the traditional old end of the north end, Point Douglas, Garden Grove, Meadows West, Tyndall Park, Amber Trails, The Maples or those I have not listed, they are all a very important part of the riding of Winnipeg North.

Winnipeg North seems to be a name that is widely accepted, as it has been since the sixties. I am not 100% sure on that, but it has been around for a long time. I will not be requesting a name change. I am quite happy with the name of Winnipeg North. However, I do believe that in situations where there is a need for change and a member is afforded the opportunity to bring in that change, then why not? That is what I would ultimately say.

At one point, I think we were anticipating that the debate was going to collapse. As I pointed out at the beginning, we had a number of Conservatives wanting to speak to the bill, so I figured I too would share in the glory of Winnipeg North and recognize the value and hard work that members put in and the sense of pride they have in the constituencies they represent.

With those few words, I hope that all members at least recognize what the member is trying to do in a straightforward way in reflecting the will of her constituents, and support the legislation.

The Deputy Speaker: I will say that as a chair occupants, we really appreciate single-word ridings, like Avalon, Provencher, Durham and Montcalm. It always makes it good.

The hon. member for Perth—Wellington.

● (1825)

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am greatly honoured to serve the good people of Perth—Wellington. My riding name makes sense. It is Perth County and Wellington County. It is very straightforward, and I am very proud to represent the good folks of Perth—Wellington and to rise to debate Bill S-207.

Being the member of Parliament for the great riding of Perth—Wellington, which includes the city of Stratford and the great Stratford Festival, of course I am inclined to quote Shakespeare, who said this most eloquently in *Romeo and Juliet*:

What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet

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To make a play on words, what is in a riding name? That which we call Châteauguay—Lacolle by any other name would something, something. I am not very good at iambic pentameter, but members get the point. There is a consideration here, as riding names should reflect the communities they represent. In this case, it has been noted that Lacolle is a neighbouring municipality that is not actually in the riding of Châteauguay—Lacolle.

I have to hand it to the member for Châteauguay—Lacolle for her persistence on this matter. If memory serves me correctly, I believe this Parliament marks the third time she has attempted to introduce this bill. In the 42nd Parliament, it was Bill C-377, and I was on the procedure and House affairs committee when we reviewed that bill. In the 43rd Parliament, first and second session, it was Bill S-213. Now, in the 44th Parliament, it is Bill S-207.

I do not want to make light of this change, because I recognize that it does reflect the riding and the communities in it, but I would be negligent in not pointing out that we are already getting into redistribution for the next redistribution. The fact is that we are now nearly seven years into debating this riding name, and we would have to go through the process of amending it, with the costs associated with that not only in the House of Commons and federal institutions, but also at Elections Canada, for potentially as little as 18 months. It seems these resources could be addressed elsewhere.

I would draw the attention of the House to the member for Châteauguay—Lacolle's original plan for a private member's bill. This is one that I would have supported wholeheartedly.

Immediately after the 2015 election, there was obviously a lottery. I placed high in the 200s. I did not have the opportunity to debate my bill, but the member for Châteauguay—Lacolle did. According to *The Hill Times*, at the time, the member for Châteauguay—Lacolle was “planning on putting forward a motion, M-125, Financial Literacy, that seeks to have the House Finance Committee study and report back on the implementation of the National Strategy for Financial Literacy to see if its meeting its current goals, evolving, and has the right measures in place to evaluate its progress.”

That is a motion I could get behind. Just imagine if six and a half years ago, the government had financial literacy in place and had been able to benefit, for the last six years, from a national financial literacy plan. Imagine how much further ahead we as Canadians would have been if the Liberals had taken up a commitment to being financially literate with the nation's finances. However, here we are six and a half years later, and sadly Motion No. 125 never saw the light of day and the member went ahead with Bill C-377 instead.

I am not going to imply that the member was told to do otherwise and go with a different PMB. We all know that often the House leader and the whips on the government side will encourage members, gently or otherwise, to go in a different direction. However, it is interesting that the member, immediately prior to the replenishment, the night before, opted not to go ahead with an important motion on financial literacy in Canada and went with changing the name of her riding from Châteauguay—Lacolle to Châteauguay—Les Jardins-de-Napierville.

I note that the name does roll off the tongue, especially for an Anglo who tries his best in our second national language. It nonetheless seems to be a PMB that lacks a purpose in the sense that we are not likely to have an election campaign before the new ridings come into place. We will not have that opportunity.

I will leave my comments there.

• (1830)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. This bill is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

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[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-21, An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms), be read the second time and referred to a committee, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I left off by acknowledging that I recognize the cultural value of hunting in many communities and for many Canadians. Having visited a community during moose hunting season in particular, I understand and have seen first-hand the value that local citizens attach to that time of year.

I also understand the sentimental value, if we want to call it that, attached to certain heirloom firearms. I believe it was the member for Kildonan—St. Paul who had, at one point in her speech, talked about a rifle, a shotgun, that had been handed down from generation to generation in her family. In a sense, it represented the efforts of the family, going way back, to carve out a living in a harsh environment in Manitoba.

I understand the sentimental value of that heirloom firearm, but what I do not understand is the sentimental value of, for example, a Saturday night special or an AK-47. The rifle the member for Kildonan—St. Paul was talking about was used to carve out a space in the wilderness, I presume, but some of these weapons are used to carve up neighbourhoods through gun violence.

This bill is not about the cultural value of hunting. It is not about persecuting duck hunters or deer hunters, who do not use handguns to hunt their prey, in any event. It is about acting before it is too late. What I mean by that is I do not believe that any member of the House wants Canada to turn into the United States as we see it today. Regardless of party, I believe we are all united in this notion.

In the United States, there are more guns than people. People there carry guns routinely such that we could be sitting on a bus and could almost assume, or it almost makes sense to assume, that a person may be packing a pistol. We do not know, when we bump into someone, if they are going to take it personally. A tragic consequence could result. It is a country where we see gun tragedies almost daily. No one in the House wants to go there; no one in the House wants Canada to be that way.

Gun violence is a multi-faceted problem, and I think it is really important that we do not oversimplify the issue. I understand that in QP, questions can be one-dimensional and issues get simplified. It is all part of the cut and thrust of debate, but I think when it comes to crafting policy, we should not oversimplify.

I have heard it said in speeches in the House that, well, gun crimes are up with the Liberals in power. The first cardinal sin of oversimplification is to confuse correlation with causation, so let us look at the facts.

Since 2009, violent offences involving guns have increased by 81%. If I recall correctly, 2009 is before 2015, when our Liberal government was elected. The fact that gun crimes are going up has nothing to do with the Liberal government's agenda. In fact, it probably has more to do with funding cuts to the CBSA by the former Harper government.

Another fact is that handguns are the preferred weapon of criminals. We know that the RCMP and border services have been working hard to cut the flow of firearms into Canada, mainly handguns. As a matter of fact, I believe the RCMP and border services intercepted nearly double the number of firearms in 2021 than the year before. The forces of the government are working hard and are having some success. The idea that gun violence going up is the fault of the Liberal government really is a terrible oversimplification and should not be allowed to stand.

• (1835)

Another fact I have learned is that over half of crime guns traced in 2020 in Canada were sourced domestically. In other words, they were obtained legally, or through theft or straw purchasing, including 50% of handguns traced. That is a big number of guns that are actually legal guns. The problem of illegal guns coming across the border is a serious one, obviously, but so is the pool of legal guns in this country.

Another point I would like to make is that ordinary Canadians, all of us, have a right to feel safe. We hear the opposition talk about this constantly when they bring up crime issues. They always talk about victims and how the community has the right to feel safe. This is what the bill is all about. It is about the right of Canadians to feel safe in their communities, especially, for example, victims of conjugal violence.

There is a contradiction, I would posit, in the Conservative narrative. When it comes to protecting communities through minimum sentences, the Conservatives are all in, but when it comes to protecting communities by curbing gun violence, all of a sudden the argument is that of course they want to curb gun violence, but the Liberal government approach is just not a practical one that is like-

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ly to work. In other words, there is a big escape hatch in the argument.

It is a complex problem, and it is not going to be solved uniquely by freezing the pool of legal handguns in this country. Some funding is required. We have already put \$920 million into addressing gun violence. That includes \$312 million over five years to increase intelligence and investigative capacity at the border, and \$250 million for municipalities and indigenous communities for programming to prevent gang violence through the building safer communities fund. As far as my own province of Quebec is concerned, our government recently provided \$46 million to the province under the guns and gangs initiative.

I think that brings me to the end. I look forward to listening to further speeches on the topic.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member on the opposite side gave a good speech.

I would like to ask him a question, and he would know me to be somewhat analytical in my approach to Canada's problems and how the government needs to look at solving those problems. I am looking at the data that shows what crimes are actually being committed in Canada and what weapons are being used in those crimes.

Does the member think it might be a little unambitious to go after legal gun owners to deal with crimes that are largely committed with guns that are not legally registered, or could his government perhaps decide to work a little harder and provide a little more ambition to show Canadians how that would reduce crime across Canada?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, freezing the pool of legal handguns would not solve the problem in and of itself. It would reduce the risk going forward of illegal handguns from a growing pool making their way into the hands of criminals.

It would minimize the risks, but there are other actions that need to be taken at the border. Those actions are being taken through budget investments that would help pay for new technologies, new scanning technologies. As I mentioned in my speech, there is money being spent to enhance the intelligence gathering and investigative capacity of the RCMP and the CBSA. We have to tackle gang activity through different programs, and so on and so forth. It is not just one solution to a complex problem.

• (1840)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of his speech, the member said that Bill C-21 does not target hunting rifles and that hunters are capable of managing their firearms responsibly.

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This bill, however, is a half measure. The member said people should feel safe. As a member from the Island of Montreal, he knows that there are neighbourhoods where people no longer feel safe.

Does he agree that Bill C-21, while it may be a step in the right direction, should have gone much further and should have included stricter control at the border and joint efforts to fight organized crime and smuggling as well as the registry we have been talking about for weeks that could have given us more control over smuggling and made Montreal's streets safer?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Speaker, that is a good question. I see these as two components.

This bill seeks to freeze the legal gun market, including handguns. As far as the border is concerned, it is often a question of budget, which requires giving the departments the necessary resources to develop more effective strategies to deal with illegal firearms smuggling.

To me, these are two different components. The fact that we introduced Bill C-21 does not stop us from giving the RCMP and the Canada Border Services Agency the resources they need to develop the strategies that the member for Montcalm mentioned.

[*English*]

Mr. Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, normally I would say it is a pleasure to rise to speak in the House, but I find it a little challenging when it is concerning Bill C-21.

In my former life, I was the mayor of a small city in Saskatchewan. One of my many roles as mayor was being the chair of the police commission. I have witnessed first-hand the full spectrum between responsible firearms owners and gang members. I am no stranger to competitive shooting or understanding the importance of the safe use of firearms. As a young boy, I won top shot numerous times in Air Cadets, and I was second in my platoon in basic officer training in Saint-Jean, Quebec. I credit this to my grandfather, who was a sniper in the offensive during World War II.

I personally know several people, and those from organizations, who are all responsible firearms owners who promote firearms safety. Today we are in the House to debate an example of the government doing something just to say it is doing something. This is something it has tremendous experience in. It is as though it legislates to generate good talking points instead of good policy. There is an old saying: "Walk around. Carry a clipboard, and look busy." This is exactly what the government is doing: looking busy and accomplishing nothing.

As everyone watching likely knows, Bill C-21 is the Liberal government's latest attack on responsible Canadian firearms owners, another band-aid solution, another policy that would punish people instead of helping them. The government has had a habit of punishing people or industries for ideological reasons. I can name any number of examples: its carbon tax, warning labels on ground beef and, today, this attack on lawful firearms owners.

The NDP-Liberal government does not think people should hunt. It does not think farmers need firearms as tools. It does not think

target shooting is a legitimate sport. The government simply does not believe anyone should own a gun. In short, it does not understand rural Canada. It is attacking us and our way of life.

Today I would like to spend some time talking about one of the aspects of this bill that has received the most attention and the most press: the handgun. Licensed handgun owners in Canada are responsible owners. For my Liberal colleagues across the aisle, who likely do not know the process but think they are experts, I would like to share with the House the lengthy process to obtain a handgun in Canada.

First, people need to go through the process to get their PAL. Again for my Liberal colleagues, that stands for a possession and acquisition licence. That involves taking the firearm safety course, passing the test and, finally, filling out the application forms and going through the needed background checks. To obtain a licence for a handgun, people also need to pass an additional safety course, which is the Canadian restricted firearm safety course. They must register the handgun and follow special storage, display, transportation and handling requirements. They may not carry the firearms on their person, they may only use them for target shooting or collecting. They may only be used at approved ranges, and one would likely need to be members in good standing at said ranges, which would come with its own background check.

After going through all these steps, it is not hard to see why handgun owners are so responsible. The cost and time to go through this process alone would deter anyone from breaking any of these rules. The question I have for my NDP-Liberal colleagues is this: What would a handgun ban accomplish that these strict rules do not already accomplish?

We all know that Canada's largest cities are experiencing a surge in gun violence. That is something that needs to be fixed, and fixed quickly, but it is not something this bill would do anything to address.

• (1845)

The government has never even tried to address the reasons people join gangs. Youth do it out of a sense of hopelessness and a lack of belonging. Hopelessness is created by not having a sense of responsibility. Who would when a government tries to bubble-wrap people and make decisions for them in almost every aspect of their lives?

What we want are responsible citizens who make decisions for themselves, who understand that for every decision a person makes, there is a consequence and sometimes an unintended consequence. For every decision someone makes, they have a choice between doing something good or something bad. They can either contribute to society and help their fellow man or take away from society and tear down their fellow man. What needs to be instilled in this country and future generations is a sense of responsibility, a sense of belonging and clear examples of the differences between right and wrong.

The gangs our youth are joining that commit these shootings are not using legal, registered firearms. They are using handguns smuggled over the border. Our border agency, the CBSA, needs more resources to tackle this problem. That is something that this bill, Bill C-21, falls well short of.

Recently the public safety committee tabled its guns and gangs report, which included several recommendations to tackle gun violence in Canada, recommendations that seem to have been totally ignored in drafting this bill. It included recommendations such as creating a program to tour young offenders through penitentiaries; maintaining mandatory minimum sentences for drug and firearm-related crimes; removing the expensive firearm buyback program and allocating the money to gang prevention programs; adequately funding indigenous police forces to combat gangs and gun smuggling; and that the government actually recognize that the majority of illegal firearms in Canada are the result of smuggling.

If the NDP-Liberals were more interested in developing good policy instead of good talking points, they would have paid attention to the committee's important work. Sadly, this has not been the case.

Bill C-21 is short on resources not only for the CBSA, but also for the RCMP. I have a constituent who has been trying, as a responsible gun owner, to contact the RCMP to register a handgun so that they are aware before the deadline. There are absolutely no resources in the RCMP to handle this influx of requests caused by the government's announcement. I have spoken to this man personally, and he is very concerned. He is very concerned because he is a responsible gun owner and he wants to do the right thing, but he cannot accomplish that because of the limited resources the government has allocated to allow him to follow the rules.

As I mentioned before, I can say with near certainty that the gang members in downtown Toronto are not graduates of a restricted firearms safety course. I talked earlier about carrying a clipboard and looking busy. The government is very good at introducing legislation that does very little and simply virtue signals to their base. That is exactly what Bill C-21 is doing, virtue signalling to their base at the expense of Saskatchewan and all of rural Canada.

Finally, this being my last chance to speak before we will rise for the summer, I would like to take this chance to thank the pages, interpreters, security, IT staff and everyone else who keeps this place running. I wish them a well-deserved summer.

• (1850)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr.

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Speaker, I can understand and appreciate the member is not going to be supporting the legislation. The Conservative Party has made that very clear. It is the only political party that will not be supporting this legislation.

More things are involved, if the member is aware, within this legislation. For example, the idea of red flags and yellow flags and ensuring there is a higher sense of safety and security for situations of domestic abuse. Does the member see any aspect of this legislation he could actually support?

Mr. Fraser Tolmie: Mr. Speaker, the member talks about red flags and yellow flags. Here is a red flag: Our party approached the Liberals to split this bill so that we could actually have a conversation about it, but that did not happen. The red flag is when we hear from the Liberals that they want to listen to the people, but they are not. They did not listen, and they are not listening to reports coming to them that are giving them good advice. Instead, they are shutting themselves down and saying this is what we need to do. They are not listening. They are not listening to Saskatchewan.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there are two important groups that support this bill.

The first is PolyRemembers, which was founded after the shooting at École polytechnique in Montreal in 1989, where 14 young women were killed. The other represents survivors of the Quebec City mosque, who also applauded the bill. That should count for a lot when we are making a decision.

There have been other shootings in Canada, and I am not sure if other groups support this bill. In Quebec, it is clear that the bill has the support of these groups. Does the fact that these people applaud the bill and want it passed count for anything for my colleague?

• (1855)

[*English*]

Mr. Fraser Tolmie: Mr. Speaker, number one, I do remember that tragedy. It is still fresh in my mind, the moment when I heard the news about what happened. It is a tragedy, but I also would like to point out that there is an opportunity to have an open conversation about motivating factors and what the motivating factors are for people who illegally use firearms. That is not being addressed in this bill, so I find that tragic as well.

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Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I spent a lot of time with the member in committee, and I really appreciate his feedback and his thoughtful presentation tonight. I know there has been a lot of intimate partner violence, and we know more and more we are seeing guns used in this. When we look at domestic violence and intimate partner violence, this is a growing concern. I am just wondering if he has any suggestions about what the government needs to do to approach these issues and to make sure that we keep people safe in these situations.

Mr. Fraser Tolmie: Mr. Speaker, I wish the member a very happy summer and look forward to working with her again in the fall, if we have that opportunity, in the committee.

Domestic violence is obviously a tragic thing that happens, and I am very sad that it does happen, but again, we need to focus on what drives and motivates. We are talking about gangs and what motivates people getting into gangs. That is a challenge, because they have a sense of hopelessness. They feel like they are not part of something. That is not being addressed. All the recommendations that have come forward are not being addressed in this bill.

Just doing something to look like something is being done does not solve the problem. We need to address the root of this problem, so I just ask that we vote this down and give it an other opportunity to actually address the real concerns within our country.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-5, the soft-on-crime bill, actually allows for lesser sentences for those who commit crimes with guns. I was wondering how the hon. member can reconcile what he sees in Bill C-21 with this soft-on-crime approach by the Liberal government.

Mr. Fraser Tolmie: Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely disappointed. I am disappointed that we seem to be soft on punishing those who have committed horrendous crimes, yet punish lawful firearms owners. I cannot reconcile that, and I just find it absolutely crazy. I think that is a very good question. There is a huge gap and divide in this bill that we are not addressing. We have an opportunity to actually do that at this point in time, but the Liberals have shut that down.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on this bill, and I will start with a confession. I am surprised to find myself agreeing with many of the criticisms expressed by Conservative members. This does not happen very often when it comes to firearms.

The Bloc Québécois supports Bill C-21 and will obviously try to improve it in committee. However, it does not address any of the current problems that are affecting cities, particularly Montreal. There is nothing in the bill to address the shootings on our city streets that are scaring our children. This is very serious.

The bill puts a freeze on the acquisition of new legal handguns. This is good and might help, but these weapons represent barely 5% of the weapons used in violent crimes. According to Montreal's police service, the SPVM, 95% of the handguns used in violent crimes are illegal. Bill C-21 contains nothing more than a few watered-down measures to tackle this problem.

Where are the measures to increase resources for border services so they can curb the trafficking of illegal weapons? Where are the additional patrols? I know that I repeat this often, but I would like to remind the House that the Government of Quebec recently provided \$6 million to increase patrols in the Akwesasne area.

The federal government is nowhere to be found. It must propose something to tackle this issue, whether it is resources, money, a special task force, I do not know. The bill does nothing to deal with the violent crimes currently being committed in our cities.

We are faced once more with a government that claims to be doing something and tries to give the impression that it is taking action while actually doing very little. Ideally, the longer it can make this last, the more satisfied it is, because it can repeat 100 promises three or four times in different election campaigns.

I am going to take the example of assault weapons, which can fire ammunition at insane speeds and which no one needs in real life. These weapons are a problem. The current government claims that it has already done its job by prohibiting them. It often repeats this claim in its speeches, saying that it is a good thing.

In reality, in May 2020, the government cobbled together a list seemingly at random, containing several models of weapons whose names seemed to have been picked out of a hat. Then the government declared that those weapons were prohibited. However, similar models that are just as or even more dangerous continue to be legal. This approach pushed the manufacturers of these weapons to adapt and develop other models since then.

We need to work intelligently, and for that to happen, the government needs to listen to the opposition once in a while. The opposition is not always right, but it often is right, and it makes good suggestions.

For example, we said that there was no need to make a list of weapons, but that we should consult experts and define what an assault weapon is. Once the legal framework is established, if a weapon fits in this framework, it will be banned and considered illegal, no matter what weapons manufacturers invent five or 10 years from now. That seems so logical to me, so I do not understand—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The member for Perth—Wellington on a point of order.

• (1900)

[*English*]

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, I apologize to the member speaking, but we are hearing reports from certain members that the Zoom application may not be working correctly. I am seeking guidance from the Table and from the Chair as to whether there is a problem with the network.

There are indications that people are not able to log on to the system.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the member for the intervention. We will continue to investigate what is going on.

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• (1905)

[*Translation*]

We will continue for now. I would ask members to inform the Chair if there are technical problems with the interpretation or with our Zoom system.

Mr. Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, do I start over or continue where I left off?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member has at least 30 seconds.

Mr. Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, I was saying that I do not understand why the government does not work with the opposition to table bills that will really make a difference.

I was talking about a definition for an assault weapon. That is important. Taking action is a Bloc proposal. We have a lot of proposals like that. Every time I rise, I am thrilled to list the Bloc's intelligent and well-thought-out proposals. I often sound brilliant when I do that, but our extraordinary research team really deserves a lot of credit.

Then there is organized crime. The people shooting at each other in Montreal are organized. They are in a gang. They want to eliminate the other gang and take over the neighbourhood. We have all watched plenty of movies and can imagine what motivates them to go and shoot someone in a restaurant, in front of children. The tragedy is that this is not a movie on Netflix. This really happens. We do not have to accept that.

As elected members of the federal Parliament, it is not only our duty but our moral obligation to act on this. We are debating Bill C-21, which will affect 5% of the firearms being used. It is a small step forward, but it does not address the real problems. Lately, during almost every question period, my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord has been asking the Minister of Public Safety when he will create a list of recognized criminal entities.

Something similar exists for terrorist groups. It gives police something to work with. It gives prosecutors tools. It makes it easier to bring people to justice. We control the laws. We have the freedom to do that.

Why not give ourselves this gift? I do not understand. Who are we afraid of? Those are the questions we need to be asking ourselves.

We are dealing with a government that will go to the media and say it is taking action on guns by passing Bill C-21, when really, the bill does absolutely nothing. I can say this because every time my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord sits down after a question in question period, that is the answer he gets. He is told every time that the government has introduced Bill C-21 and that it hopes the Bloc Québécois will support its passage. Of course the Bloc Québécois is going to vote in favour, but we need more than that. We need to tackle the root cause of the problem.

We are dealing with a government that is all about image. It does not care about tackling problems. Just look at the passport crisis we are currently facing. That is the perfect example. How long have we been talking about that? Can the government do something about it, put resources into it, open the offices on weekends?

The minister stands up and says that the offices are open on weekends, but people are telling me over the phone that the offices are not open on weekends. Then we are not supposed to get upset. For 10 years, we have been calling for employment insurance reform. What is happening? Nothing. Last fall, fathers still had to prove they were using food banks in order to get benefits. Cuts are still being made to the guaranteed income supplement. The Liberals are going to stop making cuts in July. The machine is too big. No one knows how to press the button without messing up the entire calculation. It is going to take another cheque. It is totally ridiculous. Despite the inflation we are seeing right now, the government refuses to increase the old age security pension. I could go on at length.

I asked a question about support for agriculture today. It has been more than a month since people from agricultural organizations proposed practical solutions. They are not asking for money to be thrown at them. They are showing up with a list of solutions. More than a month has gone by, and there is still no response. It is radio silence. The management of the border during the COVID-19 pandemic is another issue. I could go on until midnight. Are we sitting until midnight? I am game.

Let us come back to the bill. This bill has positive elements. Earlier, the parliamentary secretary spoke about red-flag and yellow-flag provisions. We are aware of these provisions, and that is why we will support the bill. At the same time, there are contradictions. Bill C-21 increases the sentence for gun traffickers in an attempt to impress the public, whereas Bill C-5 reduces the sentences.

We say that we agree with reducing sentences, but this is not the time to reduce them for crimes committed with a firearm. The response is that, in any event, it does not change criminals' minds.

• (1910)

The same argument does not hold from one bill to the other, which I have a hard time understanding. Everyone in the Bloc Québécois is reaching out to the government. We want to crack down on real organized crime, the real criminals, the thugs who traffic firearms and terrorize our cities. There is work to do and we are prepared to do it. Until then, we will vote in favour of Bill C-21 because it is a step in the right direction.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member talked about a wide variety of issues. I am not allowed the time to address them all in the form of a question, but I do have a very basic question that I have posed before.

I am glad to see that Bloc members are going to be supporting this legislation. However, the degree to which they want to see the legislation pass and get to committee did surprise me earlier.

Points of Order

We know that the Conservatives flat out object to the legislation before us. They are going to battle the legislation. The only reason the bill will pass to committee is because the NDP agreed to have time allocated so that at least it could get out of second-reading stage.

Could the member explain why, if the Bloc members believe in handgun bans, they believed that it was not necessary to try to get the bill rushed to the committee stage? Otherwise, who knows when it would even get there?

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, the answer is, quite simply, no. We are systematically opposed. We have supported time allocation in some very specific circumstances, but in general, we condemn the practice of wasting time with obstruction tactics on both sides of the House.

Both sides of the House share responsibility, since the government members do not have enough respect to consult with and talk to the opposition members. We learned today that the House is scheduled to sit until midnight again tomorrow, but the Bloc Québécois was not consulted. If the government wants us to collaborate, then it needs to show some respect.

[English]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from the Bloc for his speech.

The member talked about some of the issues that the government has been dealing with, and spoke in terms of illusion. I would suggest that, right now, we are a country in chaos. Even the most basic government services are being bungled by this government: passports, immigration, border issues at Roxham Road, the issues with Afghanistan and Ukraine, inflation, affordability and, not least, political interference, according to a news story that came to light today.

This is a complicated issue that requires complicated solutions. Is there any confidence, on the part of the member who just spoke, in the government's ability to deal with this issue effectively? The issue is guns, gangs, illegal criminals and the illegal importation of guns that are used for violent crimes. Does the member have any confidence in the government's ability to actually find an effective solution through Bill C-21, or is this simply smoke and mirrors and just another way of the government mishandling something?

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, that is a bit of a trick question that I got from the House leader of the official opposition about having confidence in the government, since he knows what I have to say.

In fact, it is disheartening. Right now, I do not have confidence in the government, but I am reaching out and I think it could be trusted. There needs to be a change in attitude and a collaborative effort, as was the case in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At that time, the government listened to the opposition's proposals. The opposition proposed some worthwhile measures, such as

the Canada emergency wage subsidy. That was a Bloc Québécois proposal that had a major impact on the economy.

Our proposals to define assault weapons and create a list of criminal organizations could change lives, save the lives of many people, but the government needs to listen.

• (1915)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree that legislative solutions alone are not enough without added resources at the border to fight illegal gun trafficking from the United States. In a June 2 article in Canada's National Observer, Sandy Garossino wrote that 75% of firearm fatalities were suicides committed by gun owners.

We talked about men's mental health just a week ago in the House, so we know men are much more likely to commit suicide than women. We know these suicides account for the vast majority of firearm fatalities. What are the member's thoughts on that?

Mr. Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague, whom I hold in high esteem, for the quality of his speech and his thoughtful consideration. He is proving it again today.

When I mentioned the 95% figure earlier, I was referring to 95% of violent crimes committed on the streets of Montreal. We are not talking about the same statistics. I have not seen the statistic that 75% of suicides are committed with firearms. I will trust my colleague on the validity of that figure.

Of course that is an issue. Bill C-21 could contribute to some progress in that regard, since it will reduce the number of handguns in circulation, gradually and over time.

Beyond that, I think my colleague mentioned the key elements: mental health and resources. The day that society adequately funds health care, for instance, to focus on prevention rather than the cure, or band-aid solutions after the fact, we will be well on our way to solving these problems.

My question is fundamental. It is clear where I am going with this. I am still talking about those darn health transfers. Can we just get the money to take care of our people? Then we can invest in mental health or homelessness and we can make a difference. I am sure my colleague agrees with me.

* * *

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

INTERRUPTION TO PROCEEDINGS

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I know the Table is aware of this situation. We are getting reports of some technical difficulties. Members are not able to get into Zoom. I know our lobby coordinator in the back is dealing with a problem with the dashboard that he uses. There are emails that are not circulating. I am wondering if you could provide the House with an update.

I know the Table is aware of this. I certainly did not want to interrupt my colleague from the Bloc, but before the next speaker rises, perhaps a suggestion could be that we may suspend.

Points of Order

I see the opposition whip is coming in. Perhaps he has some more information about the technical difficulties.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I checked with our desk, and it does not seem to be affecting us. Maybe the member could be more specific. It might be one or two people with bad connections who are trying to connect. It does not seem to be universal.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we have had all of our members speak, so that is why we might not necessarily have the same problems that the couple of members in the House who speak for the Liberals are having. We do know that there are several committees right now that are having trouble being stood up because the Internet is down in the Parliamentary precinct. If any member checks in their office right now, they will find that the Internet is down. We cannot have a Zoom meeting or join virtually or in a hybrid format if we are having technical problems.

We do have members in our caucus who want to participate by using the tools they are allowed to use right now; therefore, I would ask the administration or somebody to please provide us with a solution, because right now Conservatives are being denied the ability to participate in Parliament according to the rules that the House has adopted.

• (1920)

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that members of the House should remember this before they vote tomorrow or the day after on the motion to use the hybrid format for the business of Parliament for another year. It does not work all the time. I humbly suggest to my fellow members that the hybrid format should be allowed only when necessary. It should not be the norm, but an exception.

[English]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I personally find it very hard to believe that the Conservatives could be having any trouble with participation by their members as a result of Internet problems.

I know we heard vociferously in question period earlier today that Conservatives want to come to work and want to be in the chamber and feel that participating virtually is not legitimate. Therefore, I would think that any Conservative members who are really keen to participate would be in the chamber pursuant to the remarks of their leader.

I know it has been suggested in some quarters—

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, we are getting into debate.

The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona on the point of order.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I would be prepared to support that.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, I would humbly remind the House that people made plans this week to either be here or somewhere else, based on what we have as operating rules and proce-

dures for this House. This is not a debate about what it should be; this is a debate about what it currently is.

It is evidence that this format does not always work. I agree with my colleague from the Bloc about future considerations, but for the considerations right now, there are members of the Conservative caucus who cannot participate in the House of Commons.

The Deputy Speaker: I do not want to go too far into debate here, because I do want to confer with the Table officers.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member made reference to there being no Internet in the parliamentary precinct. I have my laptop open, and there is Internet access. I checked with the backroom, where we have many members who are participating, and I believe it is not universal. There might be some issues with some members, and we should continue with the debate.

The Deputy Speaker: We are hearing that we are having troubles. We have a couple of dashboards that are not working. I believe the dashboards of the Conservative caucus and the NDP caucus are not working. We are having trouble with some Internet. We have one committee that is meeting. ParLVU is apparently not working. One committee has decided not to restart.

We do have a number of issues happening in the precinct. In some cases the Internet is working and in some cases it is not. We will look to see if there is a way to solve it. I know many of us would probably pull the plug on the modem and plug it back in and hope for the best, but the system is probably a little more robust than that.

We can maybe continue with the next speaker. I will come back to the floor with an update of what we are finding across the precinct, if that is okay with members. I am just going to look for a nod.

The hon. House leader for the official opposition.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, that is fine. When we get to questions and comments, there may be some people who may not be able to participate. I would just provide that as a warning, but I am so looking forward to hearing the hon. member speak.

The Deputy Speaker: Let us do that.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I believe that these technical difficulties are giving rise to an anti-democratic situation.

Points of Order

We all decided that we would have a hybrid Parliament, meaning that members who are at home have the same rights as those who are here in Parliament. In this case, the Internet is not working for some NDP members, who are not receiving messages, and the system is also not working for some Conservative members. It happens to be working for my party, but I have a bit of a problem with that. We are saying that only part of Parliament will work, because it is currently in hybrid mode, and I have a problem with that.

With all due respect, I simply wanted to mention that.

• (1925)

The Deputy Speaker: I have consulted with the Table, and all members trying to join us can now do so. All members present in the House or online can do so.

We will be able to resume with at least one speech, and we could return to the House after finding a solution.

The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

[*English*]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I am inclined to agree with my colleague from the Bloc that if members who want to participate are not able to participate, that is a problem.

My point earlier was not that it is not a problem; it was simply that I know Conservatives expressed a lot of enthusiasm about being in the chamber for debate, and I note that they are participating otherwise, presumably because they feel that it is a meaningful form of work. I certainly do not want that meaningful form of work to be interrupted.

I would support a suspension if that is what is called for. I do not want members who want to participate in an important debate to be in a circumstance of not being able to.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I just spoke to the hon. member who is scheduled to speak. My suggestion is that we suspend until the issue is fixed, but that is your call, of course, and I respect whatever decision you make, sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Let us do this: Let us suspend for a few moments to find out. If we cannot seem to find the solution, we will proceed according to the order of the Speaker.

SITTING SUSPENDED

The Deputy Speaker: We will suspend for five minutes.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 7:28 p.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 7:48 p.m.)

• (1945)

SITTING SUSPENDED

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. We are going to remain suspended to the call of the Chair. The situation has not been resolved yet, but we are looking into it. As soon as it is, members will be called back.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 7:49 p.m.)

• (2050)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 8:54 p.m.)

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

I would like to inform members that we are still having trouble with the network. There is an estimation this will not be solved this evening, so I am wondering if we can come up with an agreement.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, based on some consultation that has been conducted, I suspect that if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent to adjourn for the day.

• (2055)

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion, please say nay. Hearing no dissenting voice, it is agreed.

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

The House is therefore adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8:55 p.m.)

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