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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, June 22, 2022

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*English*]

The Speaker: In a sign of everyone coming together, we almost have a choir today. We have the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton, the hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga and the hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay, who will be leading us, and the choir, in the singing of the national anthem.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

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INTERRUPTION TO PROCEEDINGS

The Speaker: If I can have everyone's attention, the Chair wishes to revisit the technical issues that led to the early adjournment of the House yesterday evening.

[*Translation*]

While the sitting was suspended and after yesterday's adjournment, House staff was busy identifying and resolving the causes of the problem, which proved to be a connectivity issue external to the infrastructure of the House. The problem was corrected, and the systems were tested overnight. Everything is now in order.

[*English*]

The proceedings of the House and its committees may continue and technical resources will be available as needed. I would like to give my sincere thanks to all the devoted staff of the House who handled the situation diligently.

[*Translation*]

I thank members for their attention.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

CANADA DAY

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, on July 1, Canadians will celebrate Canada's 155th birthday. As the

son of refugees, I can say that Canada has presented me and my family with not just a home, but also opportunities and a future.

Even in tough times, this country rises above many others. We believe in the rule of law. We believe in free health care for all. We believe in assistance for those in need. We believe in the people's right to be heard. We do not have tanks on the streets. Many other countries do not enjoy this way of life.

We have a lot to be thankful for, but it did not happen by accident. It took a lot of hard work to forge the nation that we are today. We are not perfect, but I would say we are pretty close. We will face our challenges. We will be respectful. We will be inclusive as we move forward together to build an even better country.

This upcoming Canada Day, let us reaffirm our common values and go forward. On behalf of the people of my riding, I hope everyone can stay safe and celebrate this magnificent country in their own unique way.

Happy birthday, Canada.

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WORLD WAR II VETERAN

Mr. Han Dong (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a very special person from Don Valley North. Mr. Jim Wilson was born in Toronto in September 1921. He joined the Canadian Army at the age of 22 and was sent to England with the Glengarry Highlanders 9th Brigade, 3rd Canadian infantry division.

Jim was among the 14,000 Canadians who stormed Juno Beach with allied forces on D-Day. He was ashore during the second wave, with the goal of advancing 16 kilometres inland to occupy the high ground west of the strategic city of Caen. Following weeks of fighting, finally Caen was secured and Jim's division continued eastward to Belgium and then Holland. Unfortunately, that is where he got shot. In 1946, Jim returned to Toronto, where he found the love of his life, his late wife Audrey, and began a successful career with Esso.

Last month, Jim was made a knight of the French National Order of the Legion of Honour for his immense contribution to the liberation of France during World War II.

Colleagues, please join me in applauding this great Canadian, Mr. Jim Wilson.

*Statements by Members***APPRECIATION FOR CONSTITUENCY STAFF**

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to recognize Oula and Linda, the two wonderful ladies who run my Edmonton constituency office.

The two are probably the most experienced team in Alberta, with Oula having worked with MPs Peter Goldring and Laurie Hawn before me, and Linda having worked with Laurie Hawn as well.

My friend, the Hon. Laurie Hawn, often compared his constituency to a car. He would explain that he was merely the hood ornament and the office team was the engine. That is to say that the real work, the heavy lifting, was done by the team and he was just the hood ornament. He was completely right. I am very blessed that Oula and Linda have been the engine for my Edmonton team since I was elected.

Laurie would also say that the best part of being an MP was helping people and the worst part was the travel. The joy I get when I receive a letter or card thanking Linda and Oula for helping a family reunite, getting their passport or fixing a CRA problem more than makes up for the hours spent waiting for a connection at Pearson.

I thank Oula and Linda for everything they have done and their service to the people of Edmonton West.

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PRIDE MONTH

Mrs. Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the month of June marks Pride Month. Canadians across the country are celebrating and recognizing the invaluable contributions of the LGBTQIA2S+ community in areas such as health, politics, academia, sports, our military, and many other fields. We celebrate Pride to embrace LGBTQIA2S+ people and acknowledge the decades-long struggles and sacrifices made to gain the equality they rightfully deserve.

While we have made progress over the years, we know that we must continue building a more tolerant and peaceful society, so let us stand shoulder to shoulder with LGBTQIA2S+ Canadians as friends and allies, including people living with disabilities and indigenous, Black and racialized members of the LGBTQIA2S+ community.

On behalf of my constituents in Mississauga—Streetsville, I wish all Canadians a happy Pride Month, and we all know that love is love.

I wish everyone a safe and enjoyable summer break.

* * *

• (1410)

[*Translation*]

QUEBEC'S NATIONAL HOLIDAY

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this year, for our national holiday, we are going to make our language and its myriad accents heard. We are going to make it heard loud and clear, and continue making it heard, together.

We are going to make each and every one of our regional dialects and accents heard to show that our national language is also a great international language and an extraordinary way of being open to the world.

We are going to make our language heard so loudly that the entire planet will hear this proud and unique voice. It is the voice of a nation that celebrates its culture in its common language. It is the voice of a nation that sings, writes, works, teaches, grows up and lives in French, because that is what unites us and brings us together, whatever our differences.

People are going to hear that voice because we are not afraid to celebrate it. We are not afraid to protect and promote it, because French is an integral part of who we are.

I wish a happy national holiday to all Quebeckers with all their myriad accents.

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[*English*]

RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last Sunday, the congregation at Beaconsfield United Church celebrated Reverend Shaun Fryday as he prepared to embark on a well-deserved retirement after 22 years of dedicated pastoral service.

Shaun's boundless goodwill and warm humanity will be dearly missed by church members, and indeed by the entire Montreal West Island community. In addition to his role as a spiritual leader, Shaun displayed vision and determination in his efforts to strengthen the foundations of community. He was a driving force in the creation of the West Island LGBTQ2+ Centre and served as the organization's chair, offering wisdom, support and guidance.

Shaun's ministry was also marked by a deep commitment to social justice overseas. He travelled five times to the Philippines in support of indigenous communities defending their rights against local mining operations.

Like so many, I will miss Shaun's spiritual and community leadership, but also his engaging voice on matters of government policy.

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VACCINE MANDATES

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to share the story of James Topp.

James is a veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces. He has served for 29 years. James is marching on foot from Vancouver to Ottawa to support Canadians hurt by vaccine mandates. The march started at the Terry Fox statue in Vancouver and is ending at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Ottawa. That is 4,293 kilometres in approximately 130 days.

James himself has suffered the consequences of the punishing vaccine mandate policy. He was placed on leave without pay from his civilian position in the RCMP. He is also currently in the process of being released from the Canadian Armed Forces, all because of a medical decision.

I invite all MPs in the House to meet James and to hear his story, and the stories of those he met along the way to Ottawa. Starting a conversation and listening to each other during these difficult times, when our country seems so divided, is the only path forward. James has started the conversation, and I intend to participate for the good of our country.

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MATHIEU DA COSTA

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of grade 8 students at Thomas Street Middle School in Mississauga-Erin Mills to highlight an important figure in our history, Mathieu Da Costa.

Mathieu da Costa is said to have been the first recorded person of African descent to set foot on this land that we now call Canada. He is one of so many Canadians of African descent who have helped build this country since long before Confederation.

He was a gifted linguist and played a vital role in building early relations with indigenous peoples of this land. In particular, he is said to have served as an interpreter between French explorers and the Mi'kmaq people. Today, he is recognized from coast to coast in museums, monuments, roads and schools.

I am glad that these stories have been so inspiring to youth in my riding of Mississauga-Erin Mills. It is always a good time to celebrate Black history in Canada, and I hope we can all continue to recognize the accomplishments of our diverse communities all across this beautiful nation.

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● (1415)

GRADUATES IN WINNIPEG SOUTH CENTRE

Hon. Jim Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the first time since the start of the pandemic, the schools in Winnipeg South Centre have completed an entire school year in person.

For the next two weeks, I will be attending the farewell ceremonies and convocations of schools to offer warm congratulations to students on a year of success and for committing to their studies and persevering during uncertain times.

Everyone deserves to have a bright future full of possibilities ahead of them, and I am confident that the class of 2022 will take full advantage of their moment. I wish the graduates every success as they move on to the next exciting chapter of their lives and their careers.

I wish good luck to the graduates.

Statements by Members

JUNIOR HOCKEY IN DAUPHIN—SWAN RIVER—NEEPAWA

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my constituency is proud to be home to four teams in the Manitoba Junior Hockey League: the Dauphin Kings, the Neepawa Titans, the Swan Valley Stampeders and the Waywayseecappo Wolverines. I rise today to congratulate all of them on a fantastic season, but I want to especially congratulate the Dauphin Kings on a stellar year of hockey.

Last month, after a nail-biting game seven against the Steinbach Pistons, the Dauphin Kings were victorious in the MJHL finals. Congratulations to all the players who worked to win the Turnbull Memorial Trophy. Congratulations to coach and general manager Doug Hedley for leading a great team to victory.

I also want to thank the community of Dauphin for rallying behind the Kings and expressing their unwavering support in countless ways. Next year, the national Centennial Cup will be hosted in Portage la Prairie, and I have no doubt that one of my riding's MJHL teams will claim victory.

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VIJAYALAYAN MATHIYALAGHAN

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Constable Vijayalayan Mathiyalaghan, a Tamil Canadian who led a life of exemplary service to his adopted country, Canada.

Vijay enlisted in the Canadian Armed Forces in 2011 and served in the 2 Combat Engineer Regiment. He notably served in Ukraine in 2018 as part of Operation Unifier, where he used his expertise in explosive ordnance disposal to train local forces in mine clearing. These skills undoubtedly helped save the lives of many Ukrainian soldiers and civilians in the dreadful war that ensued.

In 2020, Vijay joined the Ottawa Police Service and was assigned to frontline operations with A Platoon Central. Vijay was highly respected by his colleagues in the city of Ottawa, with many remembering him for his kind nature and selflessness.

He will be sorely missed by the Canadian military, Ottawa Police Services, his close-knit Ottawa Tamil community and the growing network of Tamil law enforcement professionals across Canada. He leaves behind a proud family, community and country.

*Statements by Members***CELEBRATING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN MISSION—
MATSQUI—FRASER CANYON**

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, June 21 was National Indigenous Peoples Day, and June is National Indigenous History Month. Throughout my riding, there have been events showcasing and celebrating indigenous and Métis culture. I am proud to represent the number-one riding in Canada: Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon. What makes my riding so great is that it is home to the Sts'ailes and the Stó:lo people, the Stellat'en people, the Secwépemc people and the Nlaka'pamux people in the Fraser Canyon, as well as many others.

Last weekend, I was pleased to participate in Sasquatch Days, and I am so proud to represent the riding that is home to the mythical sasquatch. Children from one of our local indigenous dance clubs did the sasquatch dance, and indigenous groups from across B.C. and Washington state took part in competitive canoe races for all ages. What a great way to celebrate sport and to bring people together.

I thank the organizers from the village of Harrison Hot Springs and the Sts'ailes people for putting on such a wonderful event.

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*[Translation]***LANDSLIDE IN LA BAIE**

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week there was a landslide in La Baie, which is in my riding. A house was destroyed, but fortunately there were no casualties.

Since then, nearly 80 families have been evacuated and are homeless. It is a terrible situation. The City of Saguenay is predicting another major landslide in the coming weeks, and that really worries me.

Earlier this week, I spoke with the Minister of Emergency Preparedness, who has assured me that he is ready to intervene on behalf of the citizens of La Baie should the provincial government make such a request. I thank him for his co-operation.

In these difficult and uncertain times, I take comfort in the fact that all levels of government are working together and joining forces to ensure that families are not left to fend for themselves. I want to thank the firefighters and the police for the excellent work they did in evacuating families.

To all those affected: Stay strong. My heart goes out to them. The people of Saguenay are always there to help one another.

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● (1420)

*[English]***ENDING THE CAPTIVITY OF WHALES**

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the plight of a 45-year-old female has been brought to my attention by Judith Goldberg, a principal in my riding. Teachers and students at Forest Run school are passionate

and determined to do something about this situation. They have created art and a website, and ultimately circulated a petition.

This female has been kept captive for over 40 years. Pregnant five times, each time she lost her child and was left to mourn on her own. She lives alone in a concrete space with little room to move about. I visited the school and spoke with some of the students. One young boy looked at me, confused, and pleadingly asked, "What if someone did that to us?"

The 45-year-old female is named Kiska. She is an orca whale, a sentient being like us. She is highly intelligent and sensitive, and is currently being held captive at Marineland.

In 2019, the House passed Bill S-203 to end the captivity of whales, but Kiska was not released. Her misery was grandfathered in. She could live somewhere, such as the Nova Scotia Whale Sanctuary, and have decades left if we do not allow her to die first due to her confinement. Judith and her students know it is wrong for us to condone this in 2022. It is past time for us to do the right thing.

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CANADA-UKRAINE PARLIAMENTARY PROGRAM

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I want to take a moment to acknowledge and thank the incredible team of Ukrainian interns who have been working in our offices over the past several months.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, parliamentarians have benefited from the work of these dedicated young leaders in the past, but of course this time it is very different. While Russia wages an illegal war in their homeland, while Russia is committing a genocide against their people, and while Ukrainians are fighting heroically for their freedom and democracy, these amazing women have been here helping us with our democracy.

In particular, I want to thank my intern, Mariia. It has been an incredible pleasure to work with her. I thank all the 2022 Ukrainian interns for strengthening the bond between Canada and Ukraine, and for reminding us every day that democracy matters in Ukraine and everywhere in the world. I thank them so much for being here.

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*[Translation]***QUEBEC SPORTS FOUNDATION**

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate and express my deep appreciation to representatives of Quebec teams and the Fondation Équipe-Québec.

Not once, not twice, but three times, our Quebec teams have been crowned world champions. Again this year, we won World Ball Hockey Federation titles in three categories: women's, master's and men's. The events were held at Mont-Tremblant in Quebec. I congratulate Patrick Ducharme and Alex Burrows on working so hard to promote the up-and-coming sport of ball hockey. I thank the organizers for doing such a great job. Bravo.

I also want to express my appreciation for the Fondation Équipe-Québec and its president, Stefan Allinger, as well as Robert Sirois and Pascale Pinard. They are dedicated to improving our Quebec athletes' access to international competitions by giving them a chance to play for Quebec in every sport.

I got into politics to feel the kind of national pride I felt on June 12 at Mont-Tremblant. I look forward to repeating the experience during every international sporting event.

* * *

● (1425)

[English]

COST OF LIVING

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the cost-of-living crisis is real, and it is hurting Canadians in my riding and across Canada. Inflation has hit a 40-year high of 7.7%, and all the Liberals are doing is playing the blame game. Inflation has increased the cost of groceries by more than 25%, which is lowering the amount of food families and seniors can put on their tables. The cost of fuel has been increasing, which also has a direct impact on the cost of production and the cost to transport food to grocery stores.

The stories I am hearing from my communities are heartbreaking. The food banks in our small rural towns are busier than they have ever been, and demand is going up exponentially. Skyrocketing food prices are driving up food security concerns across the board. One woman even caught her senior neighbour eating canned cat food because she could not afford groceries. Many more seniors have told me they believe the hardship and lack of support is because the government is waiting for them to die.

That is unacceptable, and the Liberal government is letting this happen.

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RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Brampton East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commend the retirement of one of my constituents, Mrs. Diana Nugara.

For the past 32 years, Diana has served both her Brampton and neighbouring Toronto community as a court officer with the Toronto Police Service. As a first-generation Canadian to immigrant parents, Diana has played an important role in assisting with policing and community services across the GTA.

To name a few, her achievements include everything from facilitating various contraband raids to helping save the life of an individual who went into cardiac arrest in the courtroom. In the latter part of her career, Diana helped train and test a new integrated computer system that will help police officers and courthouses increase reporting efficiencies. Like many frontline workers throughout the pandemic, Diana continued to work and fulfill her duties.

Diana can now expect a well-earned, restful retirement with her husband Kelvin, who is also a former court officer with 33 years of service; her mother Anna; her adult children; and her first grandchild, Sebastian.

Oral Questions

Please join me in congratulating Diana and wishing her the best during her retirement.

The Speaker: Before continuing to question period, I would like to remind everyone that referring to anyone in the gallery is not permitted.

I would also like to remind everyone that, when we are referring to someone, whether in a question or in an answer, it is by their title or by their riding, whichever one is more convenient.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, accusations that the Prime Minister used the Nova Scotia mass shooting to advance his political agenda are extremely troubling. We believe Superintendent Darren Campbell when he says that Commissioner Lucki pressured the RCMP to reveal certain information. We also believe that it is possible the commissioner was pressured by the PMO and the public safety minister's office. These Liberals have a pattern of interfering in investigations to advance their political agenda, just as we saw in SNC-Lavalin.

Will the government commit today to a full, open and transparent investigation to get to the bottom of this?

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the independence of law enforcement operations is a key principle of our democracy and it is one that our government deeply respects and one that I have always defended. At no point did our government pressure or interfere with the operational decisions of the RCMP.

I would take the opportunity to direct the members to the commissioner's statement from yesterday in which she makes it very clear that there was no interference.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, somebody is not telling the truth, and it is not Superintendent Darren Campbell. He did not just experience this differently. We know the Liberals have a track record of interfering in investigations when it is to their advantage. When they are caught they deny it, then they deflect and then they blame. It is sickening to think that they are using the worst mass shooting in Canadian history for political gain, but it is very possible. We need to get to the truth on this.

Oral Questions

Again, I am going to ask the minister and the government: Will they commit to a full and open investigation?

• (1430)

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to share with the members opposite the truth. In fact, yesterday, the commissioner of the RCMP released a statement in which she said, and I quote:

It is important to note that the sharing of information and briefings with the Minister of Public Safety are necessary, particularly during a mass shooting on Canadian soil. This is standard procedure, and does not impact the integrity of ongoing investigations or interfere with the independence of the RCMP.

It is important that she concludes:

I take the principle of police independence extremely seriously, and it has been and will continue to be fully respected in all interactions.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they deny, deflect and blame.

Inflation has hit a 40-year high and Canadians are worse off than they ever could have imagined. With 7.7% inflation, it is Canadians who are suffering. While Liberals blame COVID, Putin and everything else, Conservatives have asked, and are still asking, that the Liberals cut taxes and give Canadians a break at the pumps. Even President Biden announced a three-month gas tax break, but these Liberals cold-heartedly keep saying “no”.

Liberals would rather see Canadians suffer than accept any of our good ideas. Is that not the truth?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is certainly correct that affordability is a critically important concern for Canadians. That is why the Deputy Prime Minister, in a speech last week, talked through the \$9 billion in support that we are providing on that basis.

We are also working to help stabilize global energy prices through increasing production of oil and gas alongside our partners in the United States, Brazil and other countries, to ensure that we are concurrently addressing the energy crisis that exists in a manner that will ensure affordability for Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the figures speak for themselves. Inflation is at 7.7%, its highest level in 40 years. The grandiose speech by the Minister of Finance to the elite in Toronto last week was all smoke and mirrors. There was absolutely nothing in there to address inflation in this country. Even President Joe Biden temporarily lowered taxes to give Americans a bit of a break. It is well known that the Liberals love it when gas is expensive.

Why are they willing to let Canadians suffer instead of helping them pay for groceries, rent and gas? Why are they doing nothing?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no certainty that the policies the Conserva-

tives are proposing will affect the price at the pump for Canadians. What is certain is that we went all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada to defend our price on pollution, and the court ruled in our favour. What is certain is that the Conservatives have run out of ideas and do not know how to manage the economy or how to help Canadians. We are here to help Canadians deal with the rising cost of living.

* * *

PASSPORTS

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, answers like that one clearly show that the cost of living is not the only thing going up because of inflation. Liberal incompetence has also increased dramatically. Canadians currently waiting in line at passport offices are talking about mismanagement, complacency, crisis and a lack of compassion. Those are their words, not mine. The reality is that people are waiting for days for a basic government document, a passport.

This morning the minister admitted that she has known for months that this would happen, and today we finally heard her solution. She wants to create another line for people to take a number so they do not have to wait in line for a passport. Essentially, people will have to line up for a number instead of a passport. Where is the logic in that?

When will the Liberals wake up and take real action for Canadians?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the situation in Montreal is unacceptable. That is why we are changing things up as of today. We will ensure that people who are travelling in the next 24 hours receive their passports on time. For people who are travelling in more than 48 hours, we have another strategy.

Senior management is there to speak with those waiting in line, because what people are going through in Montreal is truly unacceptable. We will make sure they get served on time.

• (1435)

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would wish the Prime Minister bon voyage, but I do not really feel like it. A nice plane has been reserved for him to travel to Rwanda, his passport is in order and his visas are most certainly in order.

Here at home, thousands of people are waiting. They wait until nighttime at the risk of losing their spot to a petty cheater; they wait to pay the late fees charged by an irresponsible government, without media presence, under police supervision; and now, they are numbered like a herd of sheep. That is not a solution, it is more chaos. It is worse. It is not working.

Now that nothing is working, what is being done for these people?

Oral Questions

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the situation in Montreal is unacceptable and does not reflect what is happening in other places in the country.

For the past four business days, more than 1,000 people have been waiting in line, and we do not want people to be forced to do that. That is why, starting at 7 a.m., senior management teams were there to talk with people and ensure that they were receiving the necessary information and that they had an appointment, which would enable them to come back at a specific time without having to wait in line.

We know it is frustrating and we know that it is important. We will continue to respond to the situation.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister keeps saying that she issued directives and that no one is following them. Yesterday, all government ministers said that it was unacceptable. No one has brought forward a solution that works.

Are we to understand that this will continue until the end of 2022, and that nothing else or nothing better will be done?

If government ministers criticize instead of governing, who will govern? The Bloc Québécois?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I see that all the other parties in the House agree that the Bloc Québécois could never form the government here.

We will ensure that Canadians receive their passports. It is a difficult situation. After two years, we know that Canadians want to travel and that they need to get their passports. The demand is huge, and Service Canada employees are working extremely hard, day and night, to ensure that Canadians receive their passports. We will continue to take action to meet their needs.

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[English]

FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, inflation has reached its highest level since 1983, and what that means is that workers are having a harder time making ends meet. We know that the solution proposed is to increase interest rates, but that is going to put more pressure on the shoulders of workers.

When will the government understand that workers did not cause this inflation? They should not bear the burden of it and they need help. When will the government send help to families now?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the hon. leader of the NDP's little person. I am glad he brought her in.

This government is delivering for families. In fact, across the country, we have delivered 13 child care—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am sure the hon. minister appreciates being cheered on, but it prevents us from hearing the answer.

The hon. minister can start from the top.

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to congratulate the hon. leader of the NDP for bringing his little person in here. It is wonderful to see children here as well.

I am so thrilled to hear the members opposite be so excited about child care, because there are 13 agreements right across the country that are helping families today. In fact, in many of those provinces, families are already receiving 50% off registered child care fees, which in some provinces is between \$2,000 and \$4,000 additional dollars in their pockets each year.

That is helping working Canadians, that is helping families and that is helping our children.

[Translation]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, inflation has reached its highest level since 1983, which means that families are struggling to make ends meet.

Using higher interest rates as the only solution to address inflation will place families under even more pressure. The plan to lower inflation must include assistance for workers.

When will this government offer assistance for families?

● (1440)

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have good news for the hon. leader of the NDP. We are providing assistance right now in the 13 provinces and territories, right across the country, through the child care agreements. Families with young children will save thousands of dollars every year. We are talking about real dollars to help families cope with the rising cost of living.

We are there for families, children and our country.

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[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to have the mass murder of 22 of my fellow Nova Scotians and an unborn child be used as a Liberal gun control wedge is disgusting, obscene and an insult to the victims and their families.

The detailed investigative notes of RCMP officers, which will be used in court, state political interference into this mass murder. They were contradicted by the public safety minister and the commissioner of the RCMP.

Who is telling the truth: the RCMP investigators, or the Liberal politicians trying to interfere in the investigation?

Oral Questions

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like again to direct my hon. colleague to the commissioner's statement, which I believe speaks for itself. The decision as to what information will be publicly disclosed regarding any investigation, as well as all operational matters, lies always and solely with the police.

Let me also take the opportunity to acknowledge that the 2020 mass shooting in Nova Scotia devastated families and communities, and particularly the families and loved ones of the 22 individuals who lost their lives. We should all keep them in our thoughts.

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, many in Nova Scotia are already concerned about the proceedings of the Mass Casualty Commission. Superintendent Campbell testified, "The commissioner said she had promised the Minister of Public Safety and the Prime Minister's Office that the RCMP would release this information." The commissioner then said that the RCMP did not understand this was tied to pending gun control legislation.

Twenty-two individuals and an unborn baby died in my riding during this tragedy. We believe Superintendent Campbell. Does the minister?

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, I have never had a conversation with the superintendent, but the commissioner who did released a statement, in which she said:

It is important to note that the sharing of information and briefings with the Minister of Public Safety are necessary, particularly during a mass shooting on Canadian soil.

This is standard procedure. It does not impact the integrity of any ongoing investigation or interfere with the independence of the RCMP. She concluded:

I take the principle of police independence extremely seriously, and it has been and will continue to be fully respected in all interactions.

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has somehow managed to use politics to interfere with a cross-border police investigation. It hoped it would advance its potential gun control legislation. This interference further undermined public confidence in the police investigation as to how the killer managed to obtain and smuggle illegal guns into Canada.

How long after this tragedy did the minister discuss the gun legislation and the resulting order in council, which happened 10 days later, with Commissioner Lucki?

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would remind the member that we actually campaigned in 2019 on our promise to Canadians that we would strengthen gun control and ban assault-style rifles. In May 2020, we kept that promise, but the independence of law enforcement operations remains a key principle of our democracy. It is one that our government has always respected and one I have always defended. At no point did our government pressure or interfere with any of the operational decisions of the RCMP.

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is becoming increasingly clear why the government wanted to have a secret inquiry on this. In a statement yesterday, RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki did not deny that she promised the Minister of Emergency Preparedness that she would release information surrounding the Nova Scotia mass shooting. People are not in the habit of making promises unless they are asked to do so.

Did the Minister of Emergency Preparedness or his staff, at any time, ask the commissioner to publicly release information regarding the Nova Scotia mass shooting, yes or no?

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the very short answer to the member's question is no. Finally, I would point again to the commissioner's statement, in which she said, "I take the principle of police independence extremely seriously, and it has been and will continue to be fully respected in all interactions." Those are the facts.

• (1445)

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has gone on inappropriately interfering with prosecutions to interfering with police investigations. To the Prime Minister, the murder of 22 people is not tragedy but political opportunity.

Superintendent Campbell made it clear: "The commissioner said she had promised the Minister of Public Safety and the Prime Minister's Office that the RCMP would release this information.... The Commissioner then said that we didn't understand, that this was tied to pending gun control legislation".

Will the NDP-Liberal government allow the public safety committee to fully investigate this shocking revelation?

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again I would point out to the member the statement that was issued by the commissioner of the RCMP, in which she made it crystal clear—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. Throwing names back and forth from both sides is not going to solve the problem. I am going to ask both sides to take a deep breath, and we will let the minister respond, from the top, please.

Hon. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to take a breath.

Please let me reiterate that the decision as to how or when the police will release information lies with the police and the police alone. This was not a matter that the government in any way interfered with or extracted any promises for. I remind members of the commissioner's statement, in which she has made equally clear that there was no interference in this case. Those are the facts and that is what I have shared with the House.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, multiple sources from the RCMP are accusing the government of political interference that risks police investigations into a tragic mass shooting. Lia Scanlan, from RCMP communications, is quoted as saying, “The commissioner releases a body count that we don't even have.... It was all political pressure. That is 100% [the] Minister...and the Prime Minister.”

Canadians are not buying the minister's excuse as he desperately tries to cover for the Prime Minister and save both their careers. If the NDP-Liberals have nothing to hide, will they support the committee's investigation of this egregious political interference?

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, I would advise the members that there was no interference. At no point did our government pressure or interfere in the operational decisions of the RCMP. This has been very clearly articulated in the commissioner's statements from yesterday.

Let me also add that Canadians, including those who were directly impacted by this tragedy, have expressed great concern about how and when the RCMP shared information with the public. That is precisely why we specified in the order of reference for the Mass Casualty Commission that it examine the communications approach taken both during and after the event. That is the work of the Mass Casualty Commission. That is the work we will depend upon.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is time for a performance review.

Faced with a high-risk demonstration by truckers, the government stalled and stalled before finally invoking the Emergencies Act at the request of the police, or so they said.

However, that is not true. The police did not ask for it. Even government ministers, including the Deputy Prime Minister, have said it was a purely political choice.

Is the minister proud of the fact that he simply allowed the Prime Minister—like someone else we know in 1970—to invoke emergency measures against civilians when it was all based on lies?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the government's work during the illegal blockades. We made the necessary decisions, including invoking the Emergencies Act, based on advice from the police. That is exactly what the RCMP commissioner confirmed in committee.

We will now work with the joint parliamentary committee during the review process, as well as with Justice Rouleau, to provide as much transparency as possible on this decision, which we will always defend.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, next up in our performance review is the environment and the utterly nonsensical business of carbon sequestration, which experts say does not work, lies about whether the government's tar-

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gets can be met, the acquisition of Trans Mountain at a loss, indirect subsidies for the oil industry and Bay du Nord.

I am sure the minister was acting in good faith initially, but he ended up selling out. Do the Liberals realize they turned an environmental activist into an oil industry lobbyist?

• (1450)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my hon. colleague that, as Minister of Environment, I never circumvented environmental assessment rules, unlike my colleague, who did so not once, not twice but three times during his tenure as environment minister.

We have a plan. Our plan is working. Pollution levels in Canada are down. We will keep doing what we are doing.

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are shocked by evidence in the Nova Scotia mass shooting inquiry showing that RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki made a promise to the then public safety minister and the PMO to leverage the mass murders to get gun control laws passed. That is the most outrageous attempt to politicize the RCMP in Canadian history. It is another woman leader forced to compromise principles for political expediency.

We are calling for a committee to investigate this political interference. Will the Prime Minister co-operate with this committee investigation?

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course there was no promise, but I will again take members back to the commissioner's statement because I think it speaks for itself. She said:

It is important to note that the sharing of information and briefings with the Minister of Public Safety are necessary, particularly during a mass shooting on Canadian soil. This is standard procedure, and does not impact the integrity of ongoing investigations or interfere with the independence of the RCMP.

The commissioner concludes with this: “I take the principle of police independence extremely seriously, and it has been and will continue to be fully respected in all interactions.”

Those are the facts.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister does not need a breath; he needs ethics.

Oral Questions

Twenty-two people were brutally murdered in Nova Scotia, including an RCMP officer and a pregnant mother, by a gunman with illegal firearms. What did the Prime Minister do? He coerced the RCMP commissioner to use those innocents' deaths to support a political agenda. Canadians now know they pressured the commissioner to subvert an active investigation into mass murder. Canadians believe Superintendent Campbell.

Shame on the government. Why did it politically influence and jeopardize a mass murder investigation?

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with the respect to the suggestion and question about my ethics, I will consider the source and ignore the comment. I will—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am just going to cut this off. To both sides, please do not throw out insults. That is all I am asking. I have heard it from both sides, so I am asking both sides to calm down. If members throw one out, they deserve one back. I am sorry. That is enough from both sides. When somebody says, "They did it first", it makes me feel like I am in a kindergarten yard.

The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, how can a government sink so low as to exploit a mass shooting for political purposes?

Lia Scanlan, a spokesperson for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, said, and I quote: "[The minister], all these people, the Prime Minister, they were weighing in on what we could and couldn't say...It was all political pressure."

This government is totally immoral. Can the Prime Minister tell us who in his cabinet decided to politicize the RCMP and when that person will be relieved of their duties?

[*English*]

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to advise the House that no one made a choice to politicize the terrible tragedy of the murder of 22 people in Nova Scotia in 2020.

The independence of law enforcement operations is a key principle of our democracy. It is one that our government deeply respects and one that I have always defended. At no point did our government pressure or interfere with the operational decisions of the RCMP, including their communications strategy. I direct members to the commissioner's statement from yesterday, where she makes it very clear that there was no interference.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would counter that Superintendent Campbell of the RCMP stated, and I quote, "The commissioner said she had promised the Minister of Public Safety and the Prime Minister's Office that the RCMP would release this information."

For her to make that promise, she would have had to be asked to do so. This is not the first time the Prime Minister and his cabinet have abused their power. They would have us believe that RCMP investigators are lying, but Canadians see what is going on.

We Conservatives believe Superintendent Campbell. Does the Prime Minister?

• (1455)

[*English*]

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have already made clear, I have never had a conversation with Mr. Campbell. The conversations between the commissioner and her subordinates are something she can speak to.

However, I would reiterate for the member opposite that the independence of law enforcement operations is a key principle of our democracy, which is respected and defended by our government. I can assure the member that at no point did our government pressure or interfere in any of the operational communication decisions of the RCMP. I would direct the member to the commissioner's statement, in which she makes it crystal clear that no such interference took place.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there are very disturbing allegations that the government directed interference in an ongoing police investigation. Nova Scotians have suffered and they deserve answers. The idea that any government would compromise an investigation for its own political gain is insulting for families of the victims. Any interference from the Prime Minister's Office is completely unacceptable and breaks Canadians' trust in our institutions.

Will the government launch a full investigation into these disturbing allegations to give Canadians the answers they need?

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will have to repeat once again that there was no interference. We did not place any pressure on the RCMP for any reason.

Several months before, we made a promise to Canadians that we would ban assault-style rifles, and we kept that promise, but this terrible tragedy in Nova Scotia was certainly not to be used. We know that these weapons used in mass shootings are used for the purpose of killing as many people as possible, and we were highly resolved to act.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals face a test today. Will they take a good idea in my bill to fight climate change or side with their rich friends at the Infrastructure Bank, a corporate welfare scheme? Today we will find out as MPs vote on my bill to support indigenous and northern communities to get the infrastructure they need to survive climate change. During this week's debate, we had to listen to a Liberal MP support public-private partnership scams and push more privatization.

The climate crisis is here, and northern and indigenous communities are paying the price. Will the Liberals stand with northern and indigenous communities or their billionaire friends?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while we always recognize how we can improve delivering on infrastructure across this country, the member opposite's comments are completely out of touch with the reality of the work that the Infrastructure Bank is doing.

Here is one example. Almost 49,000 homes are going to be connected in Manitoba to fibre projects in 53 rural municipalities. Do the member opposite and her leader, who advocated for the abolishment of the Infrastructure Bank, want to talk to those 48,000 residents who are now going to be connected to much-needed fibre, because the New Democrats feel they can do better?

[Translation]

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, halting and reversing the biodiversity decline presents a major challenge that we all need to tackle together.

Canada is providing leadership on the world stage when it comes to tackling climate change and protecting nature.

Can the Minister of Environment and Climate Change update the House on the latest developments towards achieving an ambitious global framework on biodiversity?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her work and activism on this issue.

I am proud to announce to the House that, at the request of the United Nations, Canada has agreed to host the next United Nations conference on the protection of biological diversity in December.

This important conference must be the moment when countries all over the world, including Canada, commit to protecting at least 30% of our land and oceans by 2030, and to reversing biodiversity loss by 2050.

* * *

• (1500)

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, who would have thought it? The last time inflation was this high was 40 years ago, when we had another divisive tax-and-spend Liberal prime minister named Trudeau. They

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say history repeats itself; I say we should have learned from the last experience.

With so many Canadians struggling, would the Minister of Finance acknowledge that her \$100 billion of stimulus spending is inflationary, that this level of inflation is not fair and is not just? Will she admit today that it is “Justinflation”?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, global inflation caused by a number of factors. Supply chain bottlenecks, climate change and the war in Ukraine are having significant impacts on the household budgets of Canadians.

While Canada's rate of inflation is below average when compared to the Euro area, the U.S. and the OECD, we are continuing to focus on economic growth and making life more affordable for Canadians. Our measures have helped lift 1.3 million Canadians out of poverty, and important programs that have supported seniors, families and individuals are indexed to the cost of living.

We will continue to invest in Canadians while lowering our debt-to-GDP ratio and increasing Canada's long-term fiscal advantage.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these Liberals always want to talk about what Moody's thinks, but the only Moody that that member should think about right now is the mood of the Canadian people.

Conservatives have been pointing to the example of Alberta for months. When the Alberta government cut gas taxes, the price of gas dropped along with the province's inflation. Lower gas prices are a win for consumers and for the economy. Even President Biden is now calling for a three-month gas tax holiday to do the same for the American people.

Will the finance minister implement one today, or is the only holiday her government has in the mind a three-month accountability holiday from Parliament?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand rising gas prices have had a negative impact on the household budgets of Canadians, but we also know that the increase is a global phenomenon, in part resulting from the war in Ukraine.

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If we implement a tax holiday on oil and gas, energy companies could actually pocket the difference in costs. There is no guarantee that the savings would be passed on to Canadian consumers. Similarly, our carbon price at 11 cents per litre is the only fee collected on gas that is returned to consumers, making life more affordable for eight out of 10 Canadian families.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this morning, Canadians woke up to more bad news from this government: Inflation in Canada is at 7.7%, the highest it has been in 40 years.

This affects every Canadian family, especially lower-income earners. For months, the Conservatives have been calling for the tax on the price of gas to be reduced. We are not alone in thinking that way. U.S. President Biden, a Democrat, is calling for the tax to be reduced for the next three months.

Could the Prime Minister agree with his friend Biden and lower the tax?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that this is a very difficult time for millions of Canadians. Groceries cost more, and Canadians are having a hard time making their rent or mortgage payments.

That is why we have lowered taxes for the middle class twice now. The Conservatives voted against that. That is also why old age security payments, which we just increased, are arriving in July. That is also why the Canada child benefit payments will be transferred in July.

We are here to help Canadians deal with the rising cost of living. The Conservatives oppose all these measures.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, by not following President Biden's lead, the Liberals have made Canada the only G7 country that has not reduced its gas tax.

We do not need to search high and low for proof that cutting the gas tax works. In Canada, on April 1, when the government increased the Liberal carbon tax, the Alberta government lowered its tax and even removed it. That has lowered inflation in Alberta.

If it works in Alberta, why would it not work everywhere in Canada?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I would like to correct my colleague. Americans have not cut gas taxes, not yet anyway, because they know that lowering taxes for big oil does not help Canadians directly.

On this side of the House, we help Canadians directly by providing one-time payments to Canadians facing housing affordability challenges, direct payments to seniors, and direct payments to families with young children.

We are here to support Canadians. The Conservatives are here to support big oil. That is the reality.

PASSPORTS

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government is taking people for fools when it comes to passports.

Today, it started issuing tickets with fixed appointment times to the people lining up outside the Montreal office. However, by 9:20 a.m., there were no more tickets left. According to TVA, the government gave out about 75 tickets, even though thousands of people are waiting for an appointment.

Is that really the best solution the government could come up with this week? If so, it really has a long way to go.

• (1505)

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, today, we adopted a new strategy to deal with applications in Montreal in particular. Hundreds and even thousands of people are waiting outside Service Canada offices. We gave out tickets for appointments. The director for Quebec assured me that senior management will be there all day to make sure that everyone in line gets the information they need and that those who are travelling in the very near future get an appointment.

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): How reassuring, Mr. Speaker.

Thank goodness the federal government was not responsible for getting people vaccinated. Remember how the vaccination centres were run? We were greeted at the door with information and instructions, even though millions of us were seeking an appointment at the same time. What a stark contrast to the passport process.

We pay half of our taxes to this federal government, yet it is incapable of getting us a simple piece of photo ID.

Will the government at least acknowledge its own utter incompetence? I hope it at least feels ashamed.

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a passport is a secure document. We must ensure the integrity of the process, which involves stringent screening measures. This document confirms Canadian citizenship, and the integrity of the process is paramount.

In addition, nearly 85% of the passport applications we have received are from first-time applicants, and that process is much more complex than a simple renewal. That said, we are here, and we have hired more staff. We are reallocating resources, and we will be there for Canadians.

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, residents in my riding are making hard decisions when it comes to everyday essentials. Paul, from Omemee, is caught in a catch-22, because he has to work more than 50 hours a week just to make a living. Barbara, a senior in Bobcaygeon, worries as her savings dwindle away. Scott, from Burnt River, has concerns that the ongoing cost of diesel could mean the end of his business. Brad, from Peterborough, must make tough decisions between gas for work and food for the family.

When will the Prime Minister end his reckless spending and finally address the cost-of-living crisis?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that this is a difficult time for millions of Canadian families. Groceries are more expensive and bills are adding up. That is why we cut taxes for the middle class and for small businesses and lifted more than 1.3 million Canadians out of poverty. We are reducing child care costs for parents; we are delivering increased benefits for our seniors; we are also making investments to boost Canada's long-term growth and create well-paying jobs, all while lowering our debt-to-GDP ratio every single year.

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TAXATION

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, inflation has risen almost a full point month over month to 7.7%, which is near record levels. Europe has reduced fuel taxes, and the U.S. president is now calling for a gas tax holiday. What is the Canadian government doing? It is increasing fuel taxes.

The last time world oil prices were this high was 2014, when the price of gas in Canada was \$1.40, which is 70¢ less than today. The Minister of Finance says this is beyond her control, but she is ignoring her role in actually escalating inflation.

When will she take her foot off the gas on fuel tax increases?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, certainly affordability challenges that are facing Canadians today are significant. It is incumbent on the government to take steps to ensure we are addressing that issue. As the hon. member knows, the Minister of Finance discussed last week the investments we are making to address the affordability challenges faced by Canadians of modest incomes.

We will continue to look at how we can actually work to ensure affordability going forward. Concurrently, we are working to address the energy security challenge, increasing the amount of oil and gas we are producing in this country to stabilize the global energy crisis, and allow it to be reduced over time, to get away from Vladimir Putin, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the impacts on energy prices.

• (1510)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Brandy, from my riding, is a single mom struggling to get by. The higher cost of gas and groceries has forced her to go to the food

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bank. Now the CRA, after seven years of auditing her without finding anything, has decided that she has to pay \$30,000 in back taxes, and the minister has taken no action to revisit her case.

Will the Liberals resolve Brandy's case and suspend the tax on gas, as Joe Biden is planning to do?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government was there to support Canadians during the pandemic.

The Canada Revenue Agency is expanding its audit and recovery efforts, but I want to reassure those who are affected that we are also here to help them.

Anyone who needs help can contact the CRA to find a solution tailored to their unique circumstances, and I can reassure my colleagues that the CRA will proceed with empathy and compassion.

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[English]

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Shafqat Ali (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability found that more than six million Canadians report having a disability. We need to create a Canada that is inclusive from the start. That is why the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion announced new funding today for licensed early learning and child care centres through the enabling accessibility fund, which is a federal grants and contribution program that supports infrastructure projects that improve the accessibility, safety and inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Can the minister share with us more about this important announcement?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this morning I was pleased to join the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and the President of the Treasury Board to announce that as part of our government's commitment to building a barrier-free Canada, we are investing \$12.5 million in funding for 225 early learning and child care centres across Canada.

Through the accessibility fund, child care centres will receive specialized equipment so that children with disabilities can thrive in a safe environment that respects their needs. We are proud to invest in these organizations.

*Oral Questions***PASSPORTS**

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, thanks to the Harper Conservatives, the Liberal government has an important tool to protect kids abroad from sexual exploitation: The Liberals can refuse passports to Canadians who are likely to travel abroad to exploit children.

However, the Liberals are not doing this. Since they have come to power, they have only revoked 13 passports for child predators and refused eight. There are 42,000 child predators in Canada.

To the Prime Minister, over the last seven years, how many passports has the government given to convicted child sex offenders?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is extraordinarily important that we get the integrity of passports right. That is something that I have been communicating, and when someone is applying for a passport for the first time, it is one of the reasons that we ensure we are getting this right. When we are looking at children's passports, it is another reason that we want to make sure we have permission from both parents, and if there is a separation, that we go through the custody agreements, because at all costs, we must protect our children. That is exactly what we continue to do.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, passports are a major issue. In an interview with Paul Arcand this morning, the minister said that she knew for months that the situation was going to become problematic.

She let the situation deteriorate. Her negligence is typical of this government. The number of applications the government needs to deal with has gotten so out of hand that we have lost count. The minister misled Canadians by telling them that they would get their passports on time when she knew full well such would not be the case.

Can she now set the record straight in the House and tell us how many thousands of people are waiting in line outside to get their passports?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the situation in Montreal right now is like nowhere else in the country, with hundreds of people lining up at the three passport offices. With the Saint-Jean and Canada Day holidays coming up, we know that many Quebecers want to travel.

We have now changed our strategy to ensure that people receive the services and information they need. We will continue to respond to the situation to ensure that Canadians receive their passports.

* * *

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, MPs' offices are outposts for Canadians for help in getting their issues fixed, and boy, with this incompetent Liberal government, the people of Oshawa need a lot of assistance: passports, airports, immigration, pub-

lic safety, foreign affairs, CERB. It goes on and on. Our office is working around the clock fixing these Liberal failures.

When will the Liberals stop downloading their screw-ups on constituency offices, take responsibility for their chaos, get back to work and fix their mess?

● (1515)

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first I want to clarify something. The members opposite keep saying that public servants need to get back to work. Public servants at Service Canada have been in offices for months. They have been working around the clock. The people they are talking about who are working from home are the same people who delivered CERB to nine million Canadians. They are the same people who have delivered EI, OAS and CPP at the highest rate in 15 years.

We know there are challenges with passports right now. We continue to work around the clock, and public servants are working—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Davenport.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, climate change is top of mind for the residents of my riding of Davenport. In fact, I recently received a handwritten letter from Selena, an 11-year-old constituent. She is concerned about the environment and wanted to know what our federal government was doing to protect it. At the end of her letter she said, "We can all make a difference. Together, we can make the world a safer place for all its residents."

Can the Minister of Environment and Climate Change update the House on the latest initiatives our federal government has in place to protect the environment, combat climate change and make the world a safer place?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Davenport for her advocacy and her work on these important issues.

Selena is right. We need to do better when it comes to protecting our environment, which is why this week we announced that we are banning six single-use plastics that are polluting our rivers and our environment. They are ending up on our streets and everywhere. Between now and 2030, there will be 22,000 tonnes of plastic waste that we will take out of our environment and 1.3 million tonnes that we will take out of the Canadian economy.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, three years ago the Liberals created a \$150-million veterans survivors fund. As of today, zero dollars have been spent. Yesterday, the PBO found out that almost double is required to make this right.

Thousands of veterans' widows are living in poverty, and the government continues to break its promise to eliminate the sexist, archaic "gold-digger" clause.

When will the current government stop punishing veterans for finding love after 60?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is aware that we are committed to making sure veterans and their spouses have the support they need. We have been working with Statistics Canada and the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research to gather information from the survivors.

I understand of course that the committee has studied this issue and I look forward to its report. We will use the results to evaluate the situation.

I can assure my hon. colleague we will do everything to make sure we provide the services that our veterans need and deserve.

* * *

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, here we are again. Last June, the government introduced a bill to implement the Canada disability benefit days before Parliament rose and then called an election.

This June, the government introduced the exact same bill. It has been 20 days and we have yet to debate it once. Nine other bills have been prioritized since.

Canadians with disabilities continue to disproportionately live in poverty across the country. They want to see emergency supports. They want to see action.

Does the current government understand that simply introducing a bill does nothing to help Canadians with disabilities today?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since 2015, we have done so much as a government to help persons with disabilities, and I was honoured to reintroduce Bill C-22 in the House several weeks ago. We are working with the disability community to ensure that their needs and wants are reflected in the bill and that we lift as many people out of poverty as we can with the new Canada disability benefit.

We are about to release our first-ever disability inclusion action plan. Financial security is a key pillar of that plan, as is employment. We are going to make sure we get this done.

Privilege

• (1520)

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Jeanie McLean, Minister of Education and Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate for Yukon.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

* * *

[*Translation*]

HOCKEY CANADA

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion:

That the House call for an independent inquiry into Hockey Canada's handling of the events of June 2018, in order to determine whether this was an isolated event or whether there are deficiencies in Hockey Canada's handling of reported complaints of sexual assault, sexual harassment and other types of misconduct.

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

Okay. The House has heard the terms of the motion.

All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

INTERRUPTION TO PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a question of privilege concerning last night's crash of the hybrid Parliament system. I was working in my Confederation Building office here in the precinct for the House of Commons, but could not log into the Zoom portion of the House's proceedings last night. We were discussing Bill C-21, the government's cynical approach to gun control, which was to be followed by Bill C-28, a response to the Supreme Court's decision that relieved extremely intoxicated criminals of taking responsibility for their crimes. These are both issues that many of my constituents are very passionate about, and I wanted to be present for the debates.

Several colleagues also tried to access the video conference for the sitting, but were unsuccessful, I was told. I also understand that a meeting of the very important Special Joint Committee on the Declaration of Emergency, the committee looking into the government's choice to declare a national emergency over this winter's truck protest in Ottawa, had to be abandoned because of these technical failures.

Privilege

Beyond the obvious inconvenience and embarrassment of the hybrid system, which incredibly the government House leader will be asking later today to be renewed for another year, this incident represents broadly, I believe, a breach of the privilege to be able to represent my constituents. Under the House order of November 25, 2021, which reinstated hybrid arrangements after last year's election, "members may participate in proceedings of the House either in person or by video conference". It states "may participate". There is no caveat or qualification to that. There is nothing that says it is only applicable when all the technology lines are up.

As much as I may think the hybrid Parliament should be scrapped, the House has agreed to those arrangements until at least tomorrow, so I sought to exercise my right to participate remotely from my parliamentary office, yet I simply could not.

While I acknowledge that the House suspended last evening shortly after the connectivity problems were flagged, which was appropriate, the way the House adjourned was not, however. According to the records of the House, the sitting resumed at 8:54 last evening when the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader then sought unanimous consent for the House to adjourn. The chair then canvassed the House in the usual manner and found there was agreement for the motion. Since I was trying to attend remotely, but with a technical range that prevented me from doing so, I was unable to present for that vote. That too is a breach of my privileges.

I have since come to understand that there had been a consensus of party representatives to reconvene the House for the purpose of adjourning when it became obvious that technical issues could not be resolved prior to midnight. That said, I understand that my House leader's office had been assured by the government House leader's office that a minister of the Crown would be proposing the adjournment of the House. That is a critical point in these circumstances. Last night's sitting was an extended sitting under the House order of May 2, better known as Motion No. 11, which permits a cabinet minister to move an adjournment motion on a point of order, which is deemed adopted upon being moved. There would have been no vote and no opportunity to object. The NDP-Liberal agreement on Motion No. 11 already stripped me of those rights.

Had any of the 39 ministers of the Crown been here to manage the Business of the House, the House could have properly adjourned early under the Liberals' ruthless Motion No. 11, but they did not even manage that correctly. Instead, there was a vote and I was not able to be present for it. Your predecessors, Mr. Speaker, have found several prima facie cases of privilege concerning the inability of a member to reach the House, especially when there is a vote.

Mr. Speaker Regan put it well on April 6, 2017, at page 10,246 of the Debates:

The importance of the matter of members' access to the precinct, particularly when there are votes for members to attend, cannot be overstated. It bears repeating that even a temporary denial of access, whether there is a vote or not, cannot be tolerated.

He cited favourably the 21st report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs in 2004, in relation to security ar-

rangements on Parliament Hill for the visit of an American president:

The denial of access to Members of the House—even if temporary—is unacceptable, and constitutes a contempt of the House. Members must not be impeded or interfered with while on their way to the Chamber, or when going about their parliamentary business. To permit this would interfere with the operation of the House of Commons, and undermine the pre-eminent right of the House to the service of its Members.

Those cases concerned physical obstruction.

• (1525)

Page 111 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, reminds us, "A Member may also be obstructed or interfered with in the performance of his or her parliamentary functions by non-physical means." This new hybrid world obviously presents entirely new considerations that had not even been contemplated when those previous cases arose or when our procedural authorities were written. Bosc and Gagnon, at page 112, continues, "It is impossible to codify all incidents which might be interpreted as matters of obstruction [or] interference".

That said, Mr. Speaker, I know that you, yourself, have been seized with considering just how privilege intersects with the virtual component of our proceedings from the very beginning. When the procedure and House affairs committee first began studying these issues in the earliest weeks of the pandemic, you testified on April 21, 2020, saying, at page five of the evidence, "By not having the connectivity or by having any issues, that could be an issue down the road."

Later you added, at page 10, with particular relevance to my situation last night, "Allowing individuals to vote is the heart of our system, and it's the base of parliamentary privilege." You reinforced this point in your July 6, 2020, appearance before the same committee by commenting, at page six of the evidence, "It is a member's privilege to vote, and we don't want the member to lose that privilege or not be able to access it."

The issue goes much deeper than just attending votes. I could not attend any of the virtual sitting. A predecessor of yours, Peter Miliken, bluntly made the point about connection failures to the procedure and House affairs committee on April 23, 2020, at page 19 of the evidence. He said, "It would be a matter of privilege if they couldn't get into it."

Taking the evidence the committee heard in the spring and summer of 2020, it presented two reports which helped form the structure of the hybrid system which has evolved here. Its views on these issues are equally clear.

In its fifth report presented in May 2020, the committee wrote at page 31, "It is essential that any modifications to the procedures and practices of the House made in response to the COVID-19 outbreak fully respect the rights possessed by members under parliamentary privilege." It continues, "Further, in the exercise of the rights accorded by parliamentary privilege, members have the right to full and equal participation in parliamentary proceedings." Last night, I did not have full and equal participation in parliamentary proceedings.

In its seventh report, which was presented in July 2020, at page 55, the committee recommended:

That the virtual or hybrid parliament replicate the rules and customs of the House as closely as possible...in order to fully ensure the democratic role of Parliament (deliberation, accountability and decision-making), as well as the parliamentary rights and privileges of members.

Further in the report, at page 60, the committee recommended, “That members participating virtually in any proceedings of the House of Commons enjoy and exercise the same parliamentary privileges that apply to members physically present.” I was incapable of exercising the same rights and privileges as my colleagues inside the chamber last evening when the Chair canvassed the House on the parliamentary secretary’s unanimous consent motion.

As for the causes of the outage last night, I would submit that identifying the origins and motivations, if any, if either can even be identified, is immaterial to this question of privilege.

First, and most important, House business was conducted in defiance of the order adopted on November 25, 2021, denying me the opportunity to participate and vote, which is in breach of parliamentary privilege.

Second, that is a matter that a committee of the House, with a privilege reference, can determine. I will quote Mr. Speaker Milliken from October 15, 2001, at page 6085 of the debates, who said:

There is a body that is well equipped to commit acts of inquisition, and that is the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, which has a fearsome chairman, quite able to extract information from witnesses who appear before the committee, with the aid of the capable members who form that committee of the House.

Third, even if the source of last night’s technical difficulties can be readily pinpointed, I would refer you to the ruling of your predecessor, the hon. member for Regina—Qu’Appelle, on March 6, 2012, at page 5,834 of the debates, where he found a *prima facie* case of privilege in connection with the online hacker collective Anonymous.

• (1530)

I have long thought that we need to get back to traditional in-person sittings of the House. Yesterday’s situation is just the latest example of why it is so important.

Though I recognize I am straying into debate on Motion No. 19, which is on today’s schedule, the point remains that something serious happened last night. It was something that rose to the level of a breach of privilege, and a committee needs to get to the bottom of it. Should you agree, Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to move the appropriate motion.

The Speaker: I want to thank the hon. member.

The hon. government House leader is rising on this point as well.

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously, an Internet connectivity issue with an external service provider does not constitute a question of privilege because it is outside the control of the House. The House took appropriate action to restart it. Of course, these provisions have worked 99.9% of the time.

Privilege

I appreciate that the member, who was in his office 100 or 200 metres away, was impacted by this. All members were. However, there are various things that are outside of our control that sometimes interrupt our proceedings. We are back here today. It continues to work, and it has worked in 99.9% of the time. I would say that is very effective.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the same point, the hon. member for Calgary Centre expressed the issue, which is that, in the context of his participation in the House, his participation was not able to occur. That is actually the point of his question of privilege today. This relates to Motion No. 11.

I think if you go back, Mr. Speaker, you will see that he had every right to participate. He could not last night, and I would agree with the member that this is the basis of his question of privilege.

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to the government House leader, I would encourage him to first review the points that were raised by the member for Calgary Centre and then consult the authorities. He would learn that, in fact, it is not necessarily an internal challenge that would create a question of privilege.

As has been clearly stated by Mr. Speaker Milliken, Mr. Speaker Regan and the current member for Regina—Qu’Appelle, external factors can, in fact, have an impact on the privileges and the dignity of this House. For the government House leader to say that just because it was an external problem outside of the direct control of this place is incredibly misleading. I would encourage him to consult the authorities, which are available at the table in those wonderful green books, and review what constitutes a question of privilege in this place.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, given last night’s troubling events, the Bloc Québécois wishes to assert the right of reply on this question of privilege. We consider it to be very important, and we would like to contribute our thoughts.

[*English*]

The Speaker: In light of the amount of time that we have before we recess for summer, I will do my best to come back as soon as possible.

• (1535)

[*Translation*]

If any member has something to add, I would advise them to do so as soon as possible.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[Translation]

PENSION PROTECTION ACT

The House resumed from June 15 consideration of the motion that Bill C-228, An Act to amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act and the Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: It being 3:35 p.m., pursuant to an order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-228 under Private Members' Business.

[English]

Call in the members.

[Before the Clerk announced the results of the vote:]

● (1550)

Mr. Parm Bains: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I had some technical difficulties. I would like to vote "for".

The Speaker: The member voted "nay".

To clarify for the member, if he wishes to change his vote, he would have to ask for unanimous consent from the House now, if he is interested.

Mr. Parm Bains: Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to change my vote to "for".

The Speaker: Do we have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

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

(Division No. 165)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Alghabra	Ali
Allison	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Baker
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Benzen	Bergen
Berthold	Bérubé
Bezan	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Block	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Bragdon
Brassard	Brière

Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Cannings	Caputo
Carr	Carrie
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Chahal
Chambers	Champagne
Champoux	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Chong	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cooper
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Dancho	Davidson
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
d'Entremont	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Doherty
Dong	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Epp
Erskine-Smith	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Fergus	Ferreri
Fillmore	Findlay
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Gallant
Garneau	Garon
Garrison	Gaudreau
Gazan	Généreux
Gerretsen	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gould
Gourde	Gray
Green	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hallan
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Hoback
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Jeneroux
Johns	Jones
Jowhari	Julian
Kayabaga	Kelloway
Kelly	Khalid
Khera	Kitchen
Kmiec	Koutrakis
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lake	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lantsman
Lapointe	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon
Lawrence	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lehoux
Lemire	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lightbound	Lloyd
Lobb	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	MacKenzie

MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Martel
 Masse
 May (Cambridge)
 Mazier
 McDonald (Avalon)
 McKay
 McLean
 McPherson
 Mendès
 Miao
 Miller
 Morantz
 Morrison
 Motz
 Muys
 Nater
 Noormohamed
 O'Connell
 O'Regan
 Patzer
 Pausé
 Perron
 Plamondon
 Powlowski
 Rayes
 Reid
 Richards
 Rodriguez
 Romanado
 Ruff
 Sajjan
 Samson
 Savard-Tremblay
 Scheer
 Schmale
 Serré
 Shanahan
 Shields
 Sidhu (Brampton East)
 Simard
 Singh
 Soroka
 Ste-Marie
 St-Onge
 Stubbs
 Tassi
 Thériault
 Thomas
 Tochor
 Trudel
 Uppal
 Van Bynen
 Van Popta
 Vandenbeld
 Vidal
 Viersen
 Villemure
 Vuong
 Warkentin
 Webber
 Wilkinson
 Williamson
 Zarrillo
 Zuberi — 323

Maguire
 Martinez Ferrada
 Mathysen
 May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
 McCauley (Edmonton West)
 McGuinty
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 McLeod
 Melillo
 Mendicino
 Michaud
 Moore
 Morrice
 Morrissey
 Murray
 Naqvi
 Ng
 Normandin
 Oliphant
 O'Toole
 Paul-Hus
 Perkins
 Petitpas Taylor
 Poilievre
 Qualtrough
 Redekopp
 Rempel Garner
 Robillard
 Rogers
 Rood
 Sahota
 Saks
 Sarai
 Scarpaleggia
 Schiefke
 Seeback
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Shipley
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Sinclair-Desgagné
 Small
 Steinley
 Stewart
 Strahl
 Suds
 Taylor Roy
 Therrien
 Thompson
 Tolmie
 Turnbull
 Valdez
 van Koeverden
 Vandal
 Vecchio
 Vien
 Vignola
 Vis
 Wagantall
 Waugh
 Weiler
 Williams
 Yip
 Zimmer

NAYS

Members

Private Members' Business

PAIRED

Members

Genuis

Joly — 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Finance.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK ON CANCERS LINKED TO FIREFIGHTING ACT

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-224 under Private Members' Business.

● (1600)

[English]

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

(Division No. 166)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaiif
 Albas
 Alghabra
 Allison
 Anandasangaree
 Arnold
 Arya
 Atwin
 Badawey
 Baker
 Barlow
 Barron
 Battiste
 Beech
 Bennett
 Bergen
 Bérubé
 Bibeau
 Blaikie
 Blanchette-Joncas
 Block
 Boissonnault
 Bradford
 Brassard
 Brunelle-Duceppe
 Cannings
 Carr
 Casey
 Chagger
 Chambers
 Champoux
 Chen
 Chong
 Collins (Victoria)
 Cormier
 Dabrusin
 Dancho
 DeBellefeuille
 d'Entremont
 Desilets
 Dhaliwal

Aitchison
 Aldag
 Ali
 Anand
 Angus
 Arseneault
 Ashton
 Bachrach
 Bains
 Baldinelli
 Barrett
 Barsalou-Duval
 Baulieu
 Bendayan
 Benzen
 Berthold
 Bezan
 Bittle
 Blair
 Blaney
 Blois
 Boulerice
 Bragdon
 Brière
 Calkins
 Caputo
 Carrie
 Chabot
 Chahal
 Champagne
 Chatel
 Chiang
 Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
 Cooper
 Coteau
 Damoff
 Davidson
 Deltell
 Desbiens
 Desjarlais
 Dhillon

Private Members' Business

Diab	Doherty	Oliphant	O'Regan
Dong	Dowdall	O'Toole	Patzer
Dreeshen	Drouin	Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Dubourg	Duclos	Perkins	Perron
Duguid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz	Poilievre	Powlowski
Ehsassi	El-Khoury	Epp	Rayes
Ellis	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Redekopp	Reid
Erskine-Smith	Fast	Rempel Garner	Richards
Falk (Provencher)	Ferrieri	Robillard	Rodriguez
Fergus	Findlay	Rogers	Romanado
Fillmore	Fonseca	Rood	Ruff
Fisher	Fortin	Sahota	Sajjan
Fortier	Fraser	Saks	Samson
Fragiskatos	Fry	Sarai	Savard-Tremblay
Freeland	Gallant	Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Gaheer	Garon	Schiefke	Schmale
Garneau	Gaudreau	Seeback	Serré
Garrison	Généreux	Sgro	Shanahan
Gazan	Gill	Sheehan	Shields
Gerretsen	Godin	Shiple	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Gladu	Gould	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Goodridge	Gray	Sinclair-Desgagné	Singh
Gourde	Guilbeault	Small	Soroka
Green	Hallan	Steinley	Ste-Marie
Hajdu	Hardie	Stewart	Strahl
Hanley	Hoback	Stubbs	Sudds
Hepfner	Housefather	Tassi	Taylor Roy
Holland	Hussen	Thériault	Therrien
Hughes	Iacono	Thomas	Thompson
Hutchings	Ien	Tochor	Tolmie
Idlout	Jeneroux	Trudel	Turnbull
Jaczek	Jones	Uppal	Valdez
Johns	Kayabaga	Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Jowhari	Kelly	Van Popta	Vandal
Kelloway	Khera	Vandenbeld	Vecchio
Khalid	Kmiec	Vidal	Vien
Kitchen	Kram	Viersen	Vignola
Koutrakis	Kurek	Villemure	Vis
Kramp-Neuman	Kusmierczyk	Vuong	Wagantall
Kusie	Lake	Warkentin	Waugh
Kwan	Lambropoulos	Webber	Weiler
Lalonde	Lamoureux	Wilkinson	Williams
Lametti	Lapointe	Williamson	Yip
Lantsman	Lattanzio	Zarrillo	Zimmer
Larouche	Lawrence	Zuberi— 319	
Lauzon	Lebouthillier		
LeBlanc	Lewis (Essex)		
Lehoux	Liepert		
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Lloyd		
Lightbound	Long		
Lobb	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)		
Longfield	MacDonald (Malpeque)		
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacKenzie		
MacGregor	Maguire		
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Masse		
Martinez Ferrada	May (Cambridge)		
Mathysen	Mazier		
May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)	McDonald (Avalon)		
McCaughey (Edmonton West)	McKay		
McGuinty	McLean		
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McPherson		
McLeod	Mendès		
Melillo	Miao		
Mendicino	Miller		
Michaud	Morantz		
Moore	Morrison		
Morrice	Motz		
Morrissey	Muys		
Murray	Nater		
Naqvi	Noormohamed		
Ng	O'Connell		
Normandin			

NAYS

PAIRED

Members

July— 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.*[Translation]*

Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Health.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

[English]

NATIONAL STRATEGY RESPECTING ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ACT

The House resumed from June 17 consideration of the motion that Bill C-226, An Act respecting the development of a national strategy to assess, prevent and address environmental racism and to advance environmental justice, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-226 under Private Members' Business.

• (1615)

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

(Division No. 167)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blaney
Blois	Boissonnault
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	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
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	Jones
Jowhari	Julian
Kayabaga	Kelloway

Khalid
Koutrakis
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mendicino
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
Oliphant
Petitpas Taylor
Qualtrough
Rogers
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Schieffe
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
St-Onge
Tassi
Thompson
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Weiler
Yip
Zuberi— 177

Private Members' Business

Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lametti
Lapointe
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Morrice
Murray
Ng
O'Connell
O'Regan
Powlowski
Robillard
Romanado
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Singh
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Vuong
Wilkinson
Zarrillo

NAYS

Members

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

Private Members' Business

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
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Michaud	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Normandin
O'Toole	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Perkins	Perron
Plamondon	Poillievre
Rayes	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Rood
Ruff	Savard-Tremblay
Scheer	Schmale
Seeback	Shields
Shiple	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	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williams
Williamson	Zimmer — 146

PAIRED

Members

Genuis

Joly — 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

CANADA INFRASTRUCTURE BANK ACT

The House resumed from June 20 consideration of the motion that Bill C-245, An Act to amend the Canada Infrastructure Bank Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-245 under Private Members' Business.

● (1630)

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

*(Division No. 168)***YEAS**

Members

Angus	Ashton
Bachrach	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Béubé	Blaikie
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Boulerice
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Chabot	Champoux
Collins (Victoria)	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Erskine-Smith	Fortin
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gill	Green
Hanley	Hughes
Idlout	Johns
Julian	Kwan
Larouche	Lemire
MacGregor	Masse
Mathysen	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McLeod	McPherson
Michaud	Morrice
Normandin	Pauzé
Perron	Plamondon
Savard-Tremblay	Simard
Sinclair-Desgagné	Singh
Ste-Marie	Thériault
Therrien	Trudel
Vignola	Villemure
Zarrillo — 59	

NAYS

Members

Aboultatif	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Alghabra	Ali
Allison	Anand
Anandasangaree	Arnold
Arseneault	Arya
Atwin	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Baldinelli	Barrett
Battiste	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Benzen	Bergen
Berthold	Bezan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Block
Blois	Boissonnault
Bradford	Bragdon
Brassard	Brière
Calkins	Caputo
Carr	Carrie
Casey	Chagger
Chahal	Chambers
Champagne	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Chong	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cooper	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Dancho
Davidson	Deltell
d'Entremont	Dhaliwal

Dhillon
Doherty
Dowdall
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Dzerowicz
El-Khoury
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Fergus
Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser
Fry
Gallant
Généreux
Gladu
Goodridge
Gourde
Guilbeault
Hallan
Hepfner
Holland
Hussen
Iacono
Jaczek
Jones
Kayabaga
Kelly
Khera
Kmieć
Kram
Kurek
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lametti
Lantsman
Lattanzio
Lawrence
Lebouthillier
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lloyd
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martel
May (Cambridge)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Melillo
Miao
Moore
Morrison
Motz
Muys
Nater
Noormohamed
Oliphant
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski
Rays
Reid
Richards
Rodriguez
Romanado
Ruff

Diab
Dong
Dreeshen
Dubourg
Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Ehsassi
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Ferrerri
Findlay
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gaheer
Garneau
Gerretsen
Godin
Gould
Gray
Hajdu
Hardie
Hoback
Housefather
Hutchings
Ien
Jeneroux
Jowhari
Kelloway
Khalid
Kitchen
Koutrakis
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Lake
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lapointe
Lauzon
LeBlanc
Lehoux
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lightbound
Lobb
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKenzie
Maguire
Martinez Ferrada
Mazier
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLean
Mendicino
Miller
Morantz
Morrissey
Murray
Naqvi
Ng
O'Connell
O'Regan
Patzner
Perkins
Poilievre
Qualtrough
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Robillard
Rogers
Rood
Sahota

Routine Proceedings

Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Schmale
Serré
Sheehan
Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Soroka
Stewart
Strahl
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Thompson
Tolmie
Uppal
Van Bynen
Van Popta
Vandenbeld
Vidal
Viersen
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Wilkinson
Williamson
Zimmer

Saks
Saraï
Secheer
Seeback
Shanahan
Shields
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Small
Steinley
St-Onge
Stubbs
Tassi
Thomas
Tochor
Turnbull
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandal
Vecchio
Vien
Vis
Wagantall
Waugh
Weiler
Williams
Yip
Zuberi— 260

PAIRED

Members

Genius

July— 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Spadina—Fort York, Taxation; the hon. member for Kitchener Centre, Housing; the hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, Correctional Service of Canada.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

PAY EQUITY COMMISSIONER

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty to lay upon the table, pursuant to subsection 117(2) of the Pay Equity Act, the pay equity commissioner's report for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2022.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 32(5), this report is deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

* * *

[English]

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 seven petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR RECONCILIATION ACT

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-29, An Act to provide for the establishment of a national council for reconciliation.

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

* * *

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Hon. Marc Garneau (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying, entitled “Medical Assistance in Dying and Mental Disorder as the Sole Underlying Condition: An Interim Report”.

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

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to table the official opposition's dissenting report to the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying interim report.

The government continues to push the expansion of medically assisted death in such a rushed and reckless manner that Canadians will continue to be victimized. Legislation of this nature needs to be guided by science, not ideology.

We have been warned by countless experts that if MAID for those with a mental disorder as the sole underlying medical condition is implemented as planned, it will facilitate the deaths of Canadians who could have gotten better, robbing them of the opportunity to live a fulfilling life. Such an outcome is completely unacceptable and preventable, but only if the Liberal government halts and reconsiders the expansion of MAID for mental disorders as the sole underlying medical condition.

• (1635)

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, entitled “Arts, Culture, Heritage, and Sport Sector Recovery from the Impact of COVID-19”.

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

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on National Defence entitled “Modernizing Recruitment and Retention in the Canadian Armed Forces”.

[English]

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

While I am on my feet, may I wish you and your family a restful and recuperative summer.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, and I will pass it on to the other Chair occupants as well.

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, entitled “Supplying Canada’s Armed Forces and Coast Guard With the Right Equipment: An Interim Report”.

[Translation]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs entitled “Fairness in the Services Offered to Francophone, Women and 2SLGBTQ+ Veterans”.

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

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the analyst, the clerk, the interpreters and all the technical staff who support us at the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs.

[English]

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, entitled “Preventing Harm in the Canadian Sex Industry: A Review of the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act”.

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

I also want to wish everyone here, as it is the last day here for me, a very good end to the season and a good break.

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table the official opposition's dissenting report in the review of the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act.

Since 2014, the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act has been a crucial tool to protect Canadians from sexual exploitation and intervene in the buying and selling of human beings. The Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act confirms to Canadians, particularly women and girls, that they are valuable and worthy of protection.

Routine Proceedings

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and present a petition wherein the petitioners are calling upon the Prime Minister and the Government of Canada to enact just transition legislation. They want to see this legislation reduce emissions by at least 60% below 2005 levels by the year 2030, wind down the fossil fuel industry, related infrastructure and fossil fuel subsidies, and transition to a decarbonized economy. They want to see it create good, green jobs and drive inclusive workforce development. They also want to see it protect and strengthen human rights and worker rights, and respect indigenous rights, sovereignty and knowledge. Finally, they want the legislation to be paid for by increasing taxes on the wealthiest and corporations, and financing through a public national bank.

• (1645)

[Translation]

DUE DILIGENCE

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there are currently companies in the world that are based in Canada. I say “based” because Canada is a veritable flag of convenience. In reality, there is often nothing Canadian about these companies. They are committing serious human, social, and environmental rights abuses around the world.

I myself have participated in human rights observation missions, and I have seen that these companies often pollute the water, poison the air and are complicit in driving out indigenous populations. Unfortunately, they do this with total impunity. There is no legal recourse. This has to stop. That is why we need due diligence legislation.

Today, I am presenting a petition signed by 1,722 people all across Quebec. We must ensure that this reign of impunity comes to an end. We must demand that companies put an end to these abuses. We need truly binding legislation.

[English]

UKRAINE

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to present two petitions on behalf of my constituents in Willowdale, both of which pertain to our government's response to Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine.

The first petition has been signed by over 500 individuals from across the country, and it is put forward by youth activists who cite existing laws on hate speech and hate symbols. Against the backdrop of rising vandalism and intimidation in our country regarding Russian military emblems, petitioners are calling upon the government to ban the “V” and “Z” symbols, as well as the ribbon of St. George, on the basis that they serve as symbols of hate.

The second petition speaks to the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and asks that our government uphold our tradition of peacekeeping and press for an urgent ceasefire and the securing of humanitarian corridors for aid to Ukrainians. The petitioners suggest that such an event might coincide with an internationally recognized humanitarian day of recognition.

Both of these petitions highlight our expressions of solidarity with the courageous people of Ukraine. I am grateful to the petitioners for drawing attention to the issue and I am honoured to present these petitions in the House on their behalf.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to join other colleagues in wishing you and your family a splendid summer.

The Deputy Speaker: Again, I will pass that on to the other occupants of this great chair.

The hon. member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting this petition today on behalf of the students of Forest Run Public School and residents of Ontario who have brought to my attention the plight of Kiska, the orca whale, who has been held in solitary confinement, in poor health, in a concrete tank since 2011 at Marineland in Niagara Falls.

These students, teachers and others in our province want to ensure that Kiska is moved to a more suitable and healthy location. The ideal location would be the Nova Scotia whale sanctuary, and they ask that we support that project. Until it is ready to accept whales, they ask us to help Kiska have a better life, where she can live in a facility that can rehabilitate her and ensure her interaction with other orcas and cetaceans.

To achieve this, they ask the Government of Canada to remove the grandfather clause in Bill S-203, which allows Marineland to retain ownership of Kiska and possibly use her for entertainment purposes.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the teachers, the principal and the students at Forest Run Public School for their hard work in advocating for Kiska, for putting forward acts of artistry and for the petition, which received over 700 signatures.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have several petitions I would like to present today.

The first one is signed by many petitioners. They are recognizing the Liberal government's commitment to revoking charitable status for pro-life organizations, such as crisis pregnancy centres. They are concerned that this is only the first step toward more tyrannical measures that would eradicate the values and principles of Christian Canadians. They are very concerned about where that will lead to. They are resolved that members of Parliament should do everything to prevent Parliament from going down this slippery slope and to vote against any such efforts to do exactly that.

• (1650)

VACCINE MANDATES

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from a group of petitioners saying that they are recognizing the convoys and protest rallies across Canada opposing COVID-19 restrictions and mandates. In particular, they want to recognize the truckers who, through COVID-19, served Canadians so faithfully and were the heroes of our economy. Truckers are still subject to vaccine mandates when crossing the international border. The petitioners would like to see all federal mandates and restrictions lifted and an end to COVID-19 restrictions.

CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third petition I want to present to the House is signed by petitioners who recognize that the Liberal Party has views about values tests, which it ascribed to the Canada summer jobs program. They are also concerned that this may be applied to other institutions as well in order to receive federal funding. They also want to make sure that we protect the charter rights and freedoms of all Canadians and that they have the freedom to express their opinions.

VACCINE MANDATES

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the final petition is signed by numerous Canadians who ask the House of Commons to conduct a review by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization regarding the transmission of COVID-19 on airplanes.

They take note that WestJet's first chief medical officer, Dr. Tammy McKnight, stated that there have been no known cases of COVID-19 transmission aboard Canadian aircraft. An International Air Transport Association study in 2020 found that out of 1.2 billion passengers worldwide, only 44 cases of COVID-19 transmission were reported as flight-related.

Countries around the world have removed their vaccine mandates and restrictions. Petitioners are encouraging the government and the Minister of Transport to abolish all vaccine passport requirements and end all federally regulated COVID-19 vaccine mandates and restrictions.

GRAPHIC IMAGERY

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to stand here today to present a petition from a group of concerned Londoners who want to stop the distribution of graphic images of allegedly aborted fetuses. They know that this imagery can be triggering to those who have suffered trauma and loss involving pregnancy and childbirth.

They are asking for this House to amend section 175(b) of the Criminal Code, on indecent exhibition, to include indecent graphic displays; to amend legislation setting out the limitations regarding what imagery and content can be used in a protest or demonstration that is subject to public viewing; and to amend legislation regarding if and how graphic imagery can be delivered to homes across the country. An example is putting those pamphlets in envelopes with a “viewer discretion” warning.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition about environmental racism, particularly at the G&R Recycling facility in Kanesatake, Quebec.

Concerned citizens of Canada are calling upon the House of Commons to mobilize the vast resources of the federal government to secure and decontaminate the G&R recycling facility in Kanesatake and others like it; and to put forward concrete plans to enact the measures addressing systemic environmental racism as proposed in Bill C-226. Incidentally, I am very happy about the vote on that bill.

• (1655)

[English]

ANIMAL WELFARE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am really honoured to submit this petition on behalf of the students of Forest Run Public School and residents of Ontario within the riding of the hon. member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill. This petition is very close to my heart, because Bill S-203 is the bill that bans the keeping of cetaceans in captivity. I was honoured to be one of the movers of that effort, along with a number of wonderful senators.

This orca whale has been held in solitary confinement since 2011 at Marineland in Niagara Falls. Her name is Kiska. She needs to be moved to a more suitable and healthy location.

We forget sometimes in this place that petitioners do not have to be 18 years and older. Petitioners can be under 18 as long as they are Canadian citizens, and it is inspiring to see young people mobilizing to bring their voices to this place.

The petitioners ask us to do what is needed to move Kiska to a safe and healthy natural facility.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of constituents in Canada's number one riding, Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon. This petition was born out of my community email blasts. I say in every single one, “Bring a petition forward.”

Like most MPs, I have to devote a lot of staff to immigration-related issues. My riding encompasses the third most multicultural census area in Canada. There are, understandably, tons of people concerned about immigration processing times. In fact, I have to devote a single staff member—

The Deputy Speaker: There is a point of order from the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader (Senate).

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the fact that the member is absolutely incorrect, as indeed Kingston is the best riding in the country, he is now providing his own personal opinion on a petition. During petitions, members are only supposed to present a petition, not provide their own commentary on it.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for the intervention. I think West Nova is the best riding, or maybe Avalon. On that point of order, there are a whole bunch of them.

I will remind the members that when we present petitions, we try to keep to the basis of the petition.

The hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

Mr. Brad Vis: Mr. Speaker, I will stand by my words. Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon is the number one riding in Canada, and I am pleased to represent it every day.

My constituents are calling upon the Department of Citizenship and Immigration to do a much better job with giving Canadians realistic processing times for applications and permits, such as temporary resident visas and permanent residence. Newcomers want to get the necessary permits to live and work in Canada in a timely manner, but many applications are sitting in limbo even when there are no further details required to process them.

My constituents are therefore calling upon the Government of Canada and the Department of Citizenship and Immigration to provide a more efficient service so that immigrants and refugees do not have to wait years for a response to their applications for various permits, as well as to provide accurate timelines for processing those applications.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 561, 563 and 565.

[Text]

Question No. 561—**Mr. Ryan Williams:**

With regard to memorandums, briefing notes, or other documents prepared by or for Employment and Social Development Canada, since January 1, 2016: (a) what are the details of all briefing notes or memorandums prepared on Canada's labour force participation rate, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipient, (iv) title, (v) subject matter, (vi) summary of the content, (vii) file number, (viii) type of document; and (b) what are the details of all briefing notes or memorandums prepared on Canada's productivity rate, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipient, (iv) title, (v) subject matter, (vi) summary of the content, (vii) file number, (viii) type of document?

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, each month Statistics Canada conducts the labour force survey, which is used to produce labour market indicators such as the participation rate. ESDC closely monitors Statistics Canada updates of labour market participation rate and uses this key metric in several labour market diagnostics, as well as to support planning, development and evaluation of various employment programs delivered by the department.

Having surveyed the work required to respond to this request, ESDC has concluded that the production and validation of a response to this question would require significant manual information gathering. As our systems do not index memoranda and briefing notes by their contents, it is not possible to complete such a search within the required time frame.

For records back to 2019, the Open Canada website at <https://open.canada.ca/en/proactive-disclosure> provides proactive disclosure of briefing packages, such as briefing note titles, question period notes, etc., which might be useful to narrow the scope of the request on the two topics of labour force participation rate and productivity rate.

Question No. 563—**Mr. Dan Muys:**

With regard to the recommendation by the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities to abolish the Canada Infrastructure Bank: does the government respect the work of the committee, and, if so, when will it abolish the Canada Infrastructure Bank?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the recommendation by the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities to abolish the Canada Infrastructure Bank, the government continues to review the findings of the report and associated recommendation and will provide a response.

The Canada Infrastructure Bank, the CIB, works with all orders of government and private partners, including indigenous investment partners, to help to transform how infrastructure is planned, funded and delivered to Canadians.

The CIB is involved in more than 30 infrastructure partnerships and has committed over \$7.2 billion in capital, attracting over \$7.6 billion in private and institutional investment.

Budget 2022 announced measures to increase the CIB's impact by broadening the types of private sector-led projects it can support. Further, under the emissions reductions plan, it is expected to invest \$500 million in large-scale zero-emission vehicle charging and refueling infrastructure.

The CIB is supporting key projects like high-frequency rail, helping to transition Atlantic Canada off coal through clean power transmission, and supporting the Manitoba fibre plan to provide broadband access to households and businesses.

Question No. 565—**Mr. Damien C. Kurek:**

With regard to the government-wide directives in response to the first recommendation of the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, "That the Government of Canada stipulate in all future requests for proposals for collecting data of Canadians that Canadians have the option to opt out of the data collection and that instructions for the method for opting out be easily understood, widely communicated and remain publicly available.": (a) on what date will the government implement changes to abide by the recommendation; and (b) what specific directives or action has been taken by the government to implement the recommended changes?

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is currently studying the recommendations made by the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics in its recent report tabled in the House of Commons, “Collection and Use of Mobility Data by the Government of Canada and Related Issues”. The government will table a response, as requested by the committee, within the timelines required by the Standing Orders of the House of Commons.

It is important to note that in addition to the obligations in the Privacy Act, TBS’s policy on privacy protection and its underlying instruments, such as the directive on privacy practices, currently include strong requirements for institutions relating to the collection, notification, use, and disclosure of personal information as defined in section 3 of the act.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if revised response to Question No. 444, originally tabled on May 13, 2022, and the government's response to Questions Nos. 562, 564 and 566 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 444—**Mr. Adam Chambers:**

With regard to expenditures on public relations or media training, or similar type of services for ministers or their offices, including the Office of the Prime Minister, since January 1, 2019: what are the details of each such expenditure, including the (i) date of the contract, (ii) amount, (iii) vendor, (iv) individual providing the training, (v) summary of services provided, including the type of training, (vi) person who received the training, (vii) date of the training?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 562—**Mr. Arnold Viersen:**

With regard to the Department of National Defence, the Canadian Armed Forces, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, since January 2020: what are the details of any contracts or partnerships with non-Canadian entities or states to conduct operations within Canada, including the (i) start and end dates, (ii) contracting parties, (iii) file number, (iv) nature or description of the work, (v) value of the contract?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 564—**Mr. Dan Muys:**

With regard to government expenditures on Cisco and Cisco Systems products or services since January 1, 2020, including those obtained or purchased through a third party vendor: what are the details of each expenditure, including the (i) date, (ii) amount or value, (iii) vendor, (iv) description of goods or services, including the volume, (v) file number, (vi) manner in which the contract was awarded (sole-sourced, competitive bid, etc.)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 566—**Mr. Tako Van Popta:**

With regard to government programs conducting surveillance or gathering information from Canadians through their phones or other mobile devices, including programs involving anonymized data: what are the details of these programs since January 1, 2020, including, for each, (i) the name of program, (ii) the date the pro-

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gram began, if it began after January 1, 2020, (iii) the description of the data being collected, (iv) the purpose of the program, (v) the description of how the data is collected, (vi) the department or agency responsible for overseeing the program, (vii) whether or not the privacy commissioner was consulted before the program was implemented, (viii) the concerns raised by the privacy commissioner, (ix) how each concern was addressed, (x) the end date of the program, (xi) the number of Canadians who had their data tracked?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

PASSPORTS

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair has notice of a request for an emergency debate. I invite the hon. member for Thornhill to rise and make a brief intervention.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians across the country are experiencing an unprecedented backlog in the processing of passport applications. Wait times are exceeding the normal standards, and the government's inability to meet demands is affecting Canadians' ability to obtain the necessary documentation to travel. They are being forced to take time away from work, to wait in lineups for hours and hours, sometimes starting at 3 a.m. The government's remedy to the current situation is, frankly, inadequate.

This is an important matter requiring urgent consideration pursuant to Standing Order 52, and as a result I am requesting an emergency debate.

● (1700)

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Thornhill for her intervention. However, I am not satisfied that her request meets the requirements of the Standing Orders at this time.

GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair has notice of a request for an emergency debate from the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester.

Government Orders

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to stand and defend the people of Cumberland—Colchester and of Portapique specifically, who we know are being revictimized by the actions of some members of this House in their spreading of disinformation and their attempts to discount the written information given by members of the RCMP in testimony to the Mass Casualty Commission.

There is concern in Nova Scotia with respect to the proceedings of the Mass Casualty Commission at this time, and the actions and disinformation spread in this House continue to undermine the actual workings of that committee. Today we need to address the things that we have seen in this House.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester for his intervention. However, the Chair is not satisfied that his request meets the requirements of the Standing Orders at this time.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, there was notice of a request for an emergency debate from the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola. Unfortunately, he had to leave the House, so I am asking for unanimous consent for an emergency debate on the inflation and affordability crisis in this country. We found out today that inflation numbers are at 7.7%, the highest in a generation, almost 40 years. I am requesting unanimous consent for an emergency debate on that.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

* * *

[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

INTERRUPTION TO PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to come back to the question of privilege raised by the official opposition member from Calgary Centre with regard to the technical difficulties we had in the middle of debate in the House on the evening of June 21.

This clearly demonstrates that the hybrid system of Parliament has its shortcomings when technical difficulties occur. The hybrid system is not infallible and brings with it certain risks with regard to parliamentary rights and privileges.

It is therefore clear that we need to carefully weigh the pros and cons before deciding whether to make this way of doing things in the House permanent in order to deal with exceptional circumstances, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. With the voting app, there is always a plan B with the possibility of voting by Zoom if there is a problem. However, there is no plan B when there are issues with secure broadcasting on the House network.

Yesterday, there was a request for unanimous consent once there was a known issue with secure broadcasting in the House. The member for Calgary Centre was unable to hear the question because of problems with the House network. The hon. member clear-

ly demonstrated the limitations of a hybrid Parliament, and we therefore ask the Chair to consider the hon. member's request.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for his intervention.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from June 21 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. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to speak to Bill C-21, the NDP-Liberals' most recent attempt to scapegoat law-abiding firearms owners and to trick the average Canadian into believing they are trying to improve public safety while doing absolutely no such thing.

If we look at the balance of the government's agenda on public safety and justice, we see that Liberals seem content to undermine both of these departments and the essential institutions that support them. This is being done in order to virtue signal and play petty politics to the detriment of our entire society.

While this is deeply disappointing, it is hardly surprising. The government is light on substantive policy solutions and heavy on press conferences and so-called alternative facts.

Today additional details came to light about interference by the government and the Prime Minister in the investigation of the tragic mass murders in Nova Scotia in an attempt to create a narrative that would fit their political agenda. This is important, because it speaks to the foundation on which substantial parts of the Liberals' firearms policy rests, including parts of Bill C-21, the bill we are currently debating.

The Halifax Examiner reported yesterday that "RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki 'made a promise' to [the] Public Safety Minister...[at the time] and the Prime Minister's Office to leverage the mass murders of April 18/19, 2020 to get a gun control law passed."

To be clear, that former public safety minister is now the current Minister of Emergency Preparedness.

The article makes it clear that the commissioner was being pressured by the Prime Minister's Office and the current Minister of Emergency Preparedness to ensure that information was released that would help them politically, to the detriment of the ongoing investigation and potentially placing it in jeopardy.

Government Orders

As the Minister of Emergency Preparedness is a former police chief, we would expect better from him. However, maybe this is how he has always operated. This is a pattern of behaviour with this Prime Minister: He puts himself first, the Liberal Party second, his donors and insider friends third, and then if there is time and the chance for a really good photo op, he might try to do something that actually helps a few Canadians.

This is an example of the first two. The Prime Minister was willing to interfere with the ongoing police investigation in order to try to leverage a political edge. This used to be unimaginable, but given the Prime Minister's SNC-Lavalin track record, it is totally in line with his character. The way someone does one thing is the way that person does everything.

I want to read part of this article, because it is important and deserves to be heard in this place. Nova Scotia Superintendent Darren Campbell wrote about a meeting he had with Commissioner Lucki, stating:

The Commissioner was obviously upset. She did not raise her voice but her choice of words was indicative of her overall dissatisfaction with our work. The Commissioner accused us (me) of disrespecting her by not following her instructions. I was and remain confused over this. The Commissioner said she told Comms to tell us at H Division to include specific info about the firearms used by [the killer]...However I said we couldn't because to do so would jeopardize ongoing efforts to advance the U.S. side of the case as well as the Canadian components of the investigation. Those are facts and I stand by them.

Those are the words of Superintendent Campbell.

I will add that every police officer carries with them an evidence notebook. I, as a former law enforcement officer back in the 1990s, still have today my evidence notebooks in case I need to recall facts about events that happened while I was on duty.

The article continues:

Campbell noted that Lucki went on at length and said she was "sad and disappointed" that he had not provided these details to the media. Campbell continued:

The Commissioner said she had promised the Minister of Public Safety and the Prime Minister's Office that the RCMP (we) would release this information. I tried to explain there was no intent to disrespect anyone however we could not release this information at this time. The Commissioner then said that we didn't understand, that this was tied to pending gun control legislation that would make officers and the public safer. She was very upset and at one point Deputy Commissioner (Brian) Brennan tried to get things calmed down but that had little effect. Some in the room were reduced to tears and emotional over this belittling reprimand.

• (1705)

The article makes it clear that this was not the only way that the government interfered with this investigation and the release of information, by pressuring the commissioner to break agreed-upon protocols.

The article also attributes a quote to Lia Scanlan, communications director for the RCMP, that says, "The commissioner releases a body count that we don't even have. She went out and did that. It was all political pressure. That is 100% the minister and the Prime Minister. And we have a Commissioner that does not push back."

Those are the words of RCMP communications director Scanlan. It is deeply concerning that the commissioner would not push back against the government on this request, but it is completely and totally unacceptable that she should ever have had to. I can only sur-

mise that she is all too familiar with what happens to women who speak truth to power to the Prime Minister and his underlings.

This is the foundation on which Bill C-21 was constructed: political pressure and interference with the RCMP, misinformation about the perpetrators of gun violence and naked political opportunism. The bill was also announced on the heels of an American tragedy, deliberately importing American political discourse into domestic Canadian policies. The Prime Minister seems to be confused about the impact of Canadian legislation on American society, of which there is virtually none.

Unless he is announcing his plan to run for president of the United States, he should start trying to address the issues that Canadians face, not American issues here in Canada.

The firearms regimes in our two countries, Canada and the United States, are completely different. It has been made clear that the mass murderer from Texas would not be able to get a gun in Canada. In most U.S. states, a 21-year-old American with no convictions could purchase a firearm and, in pretty much every state, carry it. In about half of them, they could carry concealed with limited regulations. That is not the reality in Canada.

I am a law-abiding firearms owner. In Canada, people need to take a firearms safety course, apply for a licence and submit to a background check, not only on the initial application but on every reapplication every five years, in which the RCMP can contact former conjugal partners. Then, they wait for that information to come back for a few months, and maybe then can go and purchase a firearm and abide by stringent safe storage and transport laws. That is the reality in Canada. Every day, my ability to continue to own or possess firearms is checked against the Canadian Police Information Centre's database to ensure that I am still legally and lawfully able to.

If only the government of the day would spend that much time following up on people who are prohibited from possessing or acquiring firearms, spend that much time policing our borders and making sure that the people on our borders had the tools and equipment that they needed, and spend that much time in this chamber actually focused on criminals who commit crimes: they shoot guns in our urban centres, in our communities and in our rural areas and have no respect for the law and no respect for human life.

That is not the case with the 2.1 million law-abiding Canadian firearms owners. In fact, the data clearly says the opposite. If we are going to be harmed by somebody in the country with a firearm, the vast majority of that harm is coming from somebody who is not licensed to have the firearm in the first place.

Privilege

Every gun in this country is illegal unless it is in the possession of somebody licensed to have it. We have the best firearms laws in the world, and I will put that up against the record of any other country.

It is shameful that the government is importing U.S. politics into Canada to sell misinformation to the voters of this country and disenfranchise law-abiding Canadian citizens.

• (1710)

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will start with a comment before I get to the question. There are times that we will disagree, regardless of what side of the House we sit on, but the member opposite turned his comments to try and slander and disingenuously try to harm the reputation of a former police officer, namely now the Minister of Emergency Preparedness. I would ask the member to withdraw his statement about the member's character and apologize to the House for doing so.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, I actually do genuinely appreciate my colleague. We have spent lots of time working together in a constructive fashion on the fisheries committee, and I believe him to be an individual of solid character. I would simply suggest something to him, given the fact and the track record of the government that he has been supporting here all the while. If he wants to provide some solace to the House, I would humbly ask him to go and have a tête-à-tête with the Minister of Emergency Preparedness to make darn sure, before he asks somebody to apologize in the House, that he has all of the actual facts.

• (1715)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as we have said many times, there are a lot of good points in this bill. However, the weapons involved in all these incidents that keep happening in Montreal are weapons that have crossed the border illegally.

It turns out that people are buying these weapons, and the people buying them are members of criminal groups. Police services need to have the tools to take action against these groups.

That is why, for weeks, the Bloc Québécois has been asking the Minister of Public Safety to create a registry of criminal organizations, much like the one we have for terrorist organizations, so that we can target these people and take action against them.

The Montreal police have confirmed that 95% of the handguns used recently in these incidents in Montreal were illegal.

Can my colleague tell me why the minister has, so far, refused to establish such a registry?

[*English*]

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, this is an excellent idea and worthy of debate in the House. I look forward to my colleague in the Bloc Québécois tabling a private member's bill, or somebody in the House tabling a bill, to establish just such a thing.

As I said in my comments, I am checked as a law-abiding citizen every day to ensure that I am able to continue to legally possess firearms in this country, yet we do not have a system in this country that would keep track of people who are prohibited from having

firearms because of their affiliation and association with criminal gang activities and prior convictions.

This government, through Bill C-71, now Bill C-5 before the House, would make it easier for criminals to be out on bail, to be out on parole and to have zero time served in jail. At the same time, the only people it would make life difficult for, when it comes to firearms, are law-abiding firearms owners in this country. It is shameful.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask my colleague for Red Deer—Lacombe about airsoft guns. I have heard from a number of constituents who enjoy playing airsoft, and they feel that the proposed restrictions go too far and would make it hard for them to participate in their sport. At the same time, Canada has very few regulations for airsoft guns. Other countries around the world have different solutions. Some of them require that the barrels be painted a bright colour such as pink or yellow. Orange might be a nice colour.

I wonder, if not the regulations in the bill, is there a reasonable regulation that the member would support?

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, I represent constituents who also participate in airsoft activities. It is a small but important industry to those who take great enjoyment in it and have fun with it. It is great for exercise and a number of reasons. The fact that the Liberal government is actually not even differentiating between a toy gun and an actual firearm shows me just how little Liberals actually know or understand about actual firearms.

I would welcome any changes to this legislation that would extract those who legitimately want to use airsoft. If there are any mechanisms that are reasonable and make sense so that people who just want to go out and have a little bit of fun can continue to do so, they would have my support.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

INTERRUPTION TO PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I will be very brief on two points, with reference to the question of privilege raised earlier today.

If I may, I will first provide a comment from the Speaker of the House who issued a news release back on February 18 notifying members. I will read it directly:

As per the Parliamentary Protective Service's (PPS) most recent email notification, a police operation is expected to take place on Wellington Street and other locations in the downtown core of Ottawa.

Given these exceptional circumstances, and following discussion with all recognized party leadership, the sitting today is cancelled. More information will follow.

I cite that, because at times there are environments in which, through consultation, there is a need for the House, such as in last night's case, to adjourn. That is just the reality, and I think that I am using this to cite the precedent.

The other thing I would like to highlight is that I would like to draw to your attention some pertinent details around the adjournment of the House last night.

At 8:54 p.m., you, the Deputy Speaker, resumed the sitting of the House. When you did this, you stated the following: "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." Given that you, the Deputy Speaker, made the request that agreement be sought to adjourn, I rose in response to see if there was an agreement to adjourn, given the challenges being experienced.

No one's privileges were breached. I was responding to the information and the request from the Deputy Speaker to adjourn, so that the problem could be fixed and so that all MPs could participate.

• (1720)

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the member for his intervention. Knowing that the House may be rising soon, I know the Speaker will be trying hard to come up with a response as soon as possible.

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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. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to take part in the debate today on Bill C-21, an act to amend certain acts and to make certain consequential amendments concerning firearms. This is a very important issue for the majority of Canadians, and it is particularly important for my constituency, where public safety was recently identified as a top area of concern for our community.

All levels of government and numerous dedicated organizations in my riding of Surrey Centre have been working for many years to address gun violence and gang-related violence. Rates of gun violence have continued to rise since 2009, and violent offences that involve guns have increased by 81%. With so much news content from the United States available to Canadians, we hear daily reports of shootings in the United States. We do not want this constant exposure to desensitize us to the horrific, unspeakable tragedies that come from gun violence. As we know, Canada is not immune to that violence.

Too many communities across the country have grieved the loss of loved ones. École Polytechnique, Moncton, the mosque shooting in Quebec City, and Nova Scotia are only a few of many examples of violent acts with firearms that have occurred in Canada. These examples do not even cover the number of individuals who face gun violence on a regular basis due to domestic or intimate partner violence or gang-related activity.

According to Statistics Canada, there has been a notable increase in firearm-related violent crime across many rural areas in the country, and 47% of Canadians reported feeling that gun violence posed a serious threat to their communities. This includes my own

Government Orders

community of Surrey Centre. Earlier this year, the RCMP in Surrey reported that, in a six-day span, there had been four incidents of shots fired in the city.

From my days in high school, I saw hundreds of young boys and men shot and killed for petty disputes and turf wars. Others will recall the innocent victims of gun violence who just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Paul Bennett, a nurse and hockey coach, was killed outside his home in Surrey. Chris Mohan was shot for simply being on the same floor as a gangland hit. Bikramdeep Randhawa, a correctional officer, was killed outside of a McDonald's in another case of mistaken identity. These are all on top of hundreds of women killed in cases of domestic or intimate partner violence, including Maple Batalia, a young woman studying at Simon Fraser University, who was killed on campus by a jealous ex-boyfriend.

This is far too regular an occurrence and it puts our communities at risk of being caught in the crossfire. It is clear we need to do more to address gun violence in our communities. Canadians deserve to feel safe in their communities, homes, schools and workplaces, and we do not want to wait for another tragedy to occur in Canada before we take strong action to address that violence.

We know that reducing access to firearms reduces the amount of gun violence. It is simple. Other countries around the world have essentially eliminated gun violence in their countries by enacting tougher laws. Scotland, Australia and New Zealand are all examples of this.

In 1996, a deadly shooting at Dunblane Primary School in Scotland killed 16 students and a teacher and injured 15 others. The following year, the U.K. Parliament banned private ownership of most handguns as well as semi-automatic weapons, and required mandatory registration for shotgun owners. The reforms required owners of permitted firearms to pass a strict licence process, which involves interviews and home visits by local police who have the authority to deny approval of permits if they deem the would-be owner a potential risk to public safety. In the last decade, there have only been three homicides by gun violence in the United Kingdom. There has never been another school shooting.

Also in 1996, in a shooting at a café in Port Arthur, Australia, a man opened fire with a semi-automatic rifle. He killed 35 people and wounded another 28. Australia's then new prime minister, John Howard, who had taken office only six weeks prior to the tragedy, led a sweeping nationwide reform on guns following the incident. Australia's National Firearms Agreement restricted legal ownership of firearms in Australia. It established a registry of all guns owned in the country, among other measures. It required a permit for all new firearms purchases, as well as a flat-out ban on certain kinds of guns, such as automatic and semi-automatic rifles and shotguns.

Private Members' Business

● (1725)

Similar to our own government's plan, the Australian government has established a mandatory buyback of legal and illegal guns resulting in 650,000 formerly legally owned guns being peacefully seized. The average firearm suicide rate in Australia, in the seven years after the bill, declined by 57% compared with the seven years prior. The average firearm homicide rate went down by nearly 42%. Between 1978 and 1995, 13 mass shootings occurred in the country. In the years since those mass shootings, Australians brought in sweeping gun reform, and since 1995 there has only been one mass shooting.

New Zealand has traditionally had a high gun ownership rate, but tight restrictions and low rates of gun violence. In less than the two weeks after a far right extremist killed 50 people at a mosque in 2019, authorities in New Zealand announced a ban on military-style semi-automatic rifles and high-capacity magazines, like those the attacker had used. They also created a buyback program, as well as a special commission to explore broader issues around the accessibility of weapons and the role of social media.

Gun ownership in Canada is the fifth highest in the world. The countries I have mentioned, Scotland, Australia and New Zealand, are like Canada in that they all have a strong culture of guns. Despite this, they have successfully reduced the number of gun-related incidents and saved countless lives through comprehensive reforms and policies that address the complexity of gun violence.

The Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security recently tabled a report entitled, "A Path Forward: Reducing Gun and Gang Violence in Canada". The committee heard from 50 witnesses who echoed the same message: Gun violence is a complex issue that will take more than one program or policy to fix. The committee heard that it will take a multi-faceted and comprehensive approach that includes all levels of government, indigenous peoples, grassroots organizations, law enforcement and social services. It will require research, collection of data, and preventative and intervention measures.

Our government is committed to addressing gun violence, and we will continue to take action in an effort to mitigate the senseless tragedies that occur at the hands of firearms, and this legislation is the next step.

For those who say illegal guns smuggled across the border are the ones that we should be concerned about, they should have spoken up when the Harper Conservatives cut CBSA staff by 30%, or when they disbanded and defunded the major organized crime unit in the RCMP that investigated cross-border smuggling. How were they silent then? Are they silent now, when it comes to reducing gun violence? The story is the same.

We re-funded the CBSA and the RCMP, and the proof is in the pudding, with gun seizures at the border being double last year from the year prior.

Our plan to address gun violence will address this complexity. Bill C-21 will establish a national freeze on handguns; establish red flag and yellow flag laws; expand licence revocation; combat firearms smuggling and trafficking, notably by increasing the maximum penalty; and prohibit mid-velocity replica airguns.

This plan is about the survivors and about communities across Canada from coast to coast to coast, which are too often touched by gun violence. Canadians told us they wanted to see more action, more quickly, and we are doing that through our commitment to do more.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1730)

[*Translation*]

IMPROVEMENTS TO LONG-TERM CARE

The House resumed from April 25 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Motion No. 47 is a very interesting motion. I read it carefully. There are many items and observations in this motion on improvements the governments of Quebec and the provinces need to make to long-term care. We know that many people suffered during the pandemic. We really need to keep their interests in mind when we legislate.

When I read the motion, my first thought was to grab my phone, open Google Maps and look at where we are, because I get the impression that the person who wrote this motion did not know that they were in Ottawa. Not only does this motion talk about Quebec and provincial jurisdictions at every turn, but, what is more, it contains factual errors.

We are told that health care is a jurisdiction the federal government shares with Quebec and the provinces. I find this motion absurd. In recent years, the federal government has suddenly become interested in health care. It has developed a passion for health care, for regulating health care and for imposing conditions on the provinces. The Liberals appointed a Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, and now they want to attach conditions to health transfers and to microtransfers.

Now, the Liberals want to tackle long-term care when they have never, ever, managed such facilities, as I said before. This is absurd, because they are so interested in health care that, when the time comes to pay, they disappear. When it comes time to reach into their pockets, they disappear. When something is likely to cost even a penny, they disappear.

According to the Liberals' perspective in this motion, health is a shared jurisdiction. They are gravely mistaken, since they have made it somewhat of a shared jurisdiction over the years by using a loophole in the Constitution known as spending power. Health care is so not a shared jurisdiction that they have to interfere in a round-about way.

I will explain for the umpteenth time how the spending power works. The Liberals in Ottawa wake up one morning, read the Constitution and decide to interfere in health care. Once they have read the Constitution properly, they see that they do not have the right to legislate health care. They then think about how they can interfere in the provinces' affairs and decide to tighten the purse strings and to clamp down on the provinces so hard that, sooner or later, the provinces will do what they tell them to do. That is what is known as spending power. That is what they are doing by imposing conditions.

That is the case with the Canada Health Act and many other legislative measures. They have invented these shared jurisdictions. This is really the power to hold up the provinces. It is literally an extortion power over Quebec, over sick people, people who are suffering, people who are victims of post-COVID downloading. It is a power the federal government gave itself to hold up these people who are suffering.

The Liberals are arrogant enough to tell us that health care is a shared jurisdiction. In any case, violating Quebec's jurisdictions is certainly the exclusive purview of the federal government. I can attest to it.

It is funny, because the provinces and Quebec, the ones that know what health is all about, the ones that manage hospitals, the ones that work in this area all year long, are asking for increased health transfers. They are asking for unconditional transfers that will cover 35% of health care system costs. That is what the people who know what they are talking about are calling for.

Other people who also know what they are talking about include the witnesses who appeared before the Standing Committee on Health, of which I am a member. They told us that the Quebec and the provinces need more funding to carry out long-term reforms, particularly in home care and long-term care. The provinces should be able to make these reforms with increasing, stable and predictable funds.

In the past few weeks, no one has appeared before the Standing Committee on Health to ask the federal government to impose more constraints on the provinces because they need them. The government is proposing new constraints for the provinces, as if they needed them. The spending power is being used very liberally.

● (1735)

Only this week, the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River, whom I have jokingly called “Dr. Spending Power,” suggested to the Standing Committee on Health that the federal government should hold back the funds until Quebec and the provinces have met the federal government's immigration and medical staff targets.

I cannot make this stuff up. Quebec manages its economic immigration, and the federal government wants to reopen the agreements

Private Members' Business

to interfere in our affairs. Now it is interfering in workforce training, when it cannot even run its own immigration department. IRCC cannot even bring in temporary foreign workers. The government cannot even process those applications in a timely manner, but it wants to tell us how to train our workforce. Quebec has always defended its administrative sovereignty tooth and nail with asymmetrical agreements, and the other provinces should follow our lead.

That is what the federal government's shared jurisdiction is all about.

Over the years, the Liberals and Conservatives have cut health care funding so much that Quebeckers now believe they are the ones who can no longer manage health care. They are losing confidence in themselves and in their institutions and hospitals, because they do not realize that the problem comes from above. The problem comes from people who are interested in every aspect of health care except the aspect they are actually responsible for, namely taking the money and transferring it.

I will be honest. If the federal government were a good government and did its job like everyone else once in a while, and if the people on the other side were competent, which they definitely are not, we might be interested in hearing their advice on health care. I thought they might be good at it and maybe I am prejudiced against the federal government and especially the Liberals, so I went to see the list of the federal government's achievements in its own areas of jurisdiction.

Let us start with IRCC, which may be the worst immigration department of a G20 country. These people cannot bring in temporary foreign workers on time. Last December, our farmers were wondering whether they would get their workers, because the government was doing new labour market impact assessments, which had already been done in Quebec by the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail, Quebec's labour market partners commission. The federal government thinks that temporary foreign workers are going to steal our jobs when we are at full employment. That is how the federal government is doing in jurisdictions where it is supposed to be good.

Let us talk about passports. The federal government cannot get the printer to work, but it wants to tell Quebec and the provinces what they should do in health care.

Moreover, the government cannot even fulfill its military obligations toward its partners. It took the war in Ukraine to remind the feds that NATO exists and that normal countries take care of their army. The government does have time, however, to harass people about health care.

The Minister of Immigration is doing nothing about the airlift. We have been talking about it for weeks, and when the government finally woke up, it found three planes. We would have to put 50,000 people on each plane for that plan to work. However, the federal government has time to harass us about health care.

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Let us talk about Phoenix. Some of the federal public servants whose work is being praised by the government have lost their home. Some are still refusing promotions today. They are refusing them because they are afraid that Phoenix will mess up their file. However, the government is telling Quebec what to do about health care.

Let us talk about KPMG. The minister does not even know that she is entitled to request an investigation. The Minister of National Revenue has not read her own act. However, the government is interfering in health care.

The Governor General drinks champagne while our indigenous peoples do not even have drinking water, but the government can tell us what to do about health care.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I apologize for interrupting the hon. member. I will stop the clock. I think someone has a microphone on.

• (1740)

[*English*]

I want to remind members who are participating virtually to make sure their microphones are not on, because they disrupt what is going on in the House.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Mirabel. He has 40 seconds left.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Speaker, I will not be disarmed. The Minister of Transport is not even able to sign a sheet of paper to start the construction of a seniors' residence in Mirabel, but the Liberals can come up with a motion on this subject to meddle in our affairs.

With respect to greenhouse gas emissions, the Minister of Environment is incapable of knowing that oil is brown and black and that a pipeline carries it, but we are being told what to do about health.

As was said earlier, 95% of the weapons used in the incidents we are currently seeing are illegal weapons, but the government does not want to make a list of criminal organizations.

When the Liberals do their job, they can tell the provinces to do theirs.

[*English*]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, the COVID pandemic has exposed long-standing issues affecting long-term care. In response to what the country now knows about the shortcomings, it is the duty of the government to work with the provinces and territories to improve seniors' living conditions as well as workers' conditions in long-term care, to be more equitable across this country.

As a New Democrat, I am happy to say that we have used our power to secure a commitment from the federal government, through the confidence and supply agreement, to bring in a safe long-term care act that would ensure seniors receive the care they deserve, no matter in what province or which long-term care home they live. This long-overdue legislation must be implemented without delay, and I thank the member for Avalon for introducing this

motion, which takes another step forward in speeding up the necessary action to protect seniors and the workers who care for them.

I would like to thank all the workers who have supported seniors throughout this pandemic and who support seniors every day in this country. I offer my heartfelt gratitude to every single worker who did double duty as a caregiver and an emotional supporter when families could not visit or hug their loved ones for months on end during this pandemic. When family support was not available, every care worker stepped up to fill that gap.

I will also take a moment to recognize Frank, a long-term care resident and loved dad and uncle who finds himself again in lockdown as we work through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Care workers have a special constitution, a moral connection to their clients and skills that deserve great respect. Their work is hard, stressful and both physically and emotionally taxing. This is why the working conditions and pay of long-term care workers need to improve as we work to improve long-term care itself.

COVID-19 magnified the unequal and under-resourced long-term care system across Canada, and the lack of accountability, especially in privatized care. This lack of accountability is due to lax enforcement of standards and regulations. For example, a CBC investigation revealed that 85% of long-term care homes in Ontario had routinely violated health care standards for decades, with near total impunity.

Let me be clear that there is no fault on the workers here, who give their all in a system that is undervalued by the government. Decades of underinvestment and under-regulation have resulted in short-staffed institutions and underpaid workers. Inadequate wages have forced care workers to take on long hours and to work at multiple care homes just to make ends meet. That practice serves neither workers nor seniors and must change.

Deeply troubling in this country is the move to privatize long-term care, where corporations are focused on profits rather than the care of the people they are supposed to serve. Long-term care is medical care, but it is not covered under our universal, not-for-profit health care system in Canada, and because long-term care lies outside the Canada Health Act, too many care homes are run first and foremost for profit.

Privatization of long-term care does not work for seniors and does not work for the workers either. Decades of research have demonstrated that long-term care homes that run on a for-profit basis tend to have lower staffing levels, more verified complaints and more transfers to hospitals.

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In addition, during the pandemic, many for-profit operators paid out millions in bonuses to CEOs and dividends while accepting subsidies from the government and neglecting the residents under their care. While those CEOs were taking home bonuses, workers in long-term care had to work multiple jobs to pay rent and keep food on the table. During COVID-19, they were getting sick and injured and their mental health suffered.

We must recognize and value the essential labour of those who take care of us. Crucial policy actions need to include better and faster recognition for credentials received outside Canada for care workers, higher wages, paid sick days, accessible and affordable child care, and mental health supports. Let us also include dental care and pharmacare.

• (1745)

In recent testimony out of the HUMA committee on long-term care, Katherine Scott of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives told us that women represent 75% of workers in care occupations and have lower average employment income than their male counterparts. In 2015, a female care worker earned an average of 81% of a male care worker's wage.

Naomi Lightman told the HUMA committee, "we know that the process of transferring credentials needs to be accelerated. It needs to be faster, it needs to be easier and it needs to be more affordable." She said that many immigrant women who work in the care sector are sending remittances to their home countries and are working multiple part-time jobs just to make ends meet to support their families. She also said the current process does not allow them the time or the financial means needed to do the upgrading the government requires.

How can we expect to attract and retain workers in this highly gendered occupation when the industry discriminates against them? The exploitation of care workers needs to stop. We must make every care job a good job, to protect seniors and workers across the country.

In a HUMA study on seniors, we were told that staffing levels in long-term care facilities also need to improve. Care homes are having trouble hiring more staff. This is no surprise given that these facilities are known for low wages and difficult working conditions. The Liberals must act immediately to ensure both seniors and their care workers get the dignity they deserve.

Successive Liberal and Conservative governments have failed our care workers. As a result, the current government has also failed our seniors. It has not legislated improved standards in long-term care, has not ensured workers are paid adequately and has not respected the skill and importance of care work. Instead, it continues to let the market erode our long-term care. As it embraces the profit-driven model, it turns a blind eye to the inadequate care for seniors and the exploitation of workers.

The NDP will work relentlessly to change that. Profit has no place in the care of seniors, just as it has no place anywhere in our primary health care system. We must continue to work collaboratively with seniors, their families, caregivers, not-for-profit and public care providers and provincial and territorial governments to develop national standards for long-term care, which must include

accountability mechanisms and data collection measuring outcomes, as well as funding.

All people in Canada deserve to live in dignity, with their human rights upheld and protected. It is my expectation that the government live up to its commitments and act quickly and boldly to fix the deteriorating conditions in long-term care, not just for the residents of Port Moody—Coquitlam, Anmore and Belcarra, but for everyone across Canada. It must also stop the exploitation of care workers immediately.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am rising today to speak on something residents told me is their clear priority. I will be speaking in support of the private member's motion of my colleague for Avalon on improvements to long-term care

We know residents in long-term care homes disproportionately suffered during the early stages of the pandemic. That was true in Brampton, but also from coast to coast to coast.

Seniors are one of the fastest-growing age groups in Canada. I know everyone in this chamber agrees we need to do everything we can for the people who built this country. I read the text of this motion and see that it speaks to the many needs of our seniors, families and health care workers. The motion is in line with the Minister of Seniors' mandate letter, and I trust all members will agree that it is a positive step forward.

Today, I want to focus on specific elements of this motion to share the perspective of seniors from my community, as I have heard it directly from them.

The past two years have been challenging for Canadians. The pandemic exposed gaps in the system, and our government has been there to support Canadians and provinces by laying out a plan for the recovery. Time flies, but I still remember all the work we have done since 2020 in the Standing Committee on Health. We have listened to experts on our government's response to the pandemic.

I would like to take members back to the beginning of 2020. From January 15 to February 28, there were 14,960 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Ontario among long-term care residents. Those accounted for 15% of all reported cases in the first wave, according to Public Health Ontario. At the same time, at the peak of the first wave, outbreaks in LTC and seniors' homes accounted for 81% of deaths in Canada.

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As the situation worsened, and at the request of the Government of Ontario, teams of medically trained Canadian Armed Forces personnel were temporarily deployed to facilities identified by the province to provide a range of assistance and medical support. Grace Manor was one of them: this facility is located in Brampton South.

The Canadian Armed Forces went above and beyond to temporarily support long-term care homes. Then, the CAF report that followed included stories and examples of unacceptable abuse. When I first saw this report, I was deeply concerned about residents enduring unbearable conditions.

I want to thank all CAF members for their selfless service to our seniors, but these tragedies should never have happened. Sad stories such as these are why we are debating this motion today. They are also why I want to recognize all of the families with residents living in long-term care. Family members of residents in LTC are important support systems, and the pandemic made that difficult. We will always keep them in our hearts. Their strength, resilience and advocacy has been inspiring. That is why, back in 2020, my Ontario colleagues and I got together to advocate for national standards for long-term care so seniors in Canada could receive the quality of care they deserved.

In the 2020 fall economic statement, in budget 2021 and in budget 2022, we continued our commitment to strengthen care for seniors and persons with disabilities. The Government of Canada has worked collaboratively with provinces and territories throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to protect seniors in long-term care. This includes up to \$4 billion to help provinces and territories improve the standard of care in those facilities.

I know the Minister of Health, the Minister of Seniors and other ministers are working together with provinces to advance these commitments, and I know they will deliver. A lot of important steps have already been taken.

Our government welcomed the news that the Health Standards Organization and Canadian Standards Association have launched a process to help address these issues.

● (1750)

The Health Standards Organization and Canadian Standard Association will work with the government, stakeholders and Canadians to develop national standards that will help to inform ongoing discussions with provinces and territories on improving the quality of life of seniors in long-term care homes. After years of hard work, our seniors deserve that.

In budget 2021, our government committed \$3 billion over five years to Health Canada to support provinces and territories in ensuring that standards for long-term care were applied and permanent changes were made. Our government amended the Criminal Code to penalize those who neglect seniors under their care. This will go a long way in addressing some of the long-standing challenges and gaps.

Budget 2022 proposes the creation of an expert panel to study the idea of an aging-at-home benefit. Our government recognizes that some seniors wish to stay at home for as long as possible,

where they are comfortable and with the communities that support them. Coming this summer, we are increasing old age security for seniors ages 75 and up. I know my residents welcome this initiative, and I know that our government is taking meaningful action to support the provinces and territories as they address gaps.

The pandemic was hard on seniors, and we will come out of this stronger than ever before. Helping Canadians age with dignity in the best possible health, all while enjoying social and economic security, is one of the government's top priorities.

In conclusion, let us agree that we must continue to work with all provinces and territories to help ensure that everyone, no matter where they live in Canada, has access to the long-term care they deserve.

● (1755)

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak on Motion No. 47.

As of 2021, Alberta had a total of 186 long-term care homes. From June 6 to 12, Alberta celebrated Seniors' Week and honoured the vital contributions seniors have made, and will still make, in their respective communities. Now, it is our turn to reciprocate.

As we are all aware, it was difficult during the pandemic for many, especially seniors in long-term care. It was an eye-opener for all of us. Our long-term care facilities needed to be improved. The NDP-Liberal government must meet its provincial counterparts to ensure our seniors are taken care of properly. During the pandemic, I received complaints from families worried about their parents' well-being. Seniors were isolated. They had to stay in their rooms and have their meals in their rooms, and their daily exercise routines, as well as their socialization with others, was not permitted.

Although health care is primarily a provincial issue, the federal government needs to increase the health transfers to help provinces with the ongoing challenges they are facing. Even though the provinces use the health transfers at their discretion, the federal government can make recommendations. The government's uncontrolled spending that is exacerbating skyrocketing inflation leaves seniors and other vulnerable demographics behind. The government needs to commit to long-term care with accountability and to long-term care that serves Canadians' best interests.

For years, experts, residents and caregivers have identified the need for the same rigorous standards and accountability across Canada. The COVID-19 pandemic has shed new light on the long-standing challenges with our health care system, and we need to tackle those challenges head-on. We can no longer afford to ignore the issues that have long existed in long-term care and home care. These health services were crucial in helping older Canadians to remain active and engaged in society and to live with dignity. The pandemic has exposed the unacceptable conditions in many long-term care homes across the country that people with serious health conditions have been required to live in for decades.

Home care clients were left without basic personal care services, such as bathing and laundry, during the pandemic. This is reflective of the larger issue with home care. Its capacity to improve health and reduce costs continuously fails to be recognized and funded by governments. When long-term care and home care fail older adults, families and friends step in. Informal caregivers provide an estimated 80% of community care and 30% of care in institutions. As Canada's population ages, relying on informal caregivers to bolster the health and social systems will have major ramifications for our society and our economy.

Now is the time to implement enforced principles and national standards for long-term care developed in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments. As part of our national seniors strategy, these standards must specify conditions and criteria the provinces and territories must meet to receive federal health and social transfer payments, with repercussions for failing to meet the outlined conditions and criteria. This would ensure a standard level of quality care, availability of equitable and consistent services across the country, and adequate levels of funding for these types of care. It would also ensure greater public accountability of government delivering on long-term care and home care.

For decades, research has shown that our global counterparts that have national standards for long-term care and home care have better health outcomes and quality of life for their older populations. Research conducted during the pandemic has reaffirmed this, demonstrating that countries with national standards experienced dramatically lower numbers of COVID-19 cases and fatalities tied to long-term care and home care.

● (1800)

In Canada, during the first wave, more than 80% of COVID-19 deaths occurred in long-term care facilities. We cannot let this happen again. This government needs to commit to ensuring Canadians from coast to coast to coast have access to quality care and safe care by supporting the implementation of enforced principles and national standards for long-term care.

It is time to reimagine older adult care. It is time for the federal government to take a leadership role in establishing enforceable national standards tied to funding, and it is time for territories and provinces to unite to collaborate and fix long-term and home care. We must look out for the best interests of older Canadians by supporting the implementation of enforceable national standards for long-term and home care. We need improvements in the quality and quantity of care work. We need concrete strategies and real action

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to ensure everyone has the right to receive quality care. This includes the right to decent work for those providing care.

Canadian care standards need to be implemented to address shortfalls and inequitable levels of care for seniors and persons with disabilities, including in long-term care, home care and palliative care. Building an inclusive and equitable recovery must mean investments in better, safer jobs and stronger care systems to support care workers, ensuring that all those who need care have access to quality, public care services. This can be done by establishing an e-health strategy that includes virtual care, expanding MyHealth Records and similar programs for patient portal information capabilities, developing secure messaging and collaboration services to enhance communication, and developing a privacy and security framework for virtual care.

According to Statistics Canada, the demographic of those aged 85 and over has doubled since 2001, and it is expected to double again by 2046. A significant proportion of those in this demographic will reside in long-term care facilities. We are all aging, and one day may find ourselves in long-term care. Let us fix it now. This federal government must invest and repair Canada's failing care systems. How we emerge from the crisis in long-term care will define us as a society.

I think that part of my concern with Motion No. 47 is the fact that we have not kept up with the issues our seniors are facing in long-term care, as well as those many other issues our seniors are facing. It seems like we have almost taken them for granted, and that they are not part of our society any more. Instead, they are locked away, and we do not have to worry about them.

However, that is not the attitude that we should be taking as a government. We should be there honouring and respecting our elders, giving them the best quality of life they possibly can have, not only now, but also for years to come. That is why we need to start improving all of our long-term care facilities and making sure they are not just places where people go to die, but places where people want to be and need to be, and where they are taken care of properly. That is what we are lacking, not only with the government, but also other governments.

To make these improvements, yes, money will have to be spent, but we will be much better as a society if we are able to accomplish this as a country united to improve the quality of care for all seniors.

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● (1805)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is with much exasperation that I rise today to talk about a motion on long-term care. The major problem is that we are in the wrong legislative assembly. This is a crucial jurisdictional issue, since the federal government does not have the necessary expertise in this area. I realize that, unfortunately, I have had to say this too often. We have had enough of the federal government's paternalistic attitude. The government needs to do its duty and its job. It should not be using the COVID-19 crisis to exploit seniors for its own ends.

We do not want to trivialize what happened in our long-term care facilities. On the contrary, we want nothing less than to give them the financial means they need. I will get back to this in my speech. I am going to give some background information and outline the reasons for which the Bloc Qu b cois is against the motion. I will close by reminding my colleagues of the support of certain civil society groups.

As we now know, COVID-19 mainly affected seniors. This fact, combined with the critical situation in our long-term care facilities, finally forced the Quebec government to ask for the military's help on April 22, 2020.

Barely one month later, in May 2020, negotiations between the CAQ and Liberal governments got especially tense because of the federal government's refusal to extend the military's involvement. The government then used Quebec's request for military assistance as a pretext to announce, in its throne speech, its intention to impose Canada-wide standards on long-term care facilities. That was a twisted way of imposing its requirements on the provinces, instead of agreeing to their unanimous demand for an increase in federal health transfers equal to 35% of health care system costs.

To add insult to injury, the Liberal government reiterated its intention in last fall's economic update and at the 20th telephone conference of Canada's premiers, with the NDP's blessing, of course.

The Liberals are still clinging to that idea. In the 2021 election campaign, they promised \$6 billion for long-term care facilities in exchange for Canada-wide standards. However, for the past several weeks, the Quebec political media has been abuzz with the findings of various investigations into the matter. The debate is ongoing in civil society and in Quebec's National Assembly.

This is therefore not the problem. Allow me to share why the Bloc Qu b cois is opposed to the motion. The motion states that "we need to make sure the conditions of work reflect the care standards our seniors deserve", which is something we agree with. We are all, as individuals, collectively responsible for taking care of our seniors. However, working conditions in long-term care homes and in private seniors' residences are not a federal jurisdiction.

The motion also states that "while the management of long-term care facilities is under provincial and territorial jurisdiction, we share the goal of ensuring safer, better care for seniors". Our response to this is that health care is not under federal jurisdiction. If the federal government truly wants to help the provinces, it should hold a summit and permanently increase funding for health care, as we have proposed.

Furthermore, the motion states that "in the opinion of the House, the government should work with the provinces and territories to...improve the quality and availability of long-term care homes and beds". Our response to this is that Quebec already has a plan to overhaul its system and what it needs is funding.

The motion also states that the government should work with the provinces and territories to "implement strict infection prevention and control measures, including through more provincial and territorial facility inspections for long-term care homes". Anything else? Quebec has assessed, and continues to assess, its actions during the pandemic. It is not up to the federal government to tell Quebec what to do or how to do it. This paternalism must stop.

Finally, the motion states that it should "develop a safe long-term care act collaboratively to ensure that seniors are guaranteed the care they deserve, no matter where they live." Enough is enough. The Quebec National Assembly already unanimously opposed such federal standards.

We already had this debate before the pointless election called by the Liberal Party, which still makes me mad. In March 2021, I remember rising to speak when the NDP moved a motion to nationalize and impose standards for long-term care institutions. Members will recall that the motion was rejected by everyone, except the NDP of course. Even the Liberals voted against the motion. Here we are in the 44th Parliament, and the Liberal Party suddenly has amnesia. It has come back with the same motion.

● (1810)

I have to say, since the advent of the NDP-Liberal government, their position has become muddled. The one thing that does remain clear, however, is their appetite for interfering in things that do not concern them. Sections 91 and 92 of the Constitution Act, 1867, set out how jurisdictions are shared between the federal government and the provinces. Pursuant to those two sections, health is the exclusive jurisdiction of Quebec.

The Liberal Party of Canada and the NDP are always trying to interfere in the jurisdictions of the provinces, especially in the area of health care. However, the federalism they hold so dear requires that each level of government respect its exclusive jurisdictions.

Federalists sometimes argue that health transfers should have conditions attached. Otherwise, the provinces will take advantage of them to lower taxes rather than provide better services to their people. Our response to that argument is that it is not the federal government's job to lecture the provincial and Quebec governments. In a democracy, it is up to voters to sanction their government.

There is currently a debate raging about the issue of long-term care and the decisions that were made during the COVID-19 crisis. This debate continues, and it is up to the Quebec government to take action to remedy the situation. Then, in October, it will be up to voters, not the Liberal Party of Canada, to decide whether they are satisfied with their government's actions. In short, Quebec already has some potential solutions, including a detailed plan to increase the capacity of long-term care facilities as mentioned in a special report by the ombudsman.

The federal government will not be able to improve the situation because it does not know what is really happening on the ground. It does not understand these unique hospital settings. In response to the special report, the Quebec government has already presented a plan to overhaul the health care system.

I would like to remind the hon. members of an important date: December 2, 2020. As the Bloc Québécois critic for seniors, I had the opportunity to speak with Quebec's minister for seniors and caregivers, Marguerite Blais. She tabled a motion to denounce the Liberals' desire to impose Canadian standards on Quebec's long-term care facilities, which I will read:

That the National Assembly reject the Government of Canada's desire to impose Canadian standards in Québec CHSLDs and long-term care facilities for the elderly, as this falls under exclusive Québec jurisdiction;

That it express its disappointment that the federal government did not include an increase in health transfer payments in its last economic update, while the provinces must cover significant health spending costs in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic;

That it call on the federal government to commit to not imposing Canadian standards in Québec CHSLDs and long-term care facilities for the elderly and to increasing health transfer payments to an amount equal to 35% of healthcare network costs.

Let us not forget that the provinces and Quebec are the ones with the expertise and experience in long-term care homes, not the federal government. Every long-term care facility has to meet safety and care quality standards in order to be permitted to operate. Standards already exist.

Obviously, the federal government has no business setting those standards for long-term care facilities on behalf of the provinces and Quebec, since it has neither the experience nor the expertise, as I said. Instead, the government should focus on doing what is expected of it and taking responsibility.

The Canadian Armed Forces' report on their experience in Quebec's long-term care facilities made it clear that there were already many standards and rules in place regarding infection prevention and control and the use of PPE, but they were not enough to stop the virus. The real issue is the ability to comply with the existing standards and rules. The main reason it is so hard to follow these rules is also clear: the labour shortage.

If the federal government really wants to help Quebec and the provinces overcome the pandemic and improve care for seniors, it must drop the paternalistic attitude, scrap its plan to impose Canada-wide standards that are ill suited for all the different social and institutional contexts, and increase health transfers, which will allow the provinces to attract and retain more health care workers.

One of the Bloc Québécois's demands is that the federal government increase health transfers to an amount equal to 35% of health

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care system costs. However, the government continues to say no, even though Parliament adopted a motion in the spring asking all parties to recognize the increase in transfers, which all of the parties did, except the Liberals, who once again found themselves standing alone.

Even civil society groups, such as various unions, stepped up in March 2021 to ask for the increase and explain why it was important. A Leger poll showed that 85% of people want this. FADOQ wants it. When I went to the latest summit on seniors' quality of life, everyone said they wanted an increase, no strings attached.

In conclusion, we are not the ones spoiling for a fight. The NDP-Liberal coalition is. They are delaying many of Quebec's demands, but we are not the only ones making these demands. The provinces and territories are too. These NDP-Liberal threats need to stop. Seniors must not be held hostage. The federal government must hand over the financial means to take care of them, and that means health transfers.

• (1815)

[English]

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am delighted to rise today to participate in the second hour of debate on Motion No. 47, a motion introduced by my colleague, the hon. member of Parliament for Avalon, regarding improvements to long-term care. I am going to keep my remarks very brief today, as I recognize that the content of this motion serves to address pressing issues that should already be deemed both urgent and important by all members of the House.

This motion can be defined in two main parts. They can be categorized as a need for recognizing the problem and a need for addressing it. Primarily, the motion would require that the House recognize the long-standing issues that have plagued long-term care facilities across Canada. It calls for action to address this by requesting a joint effort in ensuring that these facilities reflect a certain standard of care that seniors deserve.

With Motion No. 47, our government is acting on its commitment to work with the provinces and territories to improve the quality and availability of long-term care homes and beds, while ensuring the implementation of strict infection and control measures and, most importantly, collaborating on the development of a safe long-term care act that would guarantee the care that seniors deserve, regardless of their geographic location across the country.

I represent the riding of Richmond Hill, a beautiful and diverse community that has only been enhanced thanks to the hard work, efforts and contributions of our senior constituents, who collectively account for almost 30% of the population in the riding. Thirty per cent is not just a statistic. This number reflects real people who have lived in our community and helped build it, grow it and make it stronger. In census 2016, there were nearly 30,000 seniors in my riding, and many local seniors are active participants in my monthly seniors community council meetings, where they are still contributing to making Richmond Hill a better place to live by sharing their ideas and advocating for how we can make life more accessible, affordable and enjoyable for their peers.

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We heard from them that we need to make sure we have sufficient funds to support them and that we hold other jurisdictions, as collaborative partners, accountable for that. As such, it is only right that when they reach the later years of their adulthood, their communities and governments are there and should be there to help them access safe, healthy and dignified care spaces. This is exactly what sets the base for Motion No. 47.

Among the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, there is one harsh reality that was brought to light: Older adults in long-term care facilities, especially those who are immunocompromised or have other underlying health conditions, were severely and disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. This impact was felt not only physically but emotionally and mentally, as the residents of long-term care homes had to witness great loss while often feeling socially isolated and alone due to restrictions that were there to protect their health. This motion would only build on the previous investments made by our government to improve conditions in long-term care, such as up to \$4 billion allocated for improving the standards of care provided in these facilities.

We acknowledge that health care is a shared responsibility between the federal, provincial and territorial governments. The Government of Canada provides financial support that empowers the provinces and territories' delivery and planning of health services. This explains why each provincial and territorial government is able to enforce its own legislation and regulations for long-term care services. However, given the variations and inconsistencies across Canada, we know that there is a need for our federal government to help facilitate cross-country coordination.

Long-term care homes in my community of Richmond Hill and across Canada serve as vital services and resources that should be subjected to a similar set of standards, regardless of which provincial or territorial jurisdiction they operate in. With Motion No. 47, we can work toward making this very needed objective a reality through teamwork with the provinces and territories, while respecting their jurisdictional authority.

• (1820)

This motion is good for seniors, it is good for the overall health care system and it is good for Canada. I urge all members to join me in supporting it in its goal to make long-term care safer.

Before I conclude, seeing as this is my last intervention on legislation for this parliamentary session, I want to take a moment to thank all of my hon. colleagues for their hard work here in the House, as well as my constituents in Richmond Hill for once again trusting me to serve as their voice in Ottawa.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Madam Speaker, we have heard throughout this debate that seniors were disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, and we know that this was particularly true for seniors living in long-term care.

In the previous Parliament, I had the opportunity to initiate a study at the HUMA committee to review the impact of COVID-19 on the financial and social health and well-being of seniors. The purpose of the study was to understand the impact on seniors, take lessons from that understanding and make specific recommendations to improve supports for seniors. We know that long-term care

was central to that study, and the committee heard important testimony that spoke directly to the experiences and needs of seniors, their families and staff in care homes.

I was relieved that in this Parliament, the HUMA committee completed that study. The report entitled "The Impacts of COVID-19 on the Well-Being of Seniors" was tabled in the House just recently. Similar to recommendations in that report, the motion being debated today calls on the government to work collaboratively with provincial and territorial governments to ensure that seniors receive adequate care.

I certainly appreciate and support the member for Avalon calling on his own government to act, but action must be taken. We know that the status quo is unacceptable and that the government can do better.

The conversation really turns to the Liberal government and the seniors minister. It is not enough to pass the motion in the House. The needle needs to move, and we know and have heard that action is past due. There are areas that fall under federal jurisdiction that can be acted on in the immediate term, and while we know that provincial jurisdictions must absolutely be respected, especially as priorities and needs may differ regionally, the federal government can certainly provide leadership.

• (1825)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I apologize for interrupting the hon. member, but the hon. member for Avalon has a right of reply for five minutes.

The hon. member for Avalon.

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to start off my speech this evening by thanking the colleagues who have reached out to me to voice their support for Motion No. 47 and have spoken in support of the motion in our first hour of debate and again here today.

I know that each and every one of us is plagued with the state of our long-term care facilities. Members' constituents, like mine, are asking us to take the state of long-term care in this country seriously. I believe, in looking around the chamber today, that I can confidently say we have bipartisan consensus that something needs to be done.

Organizations in my province, such as the NL Seniors' Coalition, Advocates for Senior Citizens' Rights and SeniorsNL, have all done a great deal of work over the years in educating on, consulting on and researching the impact that this ever-changing world has on our seniors, and in advocating for better standards of care, especially in long-term care, not just in my province, but across the country.

Private Members' Business

I want to take my time today to address some of the concerns colleagues have expressed in previous debate on Motion No. 47. I think it is important that we continue the debate today and move this conversation forward.

I first want to talk about how funding is critical to ensuring that long-term care facilities in Canada are held to a national standard. While Motion No. 47 does not tie any monetary value to implementing a national standard for long-term care across the country, we in this chamber all know that funding is the foundation of safe and well-regulated long-term care in Canada.

Our government recognizes this and has been stepping up to the plate to do what we can to support long-term care facilities in being the safest they can be. In the 2020 fall economic statement, we announced the establishment of a \$1-billion safe long-term care fund. We have invested \$38.5 million to hire and train 4,000 personal support worker interns to address the significant labour shortages that exist for long-term care homes.

We know there is more to do and more we can do, but I believe that by developing and enforcing a national standard of care throughout this country for all long-term care facilities, we can give the provinces and territories, which have jurisdiction over this industry, the framework they need to determine what funding and support are needed. We can then work with our provincial and territorial partners to determine how and where our federal government can help implement these standards.

Next I would like to speak to some concerns raised about seniors aging at home, living out their golden years in their own residences and not ending up in long-term care. I believe that Canadian seniors should have the choice of where they want to be as they get older. Everyone has different needs as they age, and I believe that seniors choosing to live in their own home in their later years is a wonderful choice. Our government supports that decision fully.

Our recently launched age well at home initiative is proof of that. Budget 2021 provided \$90 million in funding that will deliver practical support to help low-income and otherwise vulnerable seniors continue to live safely, independently and comfortably in their own homes and communities. The initiative will help seniors with at-home tasks, both big and small.

The reason Motion No. 47 focuses on creating a long-term care act and developing a set of standards for long-term care facilities really boils down to choice. When seniors can and choose to remain in their own homes as they age, they have the freedom of choice. We can all think of the best long-term care facility in our own ridings and would hope that all facilities are adhering to the same standard of care for all residents, but we know that is not always the case.

My hope with this motion is to ensure that every senior, whether they choose to stay in their own home or move into a long-term care facility, has the same freedom and choice in their care and treatment as they age. Setting out a minimum standard of care in this country and ensuring that our seniors know what that is and know what to expect from a facility are the main objectives of this motion.

I want to finish off today by reiterating something I said in my first speech before the House.

We recognize that our provincial and territorial partners have primary jurisdiction over long-term care in Canada. However, the federal government still has a vital role to play. The provinces and territories cannot do it alone. Our federal government has the resources, statistical knowledge and national expertise to help them improve the quality of long-term care in their province or territory. Only if we work collaboratively, as we did throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, will we be able to secure peace of mind for all Canadians who are residents, future residents or loved ones of someone in long-term care in any province or territory in this country.

● (1830)

I would like to thank colleagues again for their support of Motion No. 47 and for the opportunity to speak to this again today. When we look back on our legacies as parliamentarians, I think we all want to look back on them favourably, like we did the right things to benefit the most Canadians. For me, I would like to look back on this opportunity and say that we did the right thing and did what was best for those who paved the way for us and built this country: our seniors.

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

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

Mr. Ken McDonald: I would like to request a recorded vote.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, September 21, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[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. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to rise today to speak to Bill C-21, an act to amend certain acts and to make certain consequential amendments, specifically with respect to firearms. I know that there has been a lot said about this bill and how it would impact Canadians. I know that there have been some unfortunate comments that, in my opinion, do not exactly reflect what is in this bill, so I will use the opportunity today to try to highlight exactly what this bill would do.

First and foremost, this bill would establish a national freeze on handguns. Individuals would no longer have the ability to buy, sell, transfer or import handguns. This is extremely reasonable in today's society with what we are seeing going on not just outside of our borders in the United States, but also as we have actually witnessed here in Canada. We know that for the vast majority of those who are looking to harm individuals and utilize a gun for an illegal purpose, the weapon of choice is a handgun, and it is extremely important to ensure that there is a restricted ability for people to access these.

There would be exemptions, and there are exemptions in the bill, that ensure that those who require a weapon for security or policing purposes, etc., would obviously be exempt for those reasons. They would be able to make purchases for those reasons.

We also know that a certain number of people out there enjoy using a handgun for sport: for shooting at a range or in various ways. They utilize that. Although it might be more challenging to access a handgun in order to continue using it for that purpose, this bill certainly makes it known that this is not about attempting to regulate those individuals or prevent those individuals from utilizing a handgun for that purpose. In many cases, for sport, those individuals would not be impacted.

This bill would also establish red flag and yellow flag laws to expand the licence revocation process when it is deemed necessary in the right context.

The bill would also combat firearms smuggling and trafficking, notably by increasing the maximum penalty of imprisonment for indictable weapons offences. This is extremely important to reference because this, along with the mandatory minimum sentences bill that the House has also been debating in the past few weeks, is a talking point for Conservatives, with respect to minimum sentences being dropped primarily because the Supreme Court has determined that to be a necessity. Because those are being dropped, the Conservatives are suggesting that the government is being more lenient on those who commit certain crimes that would have other-

wise been, and currently would be, regulated by mandatory minimums.

It is actually the opposite, because although the government does feel that when it comes to sentencing, judges should be the ones who are determining what sentencing is, we also recognize that for some of these indictable offences, particularly those around weapons, we would be giving greater sentencing capacity to change that maximum sentence from 10 years to 14 years. Indeed, when judges find it appropriate to increase the sentence even further, they would be given more capacity to do that.

Of course, as indicated by other people who spoke before me, there is a provision within this bill to prohibit mid-velocity replica airguns. The reasons for that are quite notable, despite the fact that we have heard some conversation about the fact that different sporting activities might from time to time require these airguns.

• (1835)

It is very important to point out that this bill, at least in my opinion, is not about targeting law-abiding gun owners.

Most of my uncles in particular either own hunting lodges, where they hunt with their friends and families, or have been participating as hunters for generations, quite frankly. On my wife's side of the family, my father-in-law grew up on a hunting and fishing lodge. I am quite familiar with the needs and requirements of hunters specifically, and I must admit I have never heard one of them talk about the need to use a handgun or an AR-15 for the purpose of hunting.

What we are really trying to do here is curb the use of guns for illegal purposes: for the shootings we have seen in our country and continue to witness in the United States to the south of us. That is what the issue really is here.

I know the default, and quite often used, excuse from the other side of the House is to ask why we are not going after those who are trying to bring the guns across the border, because a significant number of guns that are used in criminal activity are coming from across the border.

Mr. Jake Stewart: I like my gun.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, that is the default reaction we hear from the Conservatives and continue to, literally as I speak right now. I am being heckled by them.

If one believes nothing else about—

Mr. Jake Stewart: I like my handgun the best; that's my favourite.

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

I want to remind the hon. member who is heckling the parliamentary secretary that if he happens to have comments or questions he should wait until it is questions and comments time. There will be five minutes for questions and comments, and the official opposition will have the first question. I would ask him to wait until then because it is not respectful to be doing what he is doing at the moment.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Government Orders

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, if the member wants, I would be happy to accept a unanimous consent motion to double my question time to 10 minutes, and then I could make sure I get to all the questions the Conservatives want to ask me. I would be more than happy to do that.

What I was getting at is that if one does not believe in anything else, they should just look at the data that is out there. The countries that have the stricter gun laws are the countries that have fewer shootings. If one considers no other information than that plain and simple fact, one is left trying to decide whether the trade-off is deemed acceptable. Do we want stricter gun laws that result in fewer gun fatalities and homicides in particular? The data also shows there is a significant decrease in police officers who are killed in the line of duty by somebody who uses a gun on them.

For me, that trade-off is pretty simple. Do we have to make things more restrictive in order to save more lives? All we have to do is look to the countries that have been quite successful in this. Other people have mentioned them throughout the debate today. The trade-off is quite simple for me. I am more interested in saving lives than preserving individuals' opportunity to hold on to and carry a firearm.

I respect the fact that there are others on the other side of the House whose tolerance for that risk is different from mine. It is just a reality that we have differing opinions on this. However, I will stand firmly in my position that I do not see the need for handguns to be on our streets or to be held on to, or that people need to have a handgun. I do not personally see the reason for it.

As I said, all those in my family and extended family who I know have hunted for generations, have never once, during our own individual discussions about this issue around the dinner table, talked about the need for a handgun. Yes, there are concerns from time to time about weapons, and in particular those used for hunting. I can respect that, but I just do not think handguns fall into that category, nor has any hunter I have ever spoken with agreed with that sentiment.

I will leave it at that. If the member wants to put forward a unanimous consent motion to get me to answer twice as many questions, I would be happy to do that to make sure I can answer all those Conservative questions out there.

● (1840)

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Madam Speaker, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader indicated in his speech that he did not believe this bill would negatively impact law-abiding gun owners. I would take a little exception to that. As a licence-holder for restricted firearms, I know this would very negatively affect law-abiding gun owners.

I am wondering why the member cannot see how the bill would do that and, at the same time, I am hoping that his position in his speech does not put him offside with his family members.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I will address the last part first. I think what puts me offside with my family members more is the rhetoric that comes from the lobbying groups and, quite frankly, to be honest, the Conservatives. It is not until I have the op-

portunity to correct that information with my family members that they then seem to be much more at ease.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, the member can disagree with me, but I am saying how my family interacts with me, and that is just the reality of the situation.

In the first part of his question, he was asking about how it would impact people. I guess it really comes down to what they determine to be an impact on somebody. Would it have an impact to tell people that we do not think it is appropriate to be carrying a firearm? If that negatively impacts them because they have a passion for doing that, then I guess it would impact them. However, I do not think it would impact those who are using a firearm for the purpose of hunting, in particular, which is the example I have been using.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulou, BQ): Madam Speaker, we fully agree that we need better gun control. However, I would like to make a brief comment: We also have to control the border, because illegal weapons are coming across it, which is a problem.

The way the bill is currently drafted, even airsoft players, who use air guns like paintball guns, will be banned from playing their sport. These are people who are very respectful of safety measures, but they will no longer be able to play, even though airsoft guns cause no injury, other than bruises.

Would my colleague be open to proposing amendments in committee on this matter?

● (1845)

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I am always open to hearing ideas about how a bill can be amended to make it better. I have participated in paintballing myself. I am quite familiar with what the guns look like. The ones that are specifically referenced in the bill are replicas. A typical paintball gun used for recreational purposes outside of intense sport have a big barrel for the paintballs. It is quite clear that it is not a replica, at least in my opinion, but I would love to explore this more at committee.

As to the first point when the member talked about the border, I would say that we have done two significant things since coming into power. The first is that we recommitted and put money into securing our borders by investing in the CBSA officers the previous Conservative government had eliminated. The second is that this bill would change the maximum sentence for those indictable offences from 10 years to 14 years. We are putting a stricter sentence on those who choose to participate in that criminal activity.

Government Orders

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will ask a question similar to what my colleague asked about the airsoft guns. In my riding, there are some small business owners who sell those airsoft rifles, and they are really concerned about what is going to happen to their business. I would like to know what the government did to consult with some of these small business owners, and if the bill moves forward and the legislation is not changed, what they will do to ensure that those small businesses are able to continue to do business.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I did not write the bill, so I do not know exactly what the consultative process has been up to this point, but what I do know is that the next stage of this bill is in committee, where the committee could do a lot of that consultative process and perhaps come up with some solutions and ideas. There is the idea her colleague mentioned in the House earlier about making it a requirement that the tip of the gun be painted a certain colour. I would argue that a nice, bright red would be better than orange, as suggested by her colleague earlier, but, nonetheless, I am sure there are opportunities out there to help improve the bill.

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC): Madam Speaker, today we are debating Bill C-21. My Conservative colleagues have already laid out some of the bill's content and really the false narrative the Liberals have tried to advance in trying to pass this bill.

We know there is a significant crime problem in many of our urban centres, especially in those where we have seen a rise in shootings and gun crime. We also know that illegal weapons are the real problem. In the city of Toronto, the police have clearly stated that in over 85% of crimes involving a firearm in that city the weapons were smuggled in illegally from the United States. As a matter of fact, CBC reported that municipalities across the country report very similar stats. It said that, depending on the municipality, between 70% and 95% of all guns used in the commission of a crime have been imported from the United States.

The stats clearly prove that very few crimes were committed by those who are legally permitted to own them, who are the real targets of Bill C-21. Members will notice the Liberals never share that data. They never say that legal gun owners are not the problem because that is the group of people they like to target. They want to have Canadians believe that legal gun owners are the problem, are scary and need to be eliminated. They are stating in this bill that they want to see an end to the trading of these guns.

It is important that Canadians know that anybody who owns a weapon that is addressed in this bill has gone through extensive training and background checks, and the stats clearly indicate they are not the problem when it comes to crime in our cities. The Liberals have been fabricating a narrative that is completely hypocritical when we see what they have done. Bill C-21 does next to nothing to deal with smuggled firearms or target the criminals who import, sell and use them.

What makes the Liberals even more hypocritical is the fact that they have a bill to deal with these criminals, which is Bill C-5. In that bill the Liberals are reducing the mandatory minimum imprisonments for criminals who are involved in the following crimes: unauthorized possession of prohibited or restricted weapons; possession of prohibited or restricted firearms with ammunition; pos-

session of firearms obtained by commission of an offence; firearms trafficking; possession of firearms for the purposes of trafficking; and knowingly importing and exporting an unauthorized firearm. They are reducing the penalties for the people who are actually the problem when it comes to gun crime in this country. It is clear to see the Liberals have no interest in dealing with the real problem, taking illegal weapons off of our streets.

As if we needed any additional evidence that the Liberal government would go to disturbing lengths to advance its own political agenda, in breaking news just yesterday afternoon we learned that the Liberals would jeopardize the independence of the institution of the RCMP for their political interests. The evidence in the report that was released included some of the scariest evidence of how low the government will go and how many boundaries it will break to advance its own political agenda. The Halifax Examiner exposed the rot that exists in the government and the manipulation it expects from the highest levels of what should be an independent trusted public institution.

The headline screams, “RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki tried to ‘jeopardize’ mass murder investigation to advance [the Prime Minister’s] gun control efforts”. In her report, Jennifer Henderson stated:

• (1850)

RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki “made a promise” to Public Safety Minister Bill Blair and the Prime Minister’s Office to leverage the mass murders of April 18/19, 2020 to get a gun control law passed.

A week after the murders, Lucki pressured RCMP in Nova Scotia to release details of the weapons used by the killer. But RCMP commanders in Nova Scotia refused to release such details, saying doing so would threaten their investigation into the murders.

The Trudeau government’s gun control objectives were spelled out in an order in council issued in May 2020....

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I suspect you might be thinking I am rising to say that the member is stating mistruths on the record, but that is not it. The member has made reference to the Prime Minister by using his name, and we are not allowed to use the name of the Prime Minister or any other member.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would like to remind the member that, in the House of Commons, he is not to use the names of current sitting members, the Prime Minister or ministers. They have to be referred to by their titles.

The hon. member for Grande Prairie—Mackenzie.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Madam Speaker, I was quoting, and I do apologize because I know that, even while quoting, I am not allowed to use the member’s names.

The member is correct. He confirmed that I am not spreading misinformation. He has confirmed that, in fact, this is truth, so I am going to continue reading. The article continues:

The...government's gun control objectives were spelled out in an order in council issued in May 2020, and [the legislation codifying them] were encapsulated in Bill C-21, which was tabled last month, but the concern in April 2020 was the extent to which politics threatened to interfere with a cross-border police investigation into how the killer managed to obtain and smuggle into Canada four illegal guns used to commit many of the 22 murders.

Now I am going to jump a little bit further ahead in the report to the part where RCMP commanders in Nova Scotia refused to release details they thought would compromise their investigation. Jennifer Henderson writes:

April 28, 2020 — just one week after the murders...Nova Scotia Supt. Darren Campbell briefed journalists at a news conference....

On the firearms question, Campbell told journalists he “couldn't get into details... because the investigation is still active and ongoing,” except to confirm the gunman had several semi-automatic handguns and two semi-automatic rifles.

Shortly after the news conference Campbell, Asst. Commander Lee Bergerman, Leather, and Nova Scotia Communications director Lia Scanlan were summoned to a meeting. RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki and a deputy from Ottawa were on the conference call. Lucki was not happy.

Let me quote that again: “Lucki was not happy.”

The article then continues:

Campbell's handwritten notes made immediately following that meeting describe what happened:

“The Commissioner was obviously upset. She did not raise her voice but her choice of words was indicative of her overall dissatisfaction with our work. The Commissioner accused us (me) of disrespecting her by not following her instructions. I was and remain confused over this. The Commissioner said she told Comms to tell us at H Division to include specific info about the firearms used by [the killer]....However I said we couldn't because to do so would jeopardize ongoing efforts to advance the U.S. side of the case as well as the Canadian components of the investigation. Those are facts and I stand by them.”

Campbell noted that Lucki went on at length and said she was “sad and disappointed” that he had not provided these details to the media. Campbell continued:

“The Commissioner said she had promised the Minister of Public Safety and the Prime Minister's Office that the RCMP...would release this information. I tried to explain there was no intent to disrespect anyone however we could not release this information at this time. The Commissioner then said that we didn't understand, that this was tied to pending gun control legislation that would make officers and the public safer. She was very upset and at one point Deputy Commissioner (Brian) Brennan tried to get things calmed down but that had little effect. Some in the room were reduced to tears and emotional over this belittling reprimand.”

● (1855)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member's time is up. I have been trying to give him a signal. He does have five minutes of questions and comments.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives' back room is working hard. They have the new spin going on in regard to the whole issue of guns. Whenever they can get personal and start attacking, that is what they are going to do.

That is what we have heard for the last five or six minutes from the member. It is just comments attacking the integrity of the system. I will stand by the RCMP. I support the RCMP. The minister has been very clear on the RCMP, but the member does not let the facts cause issues.

Government Orders

In the legislation, there is the issue of yellow flags and red flags, an area that I think the vast majority of Canadians, and I suspect even some Conservatives, would support. What is the member's opinion on the value of having the red flags and yellow flags in the legislation?

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Madam Speaker, this is a Liberal member again trying to spread information that is not complete. The member opposite knows that the system currently has a flagging system for guns that are legally held. Those people who have gone through robust security checks, those who have gone through training programs, have to relinquish their guns if, in fact, they are flagged. That exists today.

The government can put a new name on the flagging system, or put a colour on it, but the fact is that it exists today, and the members opposite know that they have been playing politics with this entire issue since the very beginning. The member claims that I am making this up or that the back rooms of the Conservative Party are making this stuff up. It is printed in every newspaper in this country currently.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

The government says it wants to reduce gun violence by introducing Bill C-21, but the Montreal police service tells us that 95% of handguns used in violent crimes come from the black market.

I would like to know if my colleague thinks the government is doing enough to fight violence committed with illegal weapons. Is it doing enough at the borders, for example? Is Bill C-21 sufficient?

● (1900)

[*English*]

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Madam Speaker, that is the real tragedy, that the Liberals would use the tragedy of the murders of 22 Nova Scotians, innocent civilians in many cases, to advance this agenda. All of the guns that were included in that were illegal weapons—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I ruled on this a while ago on the official opposition side. The hon. parliamentary secretary has been in this House for some time, and he knows that he should not be heckling or trying to ask questions while someone is already answering a question.

The hon. member for Grande Prairie—Mackenzie.

Government Orders

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Madam Speaker, that is exactly what has happened. The Liberals have tried to shut it down every time the facts get in the way of their good story, their spin. That is the incredible heartbreak of what they did with the RCMP, where they instructed the commissioner to go out there and release information, compromising an investigation.

In fact, the four guns that were found were illegally owned and had come across the border illegally. That is what we should be tackling. Instead, the Liberals are passing legislation to reduce sentences for people who are trafficking in illegal weapons, and going after law-abiding gun owners.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, we know that in most violence in intimate partner relationships, in terms of murders, there is the use of handguns. I am wondering what the Conservative Party would do, if anything, to put in stricter laws for handguns to make sure that women, in particular, are safer.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Madam Speaker, my colleague brings up a very important point. I think she misspoke when she suggested that the vast majority of domestic abuse involves firearms. I do not believe that statistic is correct.

I do believe protocols exist for those people who have been flagged as risks, those who have demonstrated a compromised mental capacity and those who have demonstrated that they should not be in possession of a firearm. I believe in and support a flagging system that gets those firearms confiscated from people who have demonstrated that they should no longer have them.

Obviously, we do need to get serious about domestic violence in this country. We do have to get serious about the importation of illegal weapons, and that is what we would like to do on this side of the House.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

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

[English]

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

The hon. official opposition House leader.

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

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to an order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the recorded division stands deferred until Thursday, June 23, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

• (1905)

[English]

ORDER RESPECTING THE BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE AND ITS COMMITTEES

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

That, notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House, beginning on Friday, June 24, 2022, and ending on Friday, June 23, 2023:

- (a) members may participate in proceedings of the House either in person or by videoconference, provided that members participating remotely be in Canada;
- (b) members who participate remotely in a sitting of the House be counted for the purpose of quorum;
- (c) provisions in the Standing Orders to the need for members to rise or to be in their place, as well as any reference to the chair, the table or the chamber shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the virtual and hybrid nature of the proceedings;
- (d) the application of Standing Order 17 shall be suspended;
- (e) in Standing Orders 26(2), 53(4), 56.1(3), and 56.2(2), the reference to the number of members required to rise be replaced with the word “five”;
- (f) the application of Standing Order 62 shall be suspended for any member participating remotely;
- (g) documents may be laid before the House or presented to the House electronically, provided that:
 - (i) documents deposited pursuant to Standing Order 32(1) shall be deposited with the Clerk of the House electronically,
 - (ii) documents shall be transmitted to the clerk by members prior to their intervention,
 - (iii) any petition presented pursuant to Standing Order 36(5) may be filed with the clerk electronically,
 - (iv) responses to questions on the Order Paper deposited pursuant to Standing Order 39 may be tabled electronically;
- (h) should the House resolve itself in a committee of the whole, the Chair may preside from the Speaker’s chair;
- (i) when a question that could lead to a recorded division is put to the House, in lieu of calling for the yeas and nays, one representative of a recognized party can rise to request a recorded vote or to indicate that the motion is adopted on division, provided that a request for a recorded division has precedence;
- (j) when a recorded division is requested in respect of a debatable motion, or a motion to concur in a bill at report stage on a Friday, including any division arising as a consequence of the application of Standing Order 78, but excluding any division in relation to the budget debate, pursuant to Standing Order 84, or the business of supply occurring on the last supply day of a period, other than as provided in Standing Orders 81(17) and 81(18)(b), or arising as a consequence of an order made pursuant to Standing Order 57,
 - (i) before 2:00 p.m. on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, it shall stand deferred until the conclusion of Oral Questions at that day’s sitting, or
 - (ii) after 2:00 p.m. on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, or at any time on a Friday, it shall stand deferred until the conclusion of Oral Questions at the next sitting day that is not a Friday,
 provided that any extension of time pursuant to Standing Order 45(7.1) shall not exceed 90 minutes;
- (k) if a motion for the previous question under Standing Order 61 is adopted without a recorded division, the vote on the main question may be deferred under the provisions of paragraph (j), however if a recorded division is requested on the previous question, and such division is deferred and the previous question subsequently adopted, the vote on the original question shall not be deferred;
- (l) when a recorded division, which would have ordinarily been deemed deferred to immediately before the time provided for Private Members’ Business on a Wednesday governed by this order, is requested, the said division is deemed to have been deferred until the conclusion of Oral Questions on the same Wednesday, provided that such recorded divisions be taken after the other recorded divisions deferred at that time;

(m) for greater certainty, this order shall not limit the application of Standing Order 45(7);

(n) when a recorded division is to be held, the bells to call in the members shall be sounded for not more than 30 minutes, except recorded divisions deferred to the conclusion of Oral Questions, when the bells shall be sounded for not more than 15 minutes;

(o) recorded divisions shall take place in the usual way for members participating in person or by electronic means through the House of Commons electronic voting application for all other members, provided that:

(i) electronic votes shall be cast from within Canada using the member's House-managed mobile device and the member's personal House of Commons account, and that each vote require visual identity validation,

(ii) the period allowed for voting electronically on a motion shall be 10 minutes, to begin after the Chair has read the motion to the House, and members voting electronically may change their vote until the electronic voting period has closed,

(iii) in the event a member casts their vote both in person and electronically, a vote cast in person take precedence,

(iv) any member unable to vote via the electronic voting system during the 10-minute period due to technical issues may connect to the virtual sitting to indicate to the Chair their voting intention by the House videoconferencing system,

(v) following any concern, identified by the electronic voting system, which is raised by a House officer of a recognized party regarding the visual identity of a member using the electronic voting system, the member in question shall respond immediately to confirm their vote, either in person or by the House videoconferencing system, failing which the vote shall not be recorded,

(vi) the whip of each recognized party have access to a tool to confirm the visual identity of each member voting by electronic means, and that the votes of members voting by electronic means be made available to the public during the period allowed for the vote,

(vii) the process for votes in committees of the whole take place in a manner similar to the process for votes during sittings of the House with the exception of the requirement to call in the members,

(viii) any question to be resolved by secret ballot be excluded from this order,

(ix) during the taking of a recorded division on a private members' business, when the sponsor of the item is the first to vote and present at the beginning of the vote, the member be called first, whether participating in person or remotely;

(p) during meetings of standing, standing joint, special, special joint, except the Special Joint Committee on the Declaration of Emergency, and legislative committees and the Liaison Committee, as well as their subcommittees, where applicable, members may participate either in person or by videoconference, and provided that priority use of House resources for meetings shall be established by an agreement of the whips and, for virtual or hybrid meetings, the following provisions shall apply:

(i) members who participate remotely shall be counted for the purpose of quorum,

(ii) except for those decided unanimously or on division, all questions shall be decided by a recorded vote,

(iii) when more than one motion is proposed for the election of a chair or a vice-chair of a committee, any motion received after the initial one shall be taken as a notice of motion and such motions shall be put to the committee seriatim until one is adopted,

(iv) public proceedings shall be made available to the public via the House of Commons website,

(v) in camera proceedings may be conducted in a manner that takes into account the potential risks to confidentiality inherent in meetings with remote participants,

(vi) notices of membership substitutions pursuant to Standing Order 114(2) and requests pursuant to Standing Order 106(4) may be filed with the clerk of each committee by email; and

(q) notwithstanding the order adopted on Wednesday, March 2, 2022, regarding the Special Joint Committee on the Declaration of Emergency, until the committee ceases to exist and where applicable,

Government Orders

(i) the committee shall hold meetings in person only should this be necessary to consider any matter referred to it pursuant to subsection 61(2) of the act,

(ii) members who participate remotely shall be counted for the purpose of quorum,

(iii) except for those decided unanimously or on division, all questions shall be decided by a recorded vote,

(iv) in camera proceedings may be conducted in a manner that takes into account the potential risks to confidentiality inherent in meetings with remote participants,

(v) when more than one motion is proposed for the election of the House vice-chairs, any motion received after the initial one shall be taken as a notice of motion and such motions shall be put to the committee seriatim until one is adopted;

that a message be sent to the Senate to acquaint Their Honours that this House has passed this order; and

that the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be instructed to undertake a study on hybrid proceedings and the aforementioned changes to the Standing Orders and the usual practice of the House.

He said: Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise on this motion and talk about the extension of hybrid provisions for one year and the opportunity for the procedure and House affairs committee members to study the issue of either the use or the non-use of those provisions as they deem through their process and their recommendations thereafter.

I will take us back for a moment to March 2020. As the whole business of the pandemic was unfolding, it was about a week before this House shut down when I had a conversation with the House administration at that time asking what the pandemic plan was and what we had on the books. Of course, those who wrote it had put something together, but it became apparent very quickly upon looking at it that the intersection of what was planned with what happened in real life meant that the plan, frankly, was not of much use.

We then began a process, and I want to thank members from all parties, reflecting back on those early days in March 2020, as we attempted to find a way for Canada's Parliament to continue to do its business and to make sure that, notwithstanding the fact that we had this incredible public health emergency that sent people to their homes, Canadians knew that the seat of their democracy continued to function, continued to get bills passed and continued to put supports out there for them.

Before I talk about some of those supports, I want to take a moment to thank the House administration and officials who worked with us to create these tools and innovations to allow our democracy to continue to function. In an incredibly short period of time, an ability was developed to participate and vote virtually. This eventually led to a voting app and other refinements that have enabled members, whether or not they are sick, whether or not they are unable to be at the House for medical or other reasons, to continue to participate in the proceedings of the House and to make sure they are not disenfranchised and their constituents continue to be represented.

Government Orders

Members would remember that Canadians and businesses were reeling in those early days of COVID, and some three million jobs were lost. There was a real state of folks not knowing where things were going to go. Small businesses were left unable to serve their customers and wondering what their future would be. It was specifically because of the provisions we put in place, which all parties worked on with the House administration, that we were able to still get those supports adopted and make historic support available to make sure that businesses and individuals did not fall through the cracks.

Now we see the economy roaring back, and 115% of jobs lost during the pandemic have come back, compared to below 100% for the United States. We see us being a world leader in economic growth, number two in the G7 and trending towards being number one next year. It is absolutely evident that the supports that were put in place to make sure that Canadians did not fall through the cracks were what got us there.

When we think of the bravery of people opening a small business, taking a chance and putting themselves out in the world, putting their shingle out and hoping to survive, there are a lot of things they have to prepare for, such as the possibility that their product may not be as popular as they had hoped, or the long hours that they, and the people they employ, will have to put in to try to make the business successful. Of course, it is not reasonable for folks to expect that a global pandemic will be the thing that shuts them down. It was, in fact, those hybrid provisions that enabled people to get that work done.

The pandemic continues, but before I talk about the continuing pandemic, I will take a moment to talk about all the things that we got done, and not just those historic supports.

As the pandemic came and went, as we thought it was over last November and we thought that things might be returning to a sense of normalcy but we got hit by omicron, the flexibility of Parliament meant that we were able to continue to get the job of the nation done. We can take a look at how much Parliament was able to accomplish from January to June: 14 bills, not including supply, were presented, and we introduced seven bills in the Senate on a range of important issues. Many of the bills that we are passing now or that have just passed through the House are going to the Senate, and it is our hope and expectation, particularly with the great work that was just done on Bill C-28, that the Senate will be able to get that done as well before it rises for the summer. This was all done using the hybrid provisions.

- (1910)

Let us take a look at some of those bills.

Bill C-19 is critical to grow our economy, foster clean technology, strengthen our health care system and make life more affordable for Canadians in areas such as housing and child care.

Bill C-18 would make sure that media and journalists in Canadian digital news receive fair compensation for their work in an incredibly challenged digital environment.

Bill C-11 would require online streaming services to contribute to the creation and availability of Canadian stories and music to better support Canadian artists.

Bill C-21 would protect Canadians from the dangers of firearms in our communities, making sure that we freeze the market on handguns, attack smuggling at the border and implement red flag provisions to address domestic violence.

Bill C-22 was brought forward to reduce poverty among persons with disabilities in Canada and is part of a broader strategy that has seen more than one million Canadians lifted out of poverty. That is particularly remarkable when we think that it was this government that set the first targets ever for poverty reduction. After we set those goals, we have been exceeding them every step of the way, and Bill C-22 is a big part of that strategy.

Bill C-28, which I talked about a minute ago, deals with the extreme intoxication defence. It is a great example of Parliament in a hybrid environment being able to work collaboratively to ensure that we close an important loophole to make sure that the extreme intoxication defence is not used when murder has been committed.

These are just some of the bills that we have been able to put forward, and we have been able to do so in a way that empowered all members of Parliament to be able to participate, whether they had COVID or not.

To give members a sense of the challenges, not only was all of this done using the hybrid system and during the middle of a pandemic, but it was done while dealing with obstruction. We saw all the times the Conservatives obstructed government legislation. In fact, 17 times over the past 14 weeks, the Conservatives used obstruction tactics, using concurrence motions and other tactics to block and obstruct, in many cases, legislation that was supported by three out of the four official parties here. They took the opportunity to obstruct, yet despite that, we have been able to make great progress.

The Conservatives support Bill C-14, yet we ended up spending a night because they were moving motions to hear their own speakers. At the MAID committee looking at medical assistance in dying, where there was incredibly sensitive testimony, witnesses were not able to testify because of the tactics and games that were happening here in this place. However, despite all that, in a hybrid environment we have been able to move forward.

Let us look at last week. Last week there were five members of the Liberal caucus who had COVID, and one of these people was the Prime Minister. I do not know how many members there were in other caucuses, but all were still able to participate in these proceedings. Every day, unfortunately, thousands of Canadians across the country continue to get COVID. Sadly, many of them are in hospitals and, even more tragically, many of them are dying. This pandemic is still very much a reality.

Government Orders

What we have seen over the last two years is that every time we try to start a parliamentary session, we spend weeks debating whether we should or should not continue using the hybrid system. Parliament deserves stability. People are still getting COVID. They have the right to be able to participate in this place, and as has been demonstrated by the incredible amount of work we have been able to get done during the pandemic, from historic supports in the deepest, darkest time of the pandemic to the more recent times dealing with a whole range of legislation that is absolutely critical to Canadians, these provisions allow us to continue to do the work of this nation in extraordinary times.

I do not think we should be in a position such that every time we start Parliament, we continue to have this debate. Canadians need predictability, as we do not know where this pandemic or public health circumstances are going. Canadians need predictability until the House of Commons, through a committee process, can evaluate the utility and usefulness of the provisions outside of a pandemic reality to see if they should be extended or used. We need to have a proper, thorough debate in that venue, hearing from witnesses, hearing from parliamentarians, taking a look at what was accomplished and at what could be done better or differently.

● (1915)

We are already seeing big improvements in everything, from the services that are being delivered to interpretation. I look forward to PROC's work to see whether or not these provisions have utility, but until then, this measure would give us the stability for PROC to do its report and for Parliament to continue to function in incredibly challenging times.

That is why I think it is only prudent to pass this measure now. It is so that Parliament will have the stability to do its work, so Canadians will know this work will not be interrupted, and so we can focus instead on the business of the nation.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate the history lesson from the government House leader. I know he has focused a lot on predictability, but let us look at what is happening in the here and now.

There is not one legislature in this country that is working under a hybrid system. Even the mother Parliament in Britain suspended its hybrid system last July and returned to an in-person system. There are other legislatures around the world that have returned to an in-person system.

The reality is that public health agencies, not just here in Ontario but in Quebec and all over the country, have limited the restrictions. There are no more mandates, for example. The government, just this week, announced that. We could revisit this in August and September and, with an agreement, return to a hybrid format if the need is there.

I do not understand why the government House leader will not accept that as the current reality of today.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, there is no obligation on the hon. House leader for the Conservatives or on his colleagues to use any of these provisions. They can show up to this place 100% of the time. When they have had COVID or been sick, they have used these provisions and voted through them. If they would rather

not vote or participate and not represent their constituents using these tools, that is an option they have.

On this side of the aisle, we do not find it acceptable for somebody who is sick to attend. As I said, we had five individuals just last week, as we are still in the middle of this pandemic, who had COVID, and despite that, they were able to continue to participate. They did not come in here and they did not spread it. I think that is responsible, and it allows us to continue to do our work. Rather than debating this for an entire summer, leading up to having to deal with it again in the fall, this would provide us with the stability and clarity we need.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. However, I am concerned about government accountability when we use the hybrid model.

It is clear, and studies have shown, that when we study important bills in committee, the informal aspect that allows us to truly engage with our colleagues to look for constructive ways to improve things is not there.

I wonder about how the hybrid approach affects accountability, especially in a context where there are a lot of worrisome signals about democracy. We have seen a government run by closure motions in recent weeks.

It is important to respect the democratic aspect, and this hybrid approach can sometimes make things a little more complicated, especially in committee. I would like to know what my colleague thinks about this.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, obviously, questions can be asked in committee both within and outside the hybrid system. Many people appeared in committee virtually, and we were able to ask them questions.

During the most difficult period of the pandemic for businesses and individuals, it was entirely possible for members to ask questions, participate in debates and exercise all their rights as members in virtual mode.

Generally speaking, most people now participate in person, but the hybrid system enables us to adapt to changing health situations while maintaining the flexibility to answer questions.

● (1920)

[*English*]

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, we heard some really interesting, to put it mildly, arguments from the Conservatives over the last number of days. I think what we have said very clearly is that virtual work is work and that we are still in the pandemic and expecting another wave, possibly in the early fall.

Government Orders

We know that a hybrid Parliament is a family-friendly Parliament. A hybrid Parliament is also a climate-smart Parliament in the era of climate change when we should be reducing our carbon footprint.

First of all, does the hon. member believe that the Conservatives need to get out of the time warp that they are in, and should Parliament not be a model workplace? Should we not be opening the doors to new and smarter and safer ways of doing work, meaning hybrid work?

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, I think what we demonstrated in this vast, enormous country, the second-largest country in the world, where we traverse enormous distances, is that in this global pandemic, a virtual environment allowed us to do our work despite those incredible challenges. There will be a separate process at the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs to look at its utility outside of the public health circumstance.

Inside the public health circumstance, when we take people from all ends of the country, put them in airplanes, put them in a small room and then send them back to their home communities, that is not a safe environment. That is not a good way for us to be operating and that is why, in a continuing pandemic, we need to have the flexibility to keep people safe.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to use myself as an example. I was one of the members who tested positive for COVID and was unable to participate in person, and this was just last week. My choice was between coming into the chamber knowing that I had tested positive for COVID or using the hybrid provisions to attend.

Because the hybrid format was there, I was able to be engaged in debates, at least on a few occasions. I was also able to vote. I think it sends a message to my constituents in terms of doing the right thing by not coming here and speaking and voting. In that way I can protect my colleagues and ultimately demonstrate leadership in the community.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, my friend and colleague raises a very important point. All members of Parliament take their responsibility to represent their communities as sacrosanct, as something that is deep within them. This would put members in a situation of having to choose whether to not represent their constituents, not show up, not participate and not vote, or come in and get everybody sick.

Remember, if we come in sick because we want to represent our constituents and be able to vote and be able to participate in a critical debate, we are going to make other people in the chamber sick, and then those sick people will go back to every corner of the country and make everybody else sick.

In talking about ending this in the middle of a pandemic, we are literally incentivizing members to come in sick so that they can represent their constituents and then act as super-spreaders across the country. That is not responsible.

I understand that there is a debate about how we can or cannot use these provisions outside of a pandemic circumstance, but since we continue to be in a pandemic right now, shutting off that option

and incentivizing members to come in sick is not the right approach.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Madam Speaker, the NDP and the Liberals seem to feel they know a lot more than a lot of the public health officials and any other parliamentarians around the country, and, as the hon. member from the Conservatives mentioned earlier, more than all other parliaments around the world.

What makes Canada so much more special that we can carve out this small niche for ourselves when the rest of the world is moving on?

• (1925)

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, I think I just explained what is different about the Canadian circumstance, and I do not think I could have been any clearer in my example.

When people are forced to make a choice between coming to work sick, representing their constituents, voting and participating in critical issues, or else staying home and not making people sick, the ramifications in a pandemic, I think, are exceptionally clear. This is particularly the case in a country as big and vast as this country. We are pulling people in from communities all over the second-largest country in the world and putting them into a small, confined space.

Eliminating the ability for them to work when they are sick and incentivizing them to come in when they are ill does not make sense. We continue to be in a pandemic.

This hybrid format makes sense. It would last for a year, and there is every opportunity for the procedure and house affairs committee to take a look at the utility or lack of utility outside of a public circumstance. We deserve to have that debate. It should take place, and I look forward to it.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is with mixed emotions that I stand here tonight to participate in this debate. The emotions are really a misunderstanding of why we are even debating this, and somewhat anger as well that we are actually using up valuable time in this place to debate a futuristic issue that somehow the government House leader is predicting to occur when everything else around the world, including 10 feet outside of this building, has returned to normal.

It does not make any sense to me that we are wasting this time tonight when there are other issues we could be discussing, including the affordability and inflation crisis going on right now. The inflation rate rose to 7.7% today, which is the highest level in 40 years, and we are not seeing any solutions from the government to deal with that.

In fact, earlier today I asked for a unanimous consent motion to deal with an emergency debate on the inflation and affordability crisis given the news of today. Given the fact that Canadians are struggling and suffering under the weight of these financial pressures, and the level of anxiety they are facing right now, I thought it would be prudent to use the time this evening to have a debate on inflation and affordability.

Government Orders

Right now, across this country there is a situation where even the most basic services the government can provide, passport services, are a fiasco. There are lineups right across the country. People are travelling in those small confined spaces, the airplanes that the government House leader just described as being a risk. They are waiting in line for passports. Some have trips coming up in a couple of days and are still waiting for their passports to be processed. In Montreal, we have seen lineups around the building. In North York, there are lineups around the building and down the street.

The most basic government services to be provided are under a complete weight of collapse right now because of the mismanagement of the government. Why are we not talking about that tonight?

One employee in my constituency office, Sarah, is solely dedicated to dealing with passport issues right now. One day last week, she was on the phone waiting for five and a half hours to get through on the MPs' passport line. She waited for five and a half hours. Once she got on to process seven passports to help constituents of mine, she had to be on the phone for another two and a half hours. That is eight hours of her day spent trying to service the people in my riding who were in desperate need of passports because they wanted to travel coming out of the COVID pandemic. This is the type of stuff that we should be discussing, not using valuable real estate or time in this place to talk about the complete collapse of basic services in this country.

The other thing we should be discussing tonight, rather than some futuristic plan of a hybrid Parliament the government House leader and the NDP House leader have cooked up, is the situation going on and the news coming out of Nova Scotia about political interference by the Prime Minister's Office and the public safety minister's office in an investigation into a mass murder that the RCMP on the ground suggested strongly would compromise or jeopardize the investigation. Those are the things we should be talking about.

That is why Conservatives, earlier today, asked for an emergency debate on those issues, and not a motion to return to hybrid Parliament when the rest of the country and the rest of the world is moving on. It just does not make any sense at all that we are in this position.

Earlier, when the government House leader was speaking, he gave a history lesson about when COVID started. I was in this place when COVID started. I believe the Speaker was, too. There was a lot of uncertainty at the time. None of us knew what was happening. We had heard about a virus that was coming. We saw it rage through China, and then it started to rage through Europe. At the time, and I think it was January 27, the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles called on the government to close the borders to stop this virus from coming into Canada. Shortly after that, we found out we had our first case.

• (1930)

These are the things that Conservatives were trying to do in the absence of any information or any knowledge of what was going on. There was a lot of fear being incited. Even at that time, because of the concern that we had and the request by the hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles to shut down the borders, I re-

member the government was referring to us as racists. Do members remember that? We were trying to protect Canadians at the time.

On March 13, we found out that the virus was really raging across the country. That is when the decision was made to shut down this place. It was shortly after the election in 2019. In fact, some of the members who were elected in 2019 had an opportunity to sit in this place for only three months before everything basically shut down. It shut down for a full month. I remember being in on those meetings with the leadership team under our then leader, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle. We were talking about the unknown: talking about the things that were going on, and how we were going to adapt to that.

The issue of hybrid Parliament came up and a return to Parliament, because the nation's business needed to continue. There were serious issues, such as health issues, procurement issues and all of the things that Canadians were facing. Businesses were shutting down, individuals were being kept away from their places of employment, and Parliament had to function. We came up with a system. I give full credit to the House administration staff for the work they did in making sure that our parliamentary democracy was able to function at that time.

There was very limited opportunity for members of Parliament to participate. We had talked about a minimum number being able to be in this chamber, as the development of Zoom came up. None of us had even heard of Zoom at the time, then all of a sudden Zoom became a permanent fixture in our lives to deal with this pandemic. House administration staff started working on that. We started working on a voting app system. At the height of the pandemic, we could rationalize it: we could justify it to ensure that members of this place would be able to participate in the democracy and represent their constituents.

At that time, I sat through the Procedures and House Affairs Committee. We focused on hybrid Parliament. We were focusing on the system. I remember that we were doing it on Zoom at the time. Several concerns came up, not the least of which was the fact that we did not want this to be a permanent-type system for Parliament. I remember that Conservatives and I argued at the time that there had to be some sort of sunset clause: if we got to a certain point, we would not continue with a hybrid Parliament.

There was always the opportunity for House leaders, the leadership team and leaders themselves, to continue with this hybrid system, understanding that there were still things happening and sub-variants that were coming in. I recall January 2021 was one of the most traumatizing times that I have dealt with as a public official, and I have been doing this as a city councillor and as a member of Parliament now for 16 years. It was when we dealt with the situation that was going on at Roberta Place: Over 100 seniors died as a result of the delta variant. We were still fighting for vaccines at that time. In fact, we were just starting to get the vaccines.

Government Orders

There were still a lot of things going on back then that required us to be diligent in the safety measures that were being put into place, not the least of which was hybrid Parliament and the voting app. We continued along that line. We continued in that vein.

As we were going through this stuff and dealing with this at PROC, the concern was always the fact that there had to be a time limit. We heard from constitutional experts. We heard from our law clerks. We heard from former speakers. Speaker Milliken appeared before the committee to talk about the peril of continuing through hybrid Parliament and what it would mean to our democratic institution of Parliament, and not least what it would do to other institutions across the country.

● (1935)

The Constitution was clear, and the evidence was clear as it was presented to us at PROC, in that this is the seat of Parliament. This is the seat of power here in Ottawa. It is in the Constitution. It is not through a Zoom call. It is not through a computer camera. It is here in Ottawa, so the warnings that were placed upon us back then were to make sure that this was not going to be permanent. We talked about changes to the Standing Orders, and there were recommendations made through PROC not to have changes to the Standing Orders and not to move to a permanent measure.

As the situation evolved, we continued to evolve with it. We continued to carry on with hybrid Parliament. We continued, and we enhanced the voting app so that people could participate not just at the height of the pandemic, but at the downside of the pandemic.

Here we are today. Everything is opening up: everything except Parliament. Public health agencies across the country, both provincially and federally, have all lifted their mandates. They have lifted their vaccination mandates and their mask mandates. Just this past week, the federal government announced that there were no more vaccine mandates. The world is moving on from COVID. The only two people who are not moving on from COVID are the government House leader and the House leader of the NDP.

It is not just public health agencies. At legislatures around the world and legislatures across the country, both provincially and territorially, no one is using a hybrid system at this point: not even the mother Parliament in England, which stopped using it last July. There is in-person voting and in-person Parliament for members of Parliament. Canada would be an outlier in this. We would be an outlier if the government gets its way, and there is no reason to believe that it will not because of its NDP partners. When we return in September, we are going to be virtual again.

That has come with some significant problems. We have seen it just in the past week. Last night, for example, we saw a server break down and we saw the inability of members to participate in this place. They could not log on. Last week, during a private member's bill, we had a crash of the voting app. It took a little while to accumulate the numbers. Can members imagine if that had been in the middle of a confidence vote? If it had been in the middle of a budget or an estimate vote or even a throne speech, can they imagine the chaos that would have ensued as a result? It would have been unbelievable.

We have also seen, obviously, some embarrassing things over Zoom in the past couple of years. We have seen members who have been caught on camera and embarrassed at great personal consequence. It was a great personal embarrassment not just for them, but for their families as well. It does come with consequences.

It is around here. I have had the privilege, since I became the opposition House leader, to sit on the Board of Internal Economy. I have heard testimony, and I have received and read reports, of the impact that this is having on our interpretation bureau. We have seen a ninefold increase in workplace injuries related to the interpretation bureau, and it is directly attributed to a hybrid Parliament. There are sound issues. We have heard tinnitus issues. It is unbelievable to me that we would continue to put our world-class interpreters in a position where they could sustain further injury as a result of hybrid Parliament.

I have asked the question of what would resolve the workplace injuries with our interpreters. In the reports and in the testimony, the answer is always the same: We have to get back to normal. We have to get back to a situation where interpreters are not wearing headsets, and the sound injury problem is not impacting them to a point like it would not when they were here in person. It is the same thing with committee work, as well.

● (1940)

Notwithstanding all of the public health measures that have been lifted and the public health guidance that has been going on, why are we not thinking about the people who work here? Why are we not thinking about the translation bureau? There is a diminishing pool of interpreters. That is going on right now, and I would suggest that given the importance of bilingualism in this place and the importance of recognizing the French language, we run a real risk of not having the same quality of bilingualism to allow this place to function properly. It is a real challenge with the diminishing pool of interpreters, and it is a problem that can easily be addressed.

We have heard what the solution is. The solution is to return to normal. The interpreters, who are working in the back and who work at committees, are much less likely to be injured if we are here. This is a party that speaks about and has a motive to look after workers, and the NDP at a minimum should be thinking about this, yet these are not even considerations in the decision to continue with hybrid Parliament. They should be, and I cannot overstate how serious this problem is for the people who work here. It is a serious issue.

I have talked about the public health issues. I have also talked about the guidance that has come out of public health agencies. I can walk literally 10 feet out of here and not have the same level of restriction I have within our symbol of democracy. People are not wearing masks and there is no vaccine requirement anymore. Even throughout the course of COVID, there was theatre on the government side. There is video evidence of members sitting in this place who are not wearing their masks, and then all of a sudden the camera gets on them and we can see them putting their masks on.

Despite or notwithstanding the rule in this place that people wear masks, which was determined by the Board of Internal Economy, we have been to receptions recently in the Sir John A. Macdonald Building with 200 or 300 people and nobody was wearing a mask. Everybody was together, talking and socializing. It is theatre. It is not following any evidence and it is not following any science. I have not been given any evidence or science on why we should continue with a hybrid system, other than anecdotal evidence by the government House leader and the NDP House leader.

I often joke about this, but not really, because I am mocking them a bit: They are not doctors but they act like doctors. I have been in situations where I have been talking to the government House leader and the NDP House leader, and they have said that somehow there is some new variant coming from the southern hemisphere in the fall. This is part of their rationale for why we have to continue with this sham hybrid system.

I have asked where the evidence and science are. The last time I checked, the government House leader and the NDP House leader are not world-renowned immunologists, epidemiologists or virologists. Where are they getting this advice? The chief medical officers of health are not talking about further restrictions come the fall. I have not heard any evidence as to why this place needs to continue in a hybrid setting this fall, other than this anecdotal information I am receiving from the government House leader and the NDP House leader.

If there is a reason for us to go back to hybrid, they can show us and provide the evidence as to why. There is no evidence, and that is why it does not make any sense, especially when the world is moving on and no other legislatures around the world are doing what we are doing.

• (1945)

On May 31, I sent a letter to the government House leader, and I circulated it to all the other House leaders and provided a copy to the Speaker. In it, with an understanding that this was the direction the government House leader and the NDP House leader had cooked up, I offered what I thought were very reasonable and practical solutions to not continue with hybrid Parliament in September.

If the rest of the world is returning to normal, businesses are returning to normal and people are going back to work, the signal this Parliament should be sending to people is exactly the reality that is happening outside of this place. People are going back to work. Unvaccinated people are going back to work. We are getting to a point where this is endemic and people are starting to live with this situation. They are starting to take responsibility for protecting themselves.

I wrote a letter to the government House leader, and I thought there were some very reasonable and practical solutions in it. This is what I proposed, and I am putting it on the record for those who did not see it so they can see how reasonable it was:

Therefore, I propose the following arrangements be put in place to succeed the current ones:

Members shall participate in debates or other proceedings in the House of Commons in person, in the House Chamber.

Members shall participate in House committees in person, in committee rooms.

Government Orders

The pre-pandemic practice for witness appearances would be resumed whereby most witnesses will appear in-person while a limited number of witnesses located at some distance from Ottawa could appear by videoconferencing.

That is exactly what we were doing before we started with the hybrid system. I remember sitting at committee with witnesses coming in from Australia. That capability existed and there is no reason we cannot get back to it.

I also said, “Ministers and senior officials would always be expected to appear in person.” That speaks to another issue that I think has gone on as a result of hybrid Parliament, and probably conveniently for the government. We have seen many ministers not show up in this place. I know the government House leader is proposing in this motion that as many ministers as possible show up in the House. Unfortunately, I cannot take him at his word on that.

We have seen, over the course of the last several months, a limited number of ministers in this place. We have seen many of them appear on Zoom. It speaks to an issue of accountability. Ministers, when they are here, are in the hot seat, especially in question period. Sometimes they are prepared and sometimes they are not. However, there have been times when I am sure they have been surrounded by ministerial staff on Zoom and are being handed notes as questions come in. We are not naive. We know that is happening, and when members are here in person, they are far more accountable. Not only that, but the media has an opportunity to question ministers as they walk through scrums, so they are not chasing them through Zoom or sending requests to their offices.

This does speak to an issue of accountability and transparency for a government that, in 2015, ran on the premise that it was going to be accountable and transparent by default. Ministers and seniors officials should always be expected to appear in person.

The other suggestion we made is “No Member of the House of Commons will be denied access to the sittings of the House and the meetings of its committees.” This obviously happened at a time when the Conservatives were proposing that all members be allowed to participate in the House, just as the rest of the country was moving on and the provinces and territories were removing not just their vaccine mandates, but their mask mandates. There were several occasions when the Conservatives tried, through opposition day motions and other motions, to get the government to try to come to its senses on these things. However, it kept holding on and kept controlling the lives of Canadians and their ability to return to some sense of normalcy. That is what this particular request represented.

Privilege

There was another thing we suggested. I know that the government House leader, when he was up here, talked about disenfranchisement, or the inability of members of Parliament to participate actively in this place. He said that somehow they could not do it without the hybrid system or the voting app.

● (1950)

Going back to the PROC study, this is precisely one of the main concerns we brought up: Members could use this system, if there was no sunset clause or it was made permanent, to perpetually electioneer in their ridings. They could use this system as an excuse, especially if they are in close or tight ridings. Being in their ridings and engaged in their ridings could mean the difference between electoral success or not. To use the voting app and hybrid model as an excuse to perpetually electioneer in their ridings to effectively build their brand was always a concern. It was a concern that I brought up at the procedure and House affairs committee regarding how the system could be used.

If a member becomes sick, is facing an illness or is dealing with a family matter, there are existing rules and standing orders within our procedures and rule books that allow members to pair. They have that ability. We have no problem with setting up pairing for travelling. It means that one vote casts out the other when, for example, a member is sick and is unable to come to Ottawa.

I am not unempathetic and unsympathetic to the plight of those who are sick. I can think of Arnold Chan and what he went through, a Liberal member who developed cancer and unfortunately passed away. I saw him coming into the House at the height of his illness and doing his job to represent his constituents. In that situation, Mr. Chan could have paired with a Conservative member. It is a long-standing practice. It is in the Standing Orders. It is a rule of this place, and we use it when ministers travel, for example.

Why can we not use that type of system to deal with a situation where somebody is dealing with illness, dealing with an injury or dealing with family situations, whether it is a sick family member or even a newborn child? There are things that can be done under the existing Standing Orders.

We therefore proposed this: “Our age-old pairing practices...should be vigorously embraced to support Members with compassionate circumstances to ensure they, and their parties, are not disadvantaged by an unavoidable absence from the House.” We were doing it pre-pandemic. There is no reason why we cannot do it now—

* * *

[*Translation*]

PRIVILEGE

INTERRUPTION TO PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

[*English*]

I am sorry that I have to interrupt another Conservative filibuster. I would love to rebut the member for Barrie—Innisfil's comments, but of course, he is stopping and blocking the entire House so that

nobody has a right of reply, which is tragic. I will say that the member for Barrie—Innisfil is a very hard-working member of Parliament.

I am rising to add some comments regarding the alleged matter of privilege that was raised earlier today by the member for Calgary Centre regarding the events of yesterday evening.

As members know, yesterday evening a technical interruption prevented some members from participating in House proceedings remotely. My colleagues and I are fierce defenders of the rights of parliamentarians to participate in proceedings remotely, so much so that we actually want to see hybrid proceedings extended as a consequence of the ongoing pandemic and as a useful tool for modern parliamentarians. Ultimately, I do not agree that this is a matter of privilege.

As the government House leader indicated, the events were completely external to anything that is within the control of the House; namely, it was a technological matter. As noted by the government House leader, hybrid proceedings have worked in 99.9% of instances. I certainly hope the Conservatives are not using the matter of privilege, which is a very important proceeding that ought not to be abused, to further a political point.

● (1955)

[*Translation*]

Unfortunately, as we know, this evening, we do not have the right to reply to the comments of the House leader of the official opposition.

[*English*]

I do somewhat disagree with the government House leader in that I believe that matters external to the control of the House can sometimes infringe on the privileges of a member, but if there were a power outage or a sewer malfunction, I do not believe that these would constitute breaches of privilege. I believe a technological hiccup is akin to these, and not a matter that the House needs to weigh in on or study. This is my submission.

It was not a matter of privilege, because when the matter was brought to the attention of Speaker and the various House leaders, the appropriate action was taken. The Speaker suspended the House, technicians attempted to address the issue, and when it became apparent that this would not be resolved in a timely way, the House adjourned. There was no breach of privilege, as no members were denied the opportunity to participate because no proceedings took place.

Imagine the catch-22 we would be caught in, if due to an inability to participate remotely in a request that the House adjourn, the House were forced to continue sitting and debating something, all the while excluding those who could not log in. That would be preposterous.

I do want to take a moment to thank the Speaker and all the House leaders for the good will that was shown last night when the matter was first raised in suspending and ultimately adjourning. I believe that was the right and appropriate thing to do. I was glad to see all parties take that approach co-operatively. It is unfortunate that that good will from last night is not extending to today, and the Conservatives are not allowing other parties to speak to the motion that is before the House. They are basically shutting down and refusing members of all other parties except themselves the right to speak on behalf of our constituents.

To conclude, I do want to raise one minor complaint, which is that members were not provided further information about the technological glitches of last night until 2:00 p.m. today, despite the Speaker's office providing details to the media. In the future, I believe it would be more appropriate for members to hear directly from the Speaker rather than having to read details in the news.

We will now return to the Conservatives' monopolization of House time.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I will take the hon. member's comments in deliberation, and the Speaker will return to the House with a ruling.

The hon. House leader of the official opposition.

* * *

ORDER RESPECTING THE BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE AND ITS COMMITTEES

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the NDP House leader for his version of Liberal karaoke. That was very nice, and I appreciate his interjection.

I will continue with what we talked about as far as the pairing situation, which is an option. Since, and well before, Confederation, politicians have contracted serious illnesses, suffered critical injuries, welcomed new children into their families and said tearful farewells to loved ones, among other significant life events. In short, life happens to members of Parliament, just like it does to all other Canadians.

For the first 153 years of Confederation, we ably managed to square our personal circumstances with our professional lives, even if it might not always have been ideal. As unprecedented as some aspects of the pandemic were, the demands on us to balance our personal and parliamentary responsibilities are not, and we can easily revert to the tried and true practices that we know work.

Again, on the issue of pairing within the standing rules and Standing Orders, while pairing has been largely based on a series of customs and practices, with only a tangential appearance in our rules via Standing Order 44.1, we would be open to considering proposals to strengthen these arrangements, to render them more

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transparent or to empower further individual members. If there were ideas on this front, I would have been happy to entertain them. Otherwise, I suspect that this will come up in the procedure and House affairs committee, as it is charged with studying and issue, which I know the Liberals and the NDP want, and that is a more permanent movement toward a hybrid Parliament.

Speaking personally, I got elected to Parliament with an understanding of what that responsibility was, and it is a great responsibility, as we know, to represent, in my case, the residents of Barrie—Innisfil.

I also understood, and my family understood, that there was a requirement for me to come to Ottawa. Being elected in 2015, and with the pandemic happening in 2020, it was common practice for me, and all of my colleagues, all of us in the House, to show up in the seat of Parliament. There is the constitutional requirement for us to be here in Ottawa.

As difficult as that was, that was a choice I made. It is a choice that all of us make. Notwithstanding some of those family pressures that I highlighted or outlined and some of the demands that go with this job, it is an incredible privilege to be able to sit in this place, to be able to come to Ottawa and represent my constituents, not just to engage in debate, not just to engage in the committee work that we do and interact with all of our colleagues on all sides of the aisle, but to actually sit in this seat and be able to vote and to stand up and be counted in person. Those were the expectations that I had when I was to become a member of Parliament and those expectations continue today.

As I said earlier, one of the issues that came up in the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs was the concern that there would be perpetual electioneering in those close ridings.

I say this with great respect, that if it is one's intent to be elected as a member of Parliament, the reasonable expectation of that intent is to come here to Ottawa. If a person is not willing to do that, if they want to stay in their community to continue to electioneer, perhaps the choice that they should make is to run for mayor, council or school board trustee if they are concerned at all with any imbalance in their lives because, as we know, this is a difficult job and a difficult thing to do, to be away from our family, in some cases, 29 or 31 weeks a year.

It is hard. It is a choice we all make because we want to be here to do the best for the people that we represent and the people in this country.

It is a vast country. It is a transcontinental country, from coast to coast to coast. People get elected to be representatives in our House of Commons and the expectation was, is, and should always be that this is the place that they take their seats. Members can call me a traditionalist. Members can call me a Conservative, as long as they call me someone who believes in our institutions, who believes in the institution of Parliament and who believes in the institution of our democracy.

Government Orders

● (2000)

The challenge I have with everything that has been going on in the last little while is that we have really seen a decline in our democracy. When government ministers are not held to the same account and transparency as they typically are by being here, and not just by us as an opposition but also by the media, it poses challenges.

There is no greater evidence of that than what we have seen over the last couple of months, particularly when we were going through the WE scandal, which was happening a year and a half or two years ago. All of that was happening on Zoom, and there were technological challenges going on with that. It was difficult. It was not the same dynamic as in-person committee meetings or the same fiery exchanges we would see, which is all a healthy part of our democracy.

We saw it recently again with Bill C-11. I am not even sure how many times the chair of the committee has been in Ottawa, but she was chairing a committee virtually on a substantive piece of legislation such as Bill C-11, which the government rammed through. We saw how difficult it was to deal with the amendments going through, and the chair was on Zoom. Anybody who was watching those exchanges in the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage could see just how dysfunctional this system has become, especially when people are not present.

Some of the other things we talked about, as I said, is that we were open-minded to meeting and supporting the pairing needs of all colleagues in this House. The current hybrid system, with minor modifications, could be reactivated in the event of a serious reversal of the current trajectory of public health guidance concerning COVID-19, upon the agreement of recognized parties and House leaders, for a period of time they agree on.

That simply means that instead of precluding some southern hemisphere variant I have heard about from the two doctor House leaders in this place, why could we not revisit this in August? Why could we not come back in September and look at the situation to see if there was a need to flip to a hybrid Parliament? We have learned our lessons over the past couple of years, and that should be an easy thing to do, so why could we not do that in August or September?

Instead, as I said at outset, here we are in the last couple of days of this session of Parliament before our summer break, and we are dealing with and precluding something none of us can predict. In fact, we can in a way because the world has moved on at this point. Public health measures have been eliminated, but not in this place. There is no reason we cannot come back in August and September to revisit this situation.

I did speak to the government House leader and gave him my word, because I will still be House leader at that point, that if there was a need at that point to flip the switch on a hybrid Parliament and get back to the virtual voting app, we would be open to it. I am not unreasonable. I can read the room. We would be open and amenable to doing that.

Some of the other things we were focused on in my May 31 letter to the other government House leaders is that the arrangements

we were talking about could take effect, as I said, after the current arrangements expire, which is happening tomorrow and hence the rush for this, and be in place for a year. The House would be instructed to acquire an adequate supply of N95 face masks to allay the concerns some of our colleagues may have going forward.

This is a suggestion I made. There is no masking requirement outside of this place. I gave the example of members of Parliament, including Liberal members and NDP members, at receptions not wearing masks when they are required to, and even on the parliamentary precinct, so this theatre needs to end.

We are at a point right now where if an individual requires or wants to wear a mask, they should have the option of doing that. Those who choose not to wear a mask, just like the rest of the world and the rest of Canada is going through right now, maybe we can supply them with a higher quality mask like an N95 just to allay their fears and make them feel a little more comfortable. It should be the right of an individual, if they choose, to wear a mask. For those who do not want to wear a mask, they should not have to wear a mask. That was in the proposal.

● (2005)

The procedure and House affairs committee would be instructed to study these arrangements with a view of producing a report next May, ahead of the scheduled expiry of these proposed arrangements.

We believe in the work of committees. We believe in the ability of the procedure and House affairs committee to look at this and to revisit the issue, as we did a couple of years ago, but in anything the committee does, any work it engages in, it should never be under the guise or direction of moving to a more permanent system of hybrid. We should not be doing that. We need to be here in Ottawa.

The tide is turning on this. Just this past week, when the issue of Motion No. 19 came up and the government indicated, with the help of its NDP partners, that it wanted to move to a year's prolongation of the hybrid system, we were starting to see pundits and people who watch this place really start to turn on this and ask why we are not getting back to normal, why we are not getting back to a level of accountability and transparency that this place is designed and structured to do, when everybody else is returning to normal. We have seen editorials that have occurred. Here are some of the comments we have seen in these editorials:

That's all well and good, but the government has not yet properly addressed the toll the hybrid system is taking on the support staff who make it possible for Parliamentarians to work remotely, especially the interpreters—a limited workforce without whom parliamentary work cannot function.

I addressed that earlier, and I think that we have to be empathetic to the plight of our interpreters and the interpretation bureau. It is becoming a real problem, one that is going to manifest itself if we continue down the path we are on with this hybrid system.

Just the other day, Campbell Clark of *The Globe and Mail* wrote about this. His editorial piece starts with this:

Another year of hybrid Parliament? No.

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If the Liberal government wants to extend this semi-artificial version of the people's house, it can come back to the House of Commons in September and ask for a month. If it absolutely feels another 30 days is needed, it can ask MPs to vote again.

That goes back to the suggestion I made earlier. Why are we dealing with this now? There are so many important issues in this country that we have to deal with, such as affordability, the inflation crisis that is going on, and the fiasco going on with the government's ability to provide the most basic services to Canadians, and of course over the last couple of days we heard about Nova Scotia and political interference. Why we are dealing with this now and not in September is beyond me. This is what causes me great anxiety.

The Toronto Star talked about the decline in our democracy and how we need to get back to some sense of normalcy. That is really the theme of what I am talking about tonight, this decline in our democracy and the fact that the hybrid system is proving itself to be an old and tired system. Yes, it was needed at the height of COVID, but we need to get back to some sense of normalcy. That is what I expect.

One of the other things that we found over the course of the last couple of years was that when Canadians were not allowed to travel, when there were mandates that restricted them from boarding airplanes, the Prime Minister had no problem travelling all over the world. It was hypocritical that he could just get on his government jet and travel anywhere he wanted when Canadians were restricted by the government's policies. We have seen this over the course of the last several years. I gave the example of the chair of the heritage committee, who was sitting in her apartment. I do not know whether she has even been to Ottawa once. She may have, and I have not checked, but certainly not during the course of dealing with this substantive bill. She was sitting there while the committee was doing its work here. It created chaos within the committee. That did not deter the Prime Minister from travelling all over the world when Canadians could not.

● (2010)

I will give members an example of how much the Prime Minister has travelled, just in 2022. On March 4, he went to Toronto. On March 6-11, he went to the U.K., Latvia, Germany and Poland. On March 16-17, he was in Alliston, central Ontario. On March 23-25, he went to Belgium. On March 27-30, he went to Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver and Williams Lake. On April 8, he went to Hamilton. On April 11-18, he went to Victoria, Edmonton, Laval, and Whistler. He flew from Edmonton to Laval for a morning of promoting the budget on April 13, before flying to Whistler that afternoon to start his vacation. On April 19, he went to Dalhousie, New Brunswick; April 20, Waterloo; April 22, Winnipeg; April 29, Montreal and Toronto. That is half of the list. Here comes the second half: May 2, Windsor; May 3, Montreal; May 6, GTA and Hamilton; May 8-9, Ukraine and Poland; May 17, St. John's, Newfoundland; May 20, Sept-Îles, Quebec; May 23-25, Kamloops, Vancouver, and Saskatoon; May 27-29, Nova Scotia; June 2, Siksika, Alberta; June 5, London, Ontario; June 7-11, Colorado Springs and Los Angeles; and today, the Prime Minister left for Rwanda.

Now, the Prime Minister can fly all over the place. He can go to places where arguably the virus is still active, but parliamentarians cannot come to this place. It just does not connect.

I know that the Prime Minister has a job to do, and I know that he represents Canada around the world, but he can fly to places that do not have the same vaccination status that we do in this country, and put himself at risk. He had COVID last week, and he has had COVID twice in the last couple of months. If he can put himself at risk by doing that, then there is no reason, given the safety measures that are in this place, the option to wear a mask if members choose to and the safety that is in aircraft across this country, why members of Parliament cannot be here, unless, of course, they do not want to be here, unless they want to be in their ridings to perpetually electioneer if they are in a close riding so that they can do everything they can to win the next election, or unless they want to hide behind the virtual Parliament and the voting app. It does not make any sense.

I know there are members who are flying across the country and perhaps not coming here, but we can check. There is public disclosure, and we know where people can go. People are flying to other parts of the country, but they are not coming here. Why? This is their job. This is what they were elected to do.

I am going to make a suggestion, and I may bring it up at the BOIE committee, for members who want to be here on a part-time basis and who do not want to be in Parliament. There are many situations where apartments around this precinct are being paid for, in some cases \$2,500 a month, and not being used. Why are taxpayers expected to pay for those apartments if members do want to be here? I think it is a fair question. Maybe there are other expenses that are being put in, and we can certainly look at that. However, if members do not want to be here, in their proper seats, then why are taxpayers subsidizing their apartments here, which are sitting empty? I think that is a fair question to ask.

As I said, the tide is turning. I was hoping, by sending that letter on May 31, that we would actually engage in and initiate some consensus. I was really hoping that the government House leader and his partner in the NDP would actually see the sense of what we were proposing. The unfortunate reality is that they did not, and we are in the position that we are in right now, where we are dealing with Motion No. 19 and the government is going to propose closure on this motion. We are effectively going to have a few hours to debate it. I know that it disrupts the plans of NDP members to discuss this, because what they want to talk about, as is their common theme, is the Conservatives obstructing things.

● (2015)

The reality is that the Conservatives are doing their job. They are actually fulfilling their constitutional obligation, as is the Bloc Québécois, to hold the government to account. We were elected in this place in a minority government. The government was sent here with less than a majority, and it was not until the coalition agreement with its partners in the NDP that it actually formed a majority.

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I can tell members that I went through the election and I was certain, at the time, that all the Prime Minister wanted was two things. He thought people were going to throw rose petals for the way he handled COVID and the billions of dollars that flowed through the treasury, which we are now paying for with inflation. He thought people were going to throw rose petals at his feet for the way he handled that, and he wanted a majority government, but he did not get it. The reason he wanted a majority government is that he knows, and we knew at that time, that there was a convergence of factors that was happening.

One cannot print that much money and inject that much liquidity into the system and expect that there would not be an impact on inflation and that it would not increase inflation. When we have more money chasing goods, the resulting effect of that is what we are seeing today, what was announced today, 7.7% inflation, and it is only going to get worse.

We are seeing that interest rates have gone up almost a point in the last month. The expectation is that on July 13, in order to fight inflation, the Bank of Canada is going to increase interest rates by another three-quarters of a point. We can think about the impact that is going to have on the lines of credit that people have. We can think about the impact that would have on variable-rate mortgages. If we have an affordability challenge now and Canadians are anxious and angry about their situation, it is only going to get worse as long as the Liberals continue to pour gas on a raging inflation fire.

We were predicting this a year and a half ago. It is not that we did not want to support them, because we did support many of the programs the government was proposing. The challenge was that there really was a lot of money going out and it was not targeted into those areas of the economy where it needed to be in order to support the economy. The Liberals basically let money rain. They were printing money like crazy, and we predicted a couple of years ago that this would happen.

Now, because of these converging factors, all of them, the economy, interest rates and the inflationary pressures that are going on right now, we are in a situation where Canadians are hurting, and I said this the other day. We had better start listening to what they say. I know I am listening to my constituents, but we all need to do a better job of listening and understanding where that anger and anxiety are coming from, because they are coming from fear. People are afraid right now, because debt levels are so high and interest rates are going up, and that is causing significant challenges.

We were talking about this a couple of years ago, and I remember my mom, when we were together two or three weeks ago, reminding me of something I said two years ago. She was upset about some of the government policies that were going on, and I said that until and unless it starts affecting people in their pocketbooks, people will not be concerned about what the government is doing. Now, we are at that point and people are genuinely concerned, because it is impacting them in their pocketbooks.

Many of us were projecting this, including some of our finance critics, our industry critics and others. They were standing up, and I was standing up, saying this is a disaster waiting to happen. What it comes down to is this: People of integrity expect to be believed, and when they are not, time will prove them right. Unfortunately,

right now, with all that is going on, time is proving us right about the things we were predicting two years ago.

I really worry for my constituents. I worry for Canadians in general, because despite the lollipops, gumdrops, rainbows and unicorns the government is projecting right now, I do not think that reflects the reality. I know it does not reflect the reality of what is happening on the ground and the anxiety people are feeling, especially those who overleveraged in an inflation-induced real estate market.

● (2020)

I think it was CMHC that recently said that 52% of Canadians have variable rate mortgages. Just think of how susceptible they are to these increases in interest rates, and the impact that these are going to have on their household budgets and their ability to pay not just for housing, but also for the costs and inflationary pressures that are being borne right across the economy by the supply side because of the price of gas.

Gas is \$2.09 a litre. For people in my riding of Barrie—Innisfil who have to go to Mississauga, Markham, Vaughan or other communities around the GTA, and who are doing that five days a week, they are putting \$115 or \$120 in their little cars. Business owners and construction workers, for example, are putting \$245 or \$250 worth of gas in their trucks and getting three or four days out of that. They are not even getting three or four days out of that when they are driving to Mississauga or Markham every day. That adds up and eats into the household budgets.

Not least, we need to be concerned about our seniors: those on fixed incomes and those who are seeing, because of the stock market right now and as a result of what is going on in the economy, their investments start to diminish. They are watching that closely. It is creating even greater fear and even greater anxiety for them.

When we sit here and talk about a hybrid Parliament and try to project or predict something that is going to happen in September, I am not sure why we are not dealing with those particular issues that are of grave importance to Canadians. We are dealing with this, when Canadians are moving on. When Canadians, health experts, legislatures around the world and legislatures in Canada have all moved on, we are sitting here debating something that we should not be debating.

There is another thing that I would say in terms of the tide turning, and it kind of gives me a chuckle. Dale Smith sits up here almost daily in Question Period. I do not know if he has missed any, quite frankly. We have been on the opposite sides of issues. I have a lot of respect for the work that Mr. Smith does. He kind of leans or works toward the government on a lot of issues. Even he, in a series of tweets over the past couple of days, has said that the acoustic injuries and possibilities of permanent hearing loss are well documented, and that this is taking an unconscionable toll on the interpretation staff.

In another tweet on June 20, he said, “Imagine telling the interpreters, ‘Sorry, but you have to face the possibility of permanent hearing loss, but we can’t,’” here he uses a slight expletive, “‘ourselves to take reasonable COVID precautions in order for us to do our jobs’, which is unacceptable”.

There were a few more tweets that he put out there.

Like me, he is a traditionalist. He believes that we are near the end of the pandemic, and that we have to return to some sense of normalcy. We actually have to signal to Canadians that this beautiful place is back to normal, and that all is right in the land. That is not to say that we do not have to be cautious or we do not have to remain diligent as to what could happen. I do not disagree that there may be some other things that we may be facing, but that does not mean that at this current moment we move into what I predict would become a permanent solution of this hybrid Parliament.

We do not move in that direction at this point. We could certainly come back in August or September to deal with it at that time. As I said earlier, we have seen a lot of hypocrisy and a lot of theatre by the government on this issue. I am not diminishing, in any way, the toll that this has taken. I had two friends who died directly as a result of COVID, but we are certainly past the point of where we were not just in March 2020, but at the height of some of the new variants.

• (2025)

We have a 95% vaccination rate in this country, and that is a credit to Canadians who decided to take the vaccine. I had never injected myself with anything. I was a firefighter. I never took a flu shot. I just did not feel comfortable doing that, but I did take a vaccine. I have actually taken three shots right now, and I am not ashamed to admit that. I did that because I know how concerned my mom and dad were. I wanted to make sure that I protected myself, first and foremost, but it was also to protect them as well. I made that determination for myself.

There were many Canadians who felt the imposition of a mandate or the suggestion that they should be vaccinated. Even friends of mine who took the vaccine and had adverse reactions to the vaccine were told by their doctors that they should not get another shot. In one case, someone spent three days in hospital because of a severe allergic reaction to her first dose. Her medical doctor suggested that she not get another dose because of this allergic reaction. Despite the effort of trying to get a vaccination, that effectively made her a prisoner in her own country. I was down in Florida in March with her husband and she could not come.

• (2030)

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am rising on a point of order.

I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to order made on Monday, May 2, the motion is deemed adopted.

(Motion agreed to)

Government Orders

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. I just want to thank the government House leader for censoring me in my debate on an important issue to Canadians.

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

NOTICE OF CLOSURE MOTION

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed the one-hour speech by the member. We are ready to move to this.

With respect to consideration of Government Business No. 19, I wish to give notice that at the next sitting of the House a minister of the Crown shall move, pursuant to Standing Order 57, that debate be not further adjourned.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.) moved that Bill C-28, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (self-induced extreme intoxication), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to share my time with the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Does the hon. minister have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Indeed. Proceed, please.

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-28. This bill responds to the Supreme Court decisions in Brown and Sullivan and Chan, which address rare yet serious situations in which a person harms someone else while in a state of self-induced extreme intoxication.

I would like to thank, first of all, the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth. As well, I thank my critics, including the member for Fundy Royal, the member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, *et le député de Rivière-du-Nord* for their collaboration and co-operation from the day that this Supreme Court decision was rendered, just over five weeks ago.

We have moved with alacrity, but also with precision, in order to fill a gap. I really want to thank my colleagues for the level of co-operation that we have received with respect to this matter, and colleagues on all sides of the House as well as the Senate who expressed an interest in us moving quickly.

Government Orders

Since the Court's decisions were released, many Canadians, including members in the House and the other place, have expressed concerns that acts of violence committed while in a state of extreme intoxication might very well go unpunished. Parliamentarians from all parties have urged action, as have some of my provincial and territorial counterparts. I am pleased that earlier this week there was an all-party agreement to move this forward swiftly. There are times when it is our duty as parliamentarians to move quickly to solve problems, and this is one of those times.

[*Translation*]

Women's rights organizations have expressed concerns about rulings that could change our way of seeing intoxication and criminal liability. They are concerned about the message that sends to survivors of sexual assault and other violent crimes.

● (2035)

[*English*]

We have heard that young women are nervous to return to university and college campuses this fall for fear that they could be assaulted and see intoxicated perpetrators escape liability. That is why we have acted quickly to introduce Bill C-28.

[*Translation*]

It is also tangible proof of our commitment to a justice system that keeps communities safe and holds offenders accountable while respecting the charter.

[*English*]

There has been a lot of inaccurate and misleading information online about the court's decisions.

[*Translation*]

Let me be clear: being intoxicated is not a defence for a criminal act such as sexual assault. That was the law before the Supreme Court decision, and it is still the law today. Extreme intoxication is a serious condition in which the person is unaware of or incapable of controlling their behaviour.

[*English*]

Parliament previously considered this issue in response to the 1994 decision of the Supreme Court in *Daviault*. In that case, the court found that a defence of extreme intoxication could be used for general intent crimes. Parliament responded by enacting section 33.1 of the Criminal Code, which limited the extreme intoxication defence in cases involving violent offences.

In the recent *Brown* decision, five weeks ago, the Supreme Court found that Parliament had two legitimate and pressing objectives in section 33.1. First, section 33.1 sought to protect the public from extremely intoxicated violence, especially women and children who are at a higher risk of experiencing violence, including violence committed by individuals who are intoxicated.

[*Translation*]

We know that there are clear links between intoxication and gender-based violence, particularly sexual violence and intimate partner violence, or IPV. According to a 2018 Statistics Canada survey,

63% of women and girls who were killed were killed by an intoxicated attacker.

Last year, the World Health Organization identified the harmful use of alcohol as a risk factor for sexual violence and IPV. Fighting violence committed by intoxicated people while protecting the public is clearly still a pressing objective.

[*English*]

The second objective was to hold individuals accountable by ensuring that they could not escape liability for crimes of violence committed while in a state of self-induced extreme intoxication. The Supreme Court recognized that these two objectives remain pressing and substantial today.

However, because section 33.1 also captured cases where extreme intoxication and violence were not reasonably foreseeable, the court concluded that the law risked convicting people who might not be to blame for ending up in a state of extreme intoxication. This, therefore, infringed the charter.

Bill C-28 addresses this gap in the law created by the court's decisions and introduces a new section 33.1 with the same public protection and accountability objectives. With this bill, we are standing up for victims and survivors of crime. This bill reaffirms that it is fair and just to hold individuals responsible for crimes of violence like assault, sexual assault and manslaughter committed in a state of extreme intoxication if they were criminally negligent in their consumption of intoxicating substances.

It is simply unacceptable for people to negligently put themselves in a dangerous state in which they cannot control their actions and then escape the consequences if someone gets hurt. The Supreme Court has described extreme intoxication as "a state akin to automatism". In other words, the body is doing something but the mind is not in control.

Legally, extreme intoxication is very rare. An accused cannot just assert that they were in a state of extreme intoxication when they harmed someone and be absolved of liability; they need to prove that they were in that rare mental state by using expert evidence.

Bill C-28 leaves this important requirement for establishing the defence in place. What changes is what happens next.

If a person establishes that they were in a state of extreme intoxication under Bill C-28, they would still be held criminally liable if they departed markedly from the standard of care expected of a reasonable person in those circumstances.

Government Orders

A “marked departure” means that a person's conduct fell far below what a reasonable person would have done in those circumstances to avoid foreseeable risk—in this case, the risk of a violent loss of control.

Determining criminal negligence—and this is a standard known to law—involves a two-step process. First, would a reasonable person, in those circumstances, have foreseen the risk and taken steps to avoid it? This is an objective test. Second, did the person's failure to do so amount to a marked departure from the standard of care expected of a reasonable person in the circumstances?

The risk here is whether consumption of intoxicants could cause extreme intoxication and lead the person to harm someone. By requiring proof of negligence, Bill C-28 corrects the constitutional deficiency found in the former section.

Bill C-28 also requires courts to assess whether the person's conduct amounted to a marked departure and requires courts to consider all relevant circumstances, including anything the person did to avoid the risk. Courts routinely conduct this type of assessment in other areas of criminal law, notably in relation to offences of criminal negligence. The bill makes clear that all relevant circumstances must be taken into account. While these circumstances will vary from case to case, certain factors can be expected to arise, including the nature of the substance and the setting where they were consumed.

To help illustrate the bill's intention, let us consider a couple examples. Someone who attends a crowded gathering and quickly consumes a large amount of a substance known to cause psychosis and agitation, without taking any precautions, could likely be proved to be criminally negligent and thus convicted.

By contrast, let us say someone takes a prescription drug, triggering an unanticipated state of extreme intoxication and hurts someone. However, because they could not have anticipated a violent loss of control when they took the medication, in this case they might very well be acquitted. Each case will turn on the unique facts before the court.

• (2040)

[*Translation*]

Bill C-28 responds to the Supreme Court of Canada's Brown, Sullivan and Chan decisions. As LEAF said last week, Bill C-28 is a thoughtful, nuanced and constitutional piece of legislation to address the narrow but significant gap resulting from the Supreme Court of Canada decisions. This bill recognizes that all members of society have a responsibility to protect each other from the foreseeable risks of their behaviour, and it holds people accountable for the harm they cause when they fail to meet that responsibility.

[*English*]

I firmly believe that Bill C-28 serves to complete the work that Parliament began in 1995 when it first enacted section 33.1. It protects the public and holds people accountable for their actions in a way that is fair and constitutional.

I once again repeat the thanks that I offered at the beginning to my critics, who worked diligently with all of us to help advance this quickly.

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to be able to discuss this with the minister tonight.

As he knows, we have been given very little time for debate, as this decision came down five weeks ago. Does he agree that it would have been preferable for us to have more time to debate this bill in the House, as well as to consider expert witness testimony at committee?

I am sure he is aware that the National Association of Women and the Law, for example, has raised some concerns. We all share an interest in protecting vulnerable Canadians, but in light of how rushed this has been, is he open to consideration in the fall if this bill does need improvement?

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for all of his work on this and other issues. He is my justice critic, and I cherish that relationship. It is a very productive one.

The short answer to the question is yes. We will consider any good ideas.

There is no question that we moved quickly. We consulted widely. We had an inkling about it from the decision. A number of prominent individuals, professors of law and that sort of thing have been saying for the last 20 years that section 33.1 was problematic. The court itself gave us two possible paths. We chose one of them, the path we thought was the best path, and it remains, therefore, constitutional.

We worked quickly. We worked expeditiously. We consulted widely. It is true that there are a few groups who disagree, but not the vast majority. The vast majority of women's groups, victims groups and experts feel that this was the best way to go. Provincial governments and Crown prosecutors all feel this was the best way to go, but we will work in good faith with our colleagues across the aisle in the fall to study this most carefully.

• (2045)

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the minister for his openness and co-operation in working with other parties to address this issue.

I wonder if he shares with me a concern I have. A confusion of simple intoxication with extreme intoxication has been inserted into the public discourse, in particular online. I guess what I hope we can do tonight is somehow address the fact that in this country, simple intoxication has never been and never will be a defence against violent criminal acts.

Government Orders

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke for his co-operation on this issue.

I share that concern. I think that actually all in this House share that concern. One of the really troubling parts of the Supreme Court decision was an explosion of misinformation online. I am not saying that it was in bad faith; it was just a misunderstanding. It was that all of a sudden there was a defence in the vast majority of cases in which intoxication might have been a factor. It is simply not the case that in those cases one has a defence to any general intent crime, such as assault, sexual assault or manslaughter.

This is a very rare set of cases. We have addressed that, but with the hon. member and other hon. members in this House, I think we should take this opportunity to repeat to Canadians that all along the spectrum, one does not have a defence of intoxication for violent crime or sexual assault.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for his speech. I am my party's status of women critic, and the Standing Committee on the Status of Women just finished a study on intimate partner violence. I believe the minister said that 68% of victims had been attacked by an intoxicated person, which sounds extremely high to me.

In a few words, how would the minister say that Bill C-28 fits into the existing continuum of measures to combat intimate partner violence? Some women's groups seem to have some doubts. Does the minister understand all the aspects of the issue, and could he tell us more about them?

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, that is a valid concern. We all have a duty to support victims of intimate partner violence. As legislators and as a government, we must find solutions.

Today's response obviously fixes one part of the problem at one end of the spectrum. It is true that the law does not allow intoxication to be used a defence, but—

[*English*]

Hon. Marci Ien (Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to express my unequivocal support for Bill C-28.

What I would like to do is focus on what this legislation means for the women and youth who are disproportionately impacted by violence, and more specifically, intoxicated violence. The extreme intoxication we are talking about is not about being drunk and not about being high. The Supreme Court has clearly said that drunkenness is not a defence in crimes of violence, including sexual assault.

That is really important, so I am going to repeat it: Drunkenness is not a defence in crimes of violence, including sexual assault.

In recent years, Canadians have deepened their understanding of the harmful social norms and influences that contribute to gender-based violence. They are also aware that our justice and social systems often fail victims and survivors. When we take an even closer look at this issue, we see that indigenous women and girls, racialized people and LGBTQ2+ people experience gender-based violence and sexual violence more than any other segments of society.

All Canadians deserve a justice system that protects them. Everyone, especially those who are most at risk, deserves to feel protected from violence. These ideals lie at the core of the legislation that is before us this evening.

In May, the Supreme Court of Canada's ruling essentially created a gap in Canadian law, a gap that can enable perpetrators to avoid conviction if they are able to prove that extreme intoxication rendered them not responsible for the crimes they committed. Bill C-28 aims to close this gap.

As mentioned, the Supreme Court ruling created a gap. Unfortunately, that gap was quickly filled with misinformation, so—

• (2050)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mend s): I have to interrupt the hon. minister. We are having a problem with the interpretation.

[*Translation*]

Is it working now?

[*English*]

I think it is the hon. minister's microphone that is perhaps a bit too high. Maybe she could lower it.

Can we try again?

Hon. Marci Ien: Madam Speaker, is this better?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mend s): It seems to be better.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Marci Ien: Madam Speaker, as mentioned, the Supreme Court ruling created a gap, and unfortunately, that gap was quickly filled with misinformation.

I have a personal note. A couple of weeks ago, my daughter, Blaize, came home from school. She is 17 years old. She said, "Mom, how messed up is it that people can just get drunk and then assault other people?" This, of course, was based on information she had seen on social media.

I come from a background of research. In my previous life I was a reporter, so I dug into this a bit. I looked into some of the social media posts, and I looked into what Blaize and other young women across this country were seeing. What I saw were social media posts with thousands of likes and comments misleading young women about what the Supreme Court's decision actually means.

Government Orders

I want to share, if I might, a couple of examples. One caption of a clip said, “POV: You are a teenage girl living in Canada where rape is now legal, if you are intoxicated”. It had 489,000 likes, more than 9,000 comments and almost 6,000 shares. Another post said, “You are a 16-year-old teenager living in Canada, and being too intoxicated is legal for rape and sexual assault”. That had 2.1 million views, and that is why I am here tonight.

While Bill C-28 would address a rare defence, the impact of the gross misinformation on young people, and young women especially, has been absolutely significant. This unintentional misinformation and sometimes intentional alarmist reporting style come with very serious consequences for women right across this country, as they are adding to the stigma that survivors already face when reporting gender-based violence. We know the data already shows us that just 5% of sexual assaults are actually reported to police.

Parliament simply cannot go another day knowing there are young women who believe that, if they are attacked, they will not be protected. It is why, in the little more than five weeks since the Supreme Court's decision, we are making it clear that individuals who consume drugs or alcohol in a criminally negligent manner are held criminally responsible. There will be no loophole.

For those who saw this ruling or the headlines surrounding it and felt that fear, I want them to know that I see them. I understand them, and I understand where that feeling comes from. By closing the gap created by the Supreme Court's rulings, the legislation would strengthen Canada's legal system and better protect some of the most vulnerable members of our society.

Bill C-28 is just one of the many actions we are taking to address gender-based violence and build public confidence in the criminal justice system. We are addressing this from every angle, with changes such as implementing more training for judges, funding campus supports for students and working with provinces and territories on a national action plan to end gender-based violence, which is on track to come out this year.

I know there is still distrust in our justice system, especially for racialized women and girls, indigenous women and members of the LGBTQ2 community, but I hope Bill C-28 will address some of these very real concerns. We cannot lose this hard-won ground. Acting quickly to close the gap created by the Supreme Court's ruling is an important part of this effort. I encourage my hon. colleagues and the other place, as well, to support this bill now before us.

● (2055)

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, one thing is so key. We know that we need to continually make improvements to the justice system because it continually fails women. While some of the people who are very supportive of this piece of legislation have come out with their support, they have also recommended that far more training occur within the criminal justice system for these types of violence and for criminal acts that happen against women.

The minister mentioned it briefly, but I would ask her talk more about what the government has planned to ensure that our criminal

justice system has that specific training to help women who are facing sexual violence.

Hon. Marci Ien: Madam Speaker, I want to reiterate what Bill C-28 would do, because that is why we are here tonight. Bill C-28 would amend the Criminal Code so that individuals would be held responsible for violence they commit while in a state of extreme intoxication if they ended up in that state through their own criminal negligence.

That is an important point. In other words, if people voluntarily consume intoxicants, drugs or mix drugs with alcohol knowing that there is a risk of losing control and becoming violent, they may be held criminally responsible. That is the gap that we are closing.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, one of the things I am hearing from many organizations is the lack of consultation. The minister indicated that there was lots of consultation, and I know the Minister of Justice said that also, but one of the biggest pieces of feedback I am getting this week is that there has not been enough.

I would ask the minister to comment on that because that is the feedback I am getting from many organizations across Canada.

Hon. Marci Ien: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is my critic. I have deep respect for the member and for the way she leads with such empathy.

It is important that we remember why we are here tonight and why we acted so expeditiously in this regard. It is my belief that lives are on the line. When we have the kind of misinformation that was rampant on social media, that creates fear. I saw it in my own daughter, and I know she is not alone. That is something we are addressing. We moved quickly to close the gap.

There was consultation, but it is so important to remember why we are here. Bill C-28 would address a rare defence. The impact of misinformation on young people and young women has been absolutely significant. I have heard first-hand young women who truly thought that if they were attacked, there would be no protection for them, none. We had to act quickly and we did. It has been just over—

● (2100)

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

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate that the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth and the governing party have moved quickly.

Government Orders

I wonder if she could offer her insights in response to comments recently reported in the media by Kerri Froc, chair of the National Association of Women and the Law, who shared concerns that Bill C-28, as written, may be too difficult for prosecutors to prove. What are the minister's comments on that?

Hon. Marci Ien: Madam Speaker, I am based in research. I have heard it first-hand. I have talked to young women who said if they are attacked, they are not going to be protected, and I had to clear up that misinformation.

We had to act quickly. We know that it has been just over five weeks. We know that well, since the Supreme Court's decision, but we are making it abundantly clear that committing any crime is not okay. I want to repeat that: It is not okay.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech given by my colleague, the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth.

She told us that lives are at stake. I completely agree with her, and the Bloc Québécois is definitely in favour of Bill C-28. If lives are at stake, then my question is obvious: Why did they wait so long to introduce legislation?

In *R. v. Brown*, which went to the Supreme Court, there was already a decision at the trial level. The government could have been proactive and provided a framework for such situations. I will quote the Supreme Court, as follows:

Parliament had before it a record that highlighted the strong correlation between alcohol and drug use and violent offences, in particular against women, and brought to the fore of Parliament's attention the equality, dignity, and security rights of all victims of intoxicated violence.

[*English*]

Hon. Marci Ien: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his support, and I will say with deep respect that five weeks is not slow.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, to begin, I would like to ask for unanimous consent to split my time with the member for Fundy Royal.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member may proceed.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, I am sure everybody in the lobby is surprised that I actually did that at the right time.

Tonight is one of our last evenings sitting in the House of Commons before we adjourn for the summer and return to our ridings. The speech that I am going to give tonight is truly based in what I am seeing all around us. It has become a culture of violence.

Tonight, we are speaking on Bill C-28. Although I support it in principle, we do have a lot further to go. Tonight, we have the opportunity to begin this discussion, which I hope becomes a much larger national discussion. We need to continue this conversation,

especially with women's organizations, which have come out and cannot support this legislation.

A good ally of mine and friend, Megan Walker, discussed this legislation with me yesterday. She cannot support it and shared her concerns about the ability of the Crown to prove it. She feels that this legislation is tokenism

Women's organizations are stepping forward and asking us to halt this legislation, while other organizations are in full support of the legislation. To me, this is a clear yellow light that we have to be cautious and that we need to re-address this: that what we are doing today is just not enough. This needs to continue.

My last six months in my role as the shadow minister for women and gender equality and youth have given me the honour to work with people, especially in the committee on the status of women.

I can share with members that it seems like we are in a real mess, and I can tell us that we need change.

Let us start with this piece of legislation. I want to address it by sharing the letter that was received by the National Association of Women and the Law. It reads, and I quote:

Feminist organizations in Canada have long been concerned about the connection between men's use of intoxicants, and violence against women. Study after study has shown that there is a direct link between so-called 'drunkenness' and sexual violence. There are studies that report an average of 50% of sexual assault perpetrators consumed alcohol at the time of the assault, with other studies showing a variance of between 30 and 75%.

Looking back to the 1994 Daviault decision, in which the Supreme Court ordered a new trial based on the accused's extreme intoxication at the time of the incident, the 'gap' in the law quickly becomes apparent. Mr. Daviault had voluntarily consumed an excessive quantity of alcohol before forcing intercourse on the complainant, an elderly woman with a disability. In response, feminist groups like National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL) pressed the government to restrict the defence of extreme intoxication. The federal government enacted section 33.1 of the Criminal Code, closing the gap by preventing those who voluntarily consume intoxicants and then commit acts of violence from using the defence of extreme intoxication for general intent offences.

In May 2022, the Supreme Court of Canada's unanimous decision in *Brown* struck down the law set out in s. 33.1, declaring it unconstitutional and stating that voluntarily taking intoxicating substances cannot replace the criminal intent required for a conviction. This decision re-opens the 'gap' left by the 1994 Daviault decision, once again leaving women vulnerable to crimes of violence when the accused can demonstrate that his intoxication put him into a state of automatism. Despite the assurances of some defence lawyers and their allies that reliance on extreme intoxication will be rare, research analyzing the extreme intoxication defence indicates that it will be raised with some regularity. Indeed, research shows that it will be used overwhelmingly by men, and that the majority of victims will be women.

I know that I shared a very lengthy part of that letter, but to me, this is what we are talking about. Yes, this legislation came out very quickly. That means we need to get it passed to stop the gap today, but that does not mean that the gap has fully been filled. That is why I am urging the government to say, yes, we have got Bill C-28 done but we need to do more. I am urging the government to get on the road and let us start doing those consultations. Let us start talking more.

Government Orders

I want to go back to stuff that we have also been hearing about Hockey Canada. We just heard that Hockey Canada receives one to two formal complaints annually and that there are investigations.

I want to talk about all of this, because one thing that I can indicate is that sexual violence and violence against children should never happen. We are seeing it more and more. In the past number of weeks, as I have been dealing with my role as the shadow minister for women and gender equality, and in chairing the committee on the status of women, we are talking about violence and more violence. Our one study on intimate partner violence was talking about domestic violence. Following that, we talked about Kyra's Law, named for a young girl, a young child, who was murdered by her father, basically to get back at the mother.

• (2105)

I am looking at what is happening with Hockey Canada. We talked about a young girl who was allegedly raped by eight hockey players, and there is no responsibility. Then we can talk about what we are talking about here today, Bill C-28. To me, it is really clear. We are talking about things that are a social issue. It is a sexual assault issue.

When I look back at that link between what I am talking about with Hockey Canada and the eight players, and what we are seeing here, the bottom line is that it should never be happening in the first place. In Hockey Canada, we are hearing about a civil law suit that went through. Hockey Canada actually paid out, rather than having this go through the criminal court system. Unfortunately, I understand why someone would choose a civil suit over our justice system right now. We know it is not perfect. With the help of Bill C-233 and other bills that have been put forward in the past, we need to ensure that there is proper training for judges, but it is not just judges. It is everybody involved.

When I look at this, I look at who is responsible. Ultimately, the perpetrator has to be responsible. Although this legislation closes that gap in which we are talking about the state of automatism, we also have to look at what is next.

Just weeks ago, we passed that important piece of legislation, Bill C-233 with unanimous support. It was an all-party effort. I believe it started a conversation, and I believe what we are doing here tonight is also starting that conversation. Just as the minister stated, I had the same conversation with my 18-year-old son. He called me the very next morning and asked me about it when I was in Ottawa. I said, "Son, I'm working on this." We recognize that it does not mean that someone has to be drunk and this could happen, but there needs to be extreme intoxication. For a young woman, anything is a barrier, including the fact that somebody may use this defence. Everything like that is a barrier.

People are coming out and saying that this law is just window dressing and is not really tackling the real issues. I think what we have to tackle is the culture of sexual violence, because we seem to be ignoring it. I was thinking about it a lot over the past few days. Working on the Hockey Canada case has really brought things to light. These are our kids we are talking about. These are the kids that our kids go to public school with. These are the children, whether they are the perpetrators or the victims. These are just kids. Sometimes we get lost on our way and we confuse what is right and

wrong. Is extreme intoxication good enough, or is because someone is an athlete or a politician good enough?

We know, from the recent Supreme Court ruling on May 13, that women's organizations have spoken up. Because of that, we know this needs to be addressed. The government has addressed it through this legislation as Bill C-28. I thank the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada. We pushed on this and we asked for this to be done, so I thank him for doing so.

We need more transparency for victims, and we need to remember that victims have rights, too. This is the problem. We talk so much about the rights of our perpetrators, but our victims need to have rights too. This is what we are losing a lot of the time in these conversations, whether I am talking about Hockey Canada or extreme intoxication. No is no, and there must be consent.

Finally, I want to end this with a quote. I go back to the National Association of Women and the Law:

While they may not be successful in making out the defence – pleading the defence, in itself, will result in increased timelines and lengthy court processes for victims. Ultimately, C-28 is a missed opportunity to close the door on the use of the extreme intoxication defence where alcohol alone is used.

I am coming back and I am saying that this summer I will be working on this. I will be working on providing any information that I can to both the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth and the Minister of Justice, because we can do better, and we need to make sure that we listen to everybody. We need to be listening to the victims, and we need to be working to end sexual violence.

• (2110)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her very thoughtful speech, as well as her support of this bill.

I want to quote from LEAF:

LEAF supports this thoughtful, nuanced, and constitutional legislation to address the narrow gap resulting from the SCC decisions.

"If adopted by Parliament, we will be looking to the courts to apply this legislation in a similarly thoughtful way," says Pam Hrick, Executive Director & General Counsel at LEAF.

I am wondering if my friend opposite could comment on this. Based on her concerns about the bill, could the member see how it is so important for us to pass this bill today and have it as law before we rise?

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Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, we need to pass it because, as the Minister for Gender Equality indicated, we do not want victims. We do not want another person to fall victim to this. I look at it as one is too many. We know that this defence being used once is one time too many, especially if somebody has been the victim of a sexual assault and somebody is getting off using this defence. We need to continue this conversation. Although this bill solves part of the problem, there needs to be a much bigger conversation.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague and I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge her. She is the chair of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. I wish her a very good summer. She was also with me at the meeting of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage on the horrible case of assault against a young woman; it is truly awful. She spoke about it at the end.

It was a difficult session. We conducted a study on domestic violence at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. It was a very tough session. We heard some poignant testimonies.

How does Bill C-28 fit into this context? She opened the door in her response to the previous question: in a continuum of measures that may be taken to address violence against people. She says that this bill may not go far enough. How does she see it? What would she have wanted to see to make this bill truly fit into the context where we address this violence against women?

I would like to hear her thoughts.

• (2115)

[*English*]

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, I have really enjoyed my time working with the member for Shefford.

When we are looking at this bill, Bill C-28, we know that domestic violence increases with the intake of alcohol. We know that over the past two years, when we have seen stress and mental health also have many challenges, we have seen an increase in domestic violence, as well. With respect to Bill C-28, because I am a person who will always advocate for victims, I look at this as a very victim-centred bill. That is what we need to look at. It seems to be more perpetrator-centred, but that is the thing. We need to continue to fight for those victims and we understand that—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We have time for a brief question. The hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know the member shares the same concern we have as New Democrats: This is only one part of attacking violence against women. Does she share with me the concern that the justice committee has twice recommended to the House that the government act to make coercive and controlling behaviour an offence in the Criminal Code? We know that coercive and controlling behaviour contributes directly to violence. Does she share my concern about the sloth with which the government is approaching that recommendation?

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, the more I sit on the status of women committee and understand coercive behaviour, the more I have to recognize this is a huge problem, whether it is financial, sexual, regarding harassment or anything of that sort. Coercive behaviour is a very strong thing that we may not see, but we know it is mental abuse. Yes, I am urging the current government to continue to look at that, because we know that women who are living under coercive behaviours and circumstances are having problems leaving those very violent situations.

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to start by thanking my colleague, the member for Elgin—Middlesex—London, for her hard work, for the comments that she just made and for all of the efforts she has made on behalf of her constituency. I thank her as well for her work on the status of women committee and for her advocacy since the Supreme Court of Canada decision to have a response from the government. I really appreciate that.

She also makes sure the voices that have not been heard so much during the drafting process of Bill C-28 are being heard in the House today and will certainly be heard as this discussion continues.

I would expect that most, if not all, members of this House would agree that addressing and eliminating violence against women and girls should be a top priority and one that is dealt with expeditiously.

Unfortunately, it has been almost 40 days since the Supreme Court of Canada released its decision in the case of *R. v. Brown*, striking down section 33.1 of the Criminal Code. As a result of this decision, which was announced back in May, it would now be permissible to claim extreme intoxication due to drugs or alcohol as an excuse for murderers, abusers and attackers.

Conservatives have spent the last 39 days calling on the Minister of Justice to prioritize the response we are debating today. The government has control over the legislative agenda, and if it had wanted to bring this bill forward sooner, before the last days of the spring sitting, it did indeed have the power to do so. That would have allowed us a thorough debate in this House and a study at committee, where we could have heard some of the testimony that we are hearing now from the newspapers and from people writing to our offices with concerns about the bill. It should be in all of our interests, and in all Canadians' interests, that we as parliamentarians get our job right. Part of our job is drafting and voting on legislation, and we want to make sure that we hear from experts before we do that.

It took less than an hour for the Liberals to announce their intention to appeal the Alberta court decision regarding their unconstitutional anti-pipeline bill, but it has been 40 days since the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that criminals will not be held accountable for murder if they were extremely intoxicated when they committed the crime. Why is the government turning on a dime in order to defend legislation that shuts down industries when we are just beginning debate, more than five weeks later, on the legislative response to the Supreme Court's ruling that leaves victims vulnerable?

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Conservatives want to err on the side of having legislation in place sooner rather than later so that there can be an element of safety against this defence being used. However, while we can allow this bill to pass for the time being, I want to make it very clear that this is by no means the end of the discussion.

That is why we have insisted in the motion that the justice committee study this bill, this response, and that the minister appear and that the committee report back so that Parliament has an opportunity to improve this legislation if necessary.

Over the summer months, Conservatives will be speaking with stakeholders, organizations, women's groups and individuals whose voices must be heard when we are talking about strengthening the justice system. Conservatives will make sure that those voices are heard.

We know the statistics. We know that women and girls are disproportionately victims of violence and we know that the offenders in these instances are almost always male. The Liberals will try to distract Canadians from the fact that their self-proclaimed “feminist” government has been dragging its feet to address a vulnerability in the law that they were very well aware of, knowing that women and girls are most often the victims in situations like this.

Again I would like to commend the hard work of my colleague from Elgin—Middlesex—London in raising awareness of this issue through a campaign using the hashtag “#oneistoomany” on her social media.

On May 27, 14 days after the ruling came down from the Supreme Court, along with my Conservative colleagues from Elgin—Middlesex—London, Brantford—Brant and Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, I wrote a letter to the Minister of Justice to express the severity and urgency of this issue and calling for action. At that point, we thought we would see some action.

• (2120)

I would now like to share with the House some of what we asked for in that letter:

The decisions ruled by the Supreme Court of Canada in *R v. Brown...* and *R v. Sullivan...* imperil the safety of victims of violent physical attacks, domestic violence and sexual assault by permitting the dubious defence of non-insane automatism due to self-induced intoxication.

These offences disproportionately affect women, gender diverse individuals and vulnerable Canadians. The ruling made by the Supreme Court of Canada leaves a gap in the law that endangers the safety of communities and the lives of Canadians. This requires the utmost urgent action in order to protect Canadians, especially those at greater risk of experiencing gender-based violence.

The government must act now. It is your duty as the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada to respond to these decisions, close the gaps in the law and ensure the protection of victims.

Our role as Parliamentarians is to represent the best interests of our communities regarding the law and legislation. This is an issue that affects us all, and we stand ready to assist in any way possible to work with you to ensure that there is an adequate response from parliament that prioritizes the safety and security of Canadians.

The Government of Canada owes it to the victims, survivors, and their families to act immediately.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We eagerly await your response.

Eagerly await the minister's response we did. Now, 25 days after we first sent this to the Minister of Justice, we are finally having

this discussion in the House of Commons today, just before we rise for the summer.

While Conservatives will allow the bill to proceed, we are not under any illusion that this is the end of the discussion. Rather, Conservatives have secured from the government a commitment to instruct the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to take up a study on this matter when we return in the fall. This is a very serious topic that deserves our Parliament's time and attention. We can only improve legislation when we invite expert testimony into the conversation, which this study will certainly endeavour to do, and which we have not heard up until this point.

I know from speaking with different organizations that they felt extremely rushed. They had an online consultation, but they did not feel that they were able to give adequate input on the bill, on the impact it could have and on how it can be improved, which should be in all of our interest. There are many individuals and organizations that should have been properly consulted before and during the drafting of the bill.

This is a critically important issue that we are working to solve urgently, but that does not mean we cannot put the time and resources towards making sure the law reflects the contributions and concerns of the various stakeholders who have spoken out over the last few days about where the bill can and should be improved.

For example, the National Association of Women and the Law published a press release responding to the Liberals' Bill C-28. It states:

Despite the assurances of some defence lawyers and their allies that reliance on extreme intoxication will be rare, research analyzing the extreme intoxication defence indicates that it will be raised with some regularity. Indeed, research shows that it will be used overwhelmingly by men, and that the majority of victims will be women.

They call Bill C-28 “a missed opportunity to close the door on the use of the extreme intoxication defence where alcohol alone is used.” I think that is a very worthy discussion for us as parliamentarians to have.

To be clear, this is just one stakeholder organization whose perspective and expertise we need to hear and seriously consider when we are talking about strengthening the law to better protect women. Our study of this legislation and the law that it impacts will take place in the fall, and this will ensure that experts and stakeholders are properly consulted.

It is our role and responsibility, as Her Majesty's loyal opposition, to hold the government accountable, and where we so often see the Liberals failing Canadians is when it comes to matters of justice and their obligations to victims of crime.

Conservatives will continue to raise up the voices of victims and victims' advocates. We look forward to making significant progress in strengthening Canada's laws to better protect vulnerable Canadians.

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• (2125)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for both his support and his speech. I also look forward to the discussion at committee in the fall on this issue.

LEAF, one of the major organizations representing women, said, “LEAF supports this thoughtful, nuanced, and constitutional legislation to address the narrow gap resulting from the [Supreme Court of Canada] decisions.”

I wonder if my friend opposite could comment on that. I recognize that there may be some limitations that he identifies, but the general consensus that has been received is that this is a sound bill that is based on consultation with many experts in the field.

Hon. Rob Moore: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for his work on the justice committee. It is good to work with him.

The point is that we have a justice committee, and when the government brings in legislation and it gets to committee, we study it and bring in experts. LEAF has made commentary and no doubt would be a witness if this bill were before our committee. Likewise, the National Association of Women and the Law has made commentary in public and would also likely be a witness at our committee.

That is the point. Without being rushed, we would be able to study this bill at committee and hopefully improve it if necessary. However, by its being introduced last Friday, we do not have that opportunity. We need to act with urgency, but in the fall we need to make sure that if there is any way to improve the law beyond this, we take further action.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, how important is it for us in Parliament to ensure that we are strengthening laws to make sure we are protecting women at this time, who are often targets of sexual assault?

Hon. Rob Moore: Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague is absolutely right. We have heard from different organizations that the Supreme Court decision puts women at risk and that we have to act with urgency. We called on the government to act right away, because it knew there was a vulnerability there, and we know the response could have been sooner.

As I said, we waited 40 days for this, and I would have liked for those different women's organizations to give input at our committee. As some of them are suggesting, we could have improved the bill.

The hon. member is right that we need to act with urgency, making any improvement to the law to fill this gap. We need to do that now, but always with an eye to looking at how we can further strengthen the law in the future.

• (2130)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague talked about the importance of addressing gender-based violence, and I hear him loud and clear. However, when

he talks about proposing improvements to the bill this fall, does he have any idea what he would like to propose if he ever wanted to revisit this?

[*English*]

Hon. Rob Moore: Madam Speaker, one of the proposals put forward by the National Association of Women and the Law is absolutely shutting the door on the defence of self-induced extreme intoxication caused solely by the consumption of alcohol. That is one proposal that I would have liked to hear some more thought and evidence on.

Also, on the threshold that is in place, there are concerns that the threshold for the prosecution to meet in order to get a conviction would be set too high by this legislation. There are suggestions of alternatives that would lower the bar for prosecution. We want to make sure that offenders are held accountable for violent acts committed against fellow Canadians and that this court decision does not result in people who should be held accountable not being held accountable.

I am always open to hearing diverse views on how we can improve and strengthen legislation, and we need to take the time at justice committee to do just that.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill C-28 this evening, in part because it got me to look over my old class notes. I am trained as a lawyer, but I certainly do not claim to be a criminal lawyer. As a result, while reading the Brown decision, I had to go back and review some of the concepts to refresh my memory.

Tonight's debate is taking place in the knowledge that, in any case, the bill will be passed at the end of the discussions that will take place. The content of the bill will not be changed in any way this evening. I think this may be a good opportunity to recap the events that led to the bill we are debating. Furthermore, I will certainly have a lot of fun this summer discussing the bill with my friends in criminal law, who already had a few things to say to me when they read the content of the bill. I hope this is something that will be done again in the fall because there are potential improvements to be made to Bill C-28.

To explain why we are talking about extreme intoxication as a defence, we have to go back to the Daviault case. The year is 1989. Seventy-three-year-old Henri Daviault is a chronic alcoholic. One evening, a friend of his wife's asks him to bring her some alcohol. After drinking seven or eight beers at a bar, he sets out with a 40-ounce bottle of brandy to bring to her. He arrives at the home of the woman, who is partially paralyzed and uses a wheelchair. All we know of what happened next is that he drank all or most of the 40 ounces of brandy, and the next morning found himself naked in the woman's bed after sexually assaulting her, which he does not remember.

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Mr. Daviault pleads automatism. He argues that he was in such an extreme state of intoxication that it was almost like sleepwalking. He was not aware of what he was doing. This is not the same as simply forgetting the next morning what happened the night before. This is about not being able to control one's body. His defence is supported by toxicological evidence. One expert states that after consuming that amount of alcohol, most people of normal constitution would have ended up in a coma or even dead.

The evidence is accepted by the Supreme Court, which considered whether a state of intoxication so extreme that an accused is in a state that bears a striking resemblance to automatism or mental illness as defined in section 16 of the Criminal Code can be used as a defence following a crime that requires not specific intent, but only general intent. Can this be used as a defence? The court decides that, yes, the principle of automatism can be used as a defence in cases of general intent offences. It is almost a though a new defence has been created.

The majority opinion in Daviault was criticized for its “alarming lack of consideration of the social context of sexual assault particularly for women and children”. At the time, Professor Grant argued that “alcohol is often implicated in gendered violence, and therefore strong equality protections are necessary”. She wrote, “The suggestion that someone could be too drunk to be convicted of sexual assault shocked the public's sense of justice and common sense”.

Parliament was therefore kind of stuck with the Supreme Court decision that allowed the defence of extreme intoxication in cases involving offences such as sexual assault and other general intent offences such as assault. That was the background to Parliament's adoption of the old section 33.1, which was at issue in Brown. Section 33.1 eliminated the defence of self-induced intoxication akin to automatism applied to the violent offences identified in subsection 33.1(3) where the accused departed markedly from the standard of care described in subsection 33.1(2).

In its response to Daviault, Parliament sought to supply a link between the intention to become intoxicated and the intention to commit a crime of violence identified by the majority. In a way, the two intentions were conflated, which was part of the problem in Brown with respect to the constitutionality of section 33.1. I will come back to that.

● (2135)

The purpose of drafting the section at that time was, as noted in the preamble to what was then Bill C-72, the fact that domestic and sexual violence have “a particularly disadvantaging impact on the equal participation of women and children in society”. Parliament was particularly mindful that the accused should not be allowed to use self-induced intoxication to justify acts of violence against women and children.

The purpose of using the Oakes test was to determine whether section 33.1 passed the test of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and whether it was constitutional. In essence, this was Brown's challenge to the Supreme Court of Canada; he stated that this section was not constitutional and he should not be subject to it.

When applying the Oakes test, it must first be established that there is an infringement of the Charter caused by the wording of the section. Is there an infringement? The Crown submitted its arguments and the judges held that, contrary to the Crown's contention, the “marked departure” standard of fault in paragraph 33.1(2) clearly applies to the violent offence, not to the act of self-induced intoxication.

As I was saying, Parliament sort of combined these two principles, so that when a person committed an offence, such as sexual assault or assault, they were always departing from the standard of good conduct. That person automatically ended up being subject to section 33.1 and having no defence to put forward.

What was said, and what the judges held, was that section 33.1 operated akin to a regime of absolute liability by allowing conviction without proof beyond a reasonable doubt that the accused intentionally or voluntarily committed the offence. Section 33.1 improperly substituted intent to become intoxicated with intent to commit a violent offence.

Section 33.1 directed that the accused was criminally responsible even in the case of involuntary conduct. Because involuntariness negates the *actus reus* of the offence, involuntary conduct is not criminal, and Canadian law recognizes the requirement of voluntariness for the conviction of a crime, the person was deprived of an aspect of fundamental justice. The judges wrote that the defence of automatism denies the element of voluntariness and therefore negates the *actus reus* of the offence. Involuntary conduct is understood to be genuinely exculpatory because, while the prohibited act was harmful, the accused lacks the capacity to answer for what they did. A physically involuntary act, however wrongful in outward appearance, is not a guilty act that can be imputed to an accused.

What this means is that this defence, in this context, appears to be a violation of a charter right, because it amounts to an absolute liability offence. As soon as a right is violated by the Charter, the Oakes test can be used to determine whether upholding the section in question is justified, in the context of today's society and in spite of the fact that it infringes on a charter right.

There are several steps to the Oakes test. First, the section in question must respond to a pressing and substantial need. Then, there must be a rational connection between the objective and the means used to achieve it. After that, it must be proven that the section is minimally impairing and that there is no less rights-impairing means of achieving the objective. Lastly, there must be proportionality between the effects of the section and the objective.

For the first step, there must be a pressing and substantial objective. As I already said, parliamentarians went through this exercise when they drafted section 33.1. This was even mentioned in the preamble, which pointed to the broad reasons the section was enacted in the period following Daviault, namely the protection of the victims of extremely intoxicated violence and a sense that the law should hold offenders accountable for the bodily harm they cause to others when, by choice, they become extremely intoxicated.

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● (2140)

It was in this context and with these two specific goals in mind that Parliament drafted section 33.1. The Court agreed that the section served a pressing and substantial purpose and cited Justice Lamer in *Robinson*: “There is no question that the protection of the public from intoxicated offenders is of sufficient importance to warrant overriding a constitutionally protected right or freedom”. The first part of the *Oakes* test was satisfied.

The second part of the *Oakes* test is that it must be proven that the means has a rational connection to the objective. I will quote the Supreme Court, which upheld the Court of Appeal ruling that the deterrent and denouncing effects of section 33.1 provide a rational connection to Parliament's protective objective.

In addition, s. 33.1 is rationally connected to the objective of holding individuals accountable, in as full a manner as possible, for the choice to become extremely intoxicated and the violence committed while in that state. It is obvious that where a person is foreclosed from advancing a defence that could result in an acquittal, that person is held accountable for something they otherwise would not be.

The second part of the *Oakes* test is satisfied here.

It is on the third part of the test that things start to get dicey. That is where the court is suggesting to Parliament—which is rather exceptional—what legislators could do to rewrite section 33.1 so as to make it constitutional. The court analyzed the third part of the *Oakes* test to see if there was any way for the rights of the accused to be less substantially impaired while still meeting the original objectives of that section of the act.

The court suggested two options. The first, and some members have spoken about it, was to create a separate offence that would criminalize the act of becoming so extremely intoxicated that a person puts themselves in a state that is dangerous to others. However, Parliament has dismissed that option in the past for two different reasons.

I, too, submit that this option would not be the right course of action to replace what we currently have in Bill C-28. It could be a subsidiary or complementary approach, but it is not the right way to replace section 33.1. In fact, it could open the door to lesser sentences for offences committed in a highly intoxicated state. Some people even called it a “drunkenness discount”. For example, the sentence for voluntarily becoming highly intoxicated could correspond to dangerous driving and the person might avoid being sentenced for aggravated or sexual assault.

The other problem is that the real harm caused by the offender would not be recognized. This approach would imply that the offender should not be held responsible for the harm they did by committing assault or sexual assault. This option should not replace the current wording of Bill C-28, but could be used as a complementary approach.

The second option upheld by the court was to review, to a certain extent, the question of the marked departure by intoxication. The idea was that individuals could still be found guilty where there was a genuine marked departure from the situation in which they had placed themselves. Parliament asserted that it was open to Parliament to enact legislation to hold extremely intoxicated persons accountable for violent crimes where they had chosen to create the risk of harm by ingesting intoxicants.

In other words, perpetrators could be held accountable for the offence in subsection 33.1 if the legal standard of criminal negligence required a demonstration that both the risk of loss of control and the risk of the resulting harm were reasonably foreseeable. In either scenario, Parliament would enact a law based on the moral instinct that individuals who choose to become extremely intoxicated can legitimately be held responsible for creating a situation where they threaten the integrity of others.

● (2145)

That is what Parliament is proposing as the alternative to the current subsection 33.1(2). Since it had proved that there were other legislative solutions that would achieve the same objectives and be less harmful to the accused, the court concluded that the minimal impairment standard of the *Oakes* test had not been met. As a result, the court found that section 33.1 should be declared of no force or effect.

Finally, the last component requires proportionality between the limitations to the section of the law and the legislative objectives. The court ruled that the risk of imprisoning the morally innocent outweighed the objective of protecting society.

All of this influenced the wording of the new section 33.1. Now, rather than associating the departure from the standard with the offence, it is actually associated with the person's consumption, that is, the way in which the person induced their own state of extreme intoxication.

I want to raise two points in connection with that. As I said, Bill C-28 is being passed a little hastily, unfortunately. The courts tasked with interpreting its provisions will not be able to consult the debates of the House on this bill to understand the legislator's intent because they were so short, abbreviated even. That is kind of problematic.

Nevertheless, there was also an urgent need for action. If the legal void created by invalidating section 33.1 was not filled, we could have seen a situation like what happened right after *Daviault*, when there was a distinct possibility that an accused could raise the defence of extreme intoxication akin to automatism. In the absence of any structure, it made sense to act quickly.

Having said that, certain questions remain unanswered, and there have been some criticisms. I am thinking in particular of Professor Hugues Parent, who was quoted as saying the following in yesterday's edition of *La Presse*:

“The problem—and it is a serious problem—is that by limiting extreme intoxication to a state akin to automatism, the government is discounting states of intoxication that do not disrupt the individual's awareness, but that affect their sense of reality, such as psychosis.”

Automatism induced by a substance, such as a drug, is “very, very rare”, said Mr. Parent. In his more than 20 years of research on this subject, he saw the courts accept no more than four cases.

However, cases of psychosis triggered following drug consumption, where the highly intoxicated individuals are aware of their actions, “occur very frequently, as police and psychiatrists will tell you”. But these individuals are not covered by Bill C-28...

This deserves another look. I submit that the automatism defence is a common law creation and that it is not expressly mentioned in the wording of the proposed section 33.1, any more than psychosis is. The interesting thing about the Brown decision is that it says that Brown was in a psychotic state akin to automatism. Maybe that is covered by section 33.1, but maybe not. That is worth exploring.

The proposed section 33.1 reads as follows: “A person who, by reason of self-induced extreme intoxication, lacks the general intent or voluntariness ordinarily required to commit an offence referred to in subsection (3), nonetheless commits the offence”. Does that not also encompass psychosis? Is there not a *mens rea* defence that in any case would fall outside section 33.1? It is a valid question.

As I was saying, it would be good if the government could avoid falling into the same old bad habits this fall when the time comes for the *ex post facto* review of this section in committee. If we encounter pitfalls, if we observe that the interpretation is not clear when it comes to substance addiction, the type of drug consumed, the individual's predisposition, or the emotional or family circumstances, I hope the government will have the humility to be open to amending the proposed section.

• (2150)

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Saint-Jean for her speech.

I am glad that she said she was not a criminal law expert, because if she were, we would have gotten another great lesson. I congratulate her on giving such an excellent, well-documented and detailed speech, as usual, especially on a topic like this one.

With respect to Bill C-28, I must admit that I am not naturally a particularly open-minded person. This is a humble confession, but I was reassured to see that this is being taken seriously by the Minister of Justice and by parliamentarians. I also want to commend my colleague from Fundy Royal, who collaborated in the drafting of this bill.

The member said in her speech that the government would refer this bill to parliamentary committee to address certain aspects. We had to move quickly in response to the Supreme Court decision, but is the member, as a lawyer, reassured by the fact that this issue will be dealt with again in parliamentary committee this fall?

Ms. Christine Normandin: Madam Speaker, in a way, I am reassured that it has already been announced that there will be an *ex post facto* review of the measure. I would hope that legal professionals will be invited. My criminal law colleagues for both the Crown and the defence would certainly have some interesting things to say. I imagine it will be most interesting to analyze the section as applied.

I will say it again. The government must “consider the objective foreseeability of the risk that the consumption of the intoxicating substances could cause extreme intoxication and lead the person to harm another person”.

What is “objective foreseeability”? As I said, how should substance addiction, the type of drug consumed, the individual's predisposition, their past experience with drugs, and their emotional and family circumstances be taken into account? All these factors

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open the door to myriad interpretations. Does the government want to clarify that or not? That is a valid question. Perhaps there will be more answers in parliamentary committee.

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague.

[English]

I would like to just reflect on the past 40 days or so since the Supreme Court decision came about. The government has moved expeditiously to put forward this legislation. We thank the member and her party for their support and look forward to studying this bill at committee later on this year.

I want to ask her what she has been hearing from key stakeholders. I know that on our end, for example, we have heard this from LEAF:

LEAF supports this thoughtful, nuanced, and constitutional legislation to address the narrow gap resulting from the SCC decisions.

Could the member comment on what she has been hearing from key stakeholders in her riding and in Quebec?

• (2155)

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Madam Speaker, I am not the justice critic, so, unfortunately, I cannot say that I have had the privilege of meeting with women's groups, among others, that might have had a thing or two to say. I opted to focus more on the practical legislative aspect of the issue with my colleagues, some of whom are more knowledgeable about criminal law. They said there may or may not be some room for improvement. Perhaps once the parliamentary committee completes its study, it will conclude that Bill C-28 is well written.

What is important to remember is that we have a Supreme Court ruling explaining why section 33.1 was not constitutional and suggesting an approach for drafting the new bill. What we do not want to do is draft a new bill on behalf of women's groups and others that will also be overturned by the court in the end. We have to keep that in mind.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, everyone has talked about the importance of prevention and, above all, the need to take action on sexual assault.

Could my colleague also share her comments on the need for the government to act more comprehensively to end violence and sexual assault against women?

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Ms. Christine Normandin: Madam Speaker, I think that in some ways, it is even more important to tackle this problem than it is to address Bill C-28. It is important to remember that the bill deals with extremely rare cases. Extreme intoxication to the point of automatism is not a common occurrence. We have seen it only a few times over a period of 30 years, while sexual assault offences are sadly far more common. With that in mind, it is even more important to tackle this problem directly and much more aggressively. Although what we are doing tonight is absolutely necessary, the focus should be more on sexual assault.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am just going to ask my colleague a question and take the opportunity to thank her once again for her work during this session.

Unfortunately, the session is ending with a bill that touches on a very sensitive issue. Women's groups have many questions and doubts. It is clear that the issue of defences in cases of sexual assault is extremely delicate.

What message does this bill send, as part of a continuum? I see that the stars are aligning at the moment for us to work on this issue. I am thinking in particular of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage and the Hockey Canada case. There has been a lot of talk about the importance of working on the culture of toxic masculinity and how we educate young men about their behaviour towards women. Similarly, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women just did a study on intimate partner violence. Today, this bill is being introduced. These are extreme cases. How does this add to a series of really important measures to be able to work on this important issue?

Statistics show that people are often intoxicated in cases of sexual assault. The numbers are staggering.

Ms. Christine Normandin: Madam Speaker, there is the whole issue of how to deal with different types of sexual assault. My colleague mentioned a few. I would say that this is a different issue. We cannot see the bill as being part of a continuum because we are responding to a Supreme Court of Canada decision, and we could not anticipate exactly when it would be handed down. It is rather unfortunate that the ruling was handed down at the end of the session. We could not tell the Supreme Court of Canada to delay its decision until the fall or to release it sooner so we would have more time. That was out of our control.

I therefore do not think it belongs in a continuum of measures for other problems. It is really something that fell into our lap. The Supreme Court of Canada could have decided not to strike down the section. Then we would have had nothing to do. In short, we had no control over the Supreme Court of Canada's decision, and we are never supposed to have any.

• (2200)

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be speaking tonight on Bill C-28, though perhaps not to be speaking at this hour, but I am glad to see Parliament acting quickly in response to the Supreme Court of Canada decision in *R. v. Brown*, which found section 33.1 of the Criminal Code, prohibiting the use of the extreme intoxication de-

fence, unconstitutional. That was on May 13 of this year, only some five weeks ago.

It is important to note that the Supreme Court found section 33.1 violated the charter, both section 7, which provides protection for life, liberty and security of the person, and section 11(d), which protects the presumption of innocence. It is also important to note that our legal system has gone back and forth over time on the legality of using extreme intoxication as a defence in crimes requiring an element of intent.

The Supreme Court of Canada, before the charter, in 1978, in a case called *R. v. Leary*, said it never could be used as a defence in those kinds of cases. However, after the charter was established in 1994, in a case called *R. v. Daviault*, the Supreme Court overruled what I guess we could call the previous common law rule and restored the possibility of using extreme intoxication as a defence, finding that the prohibition violated the charter.

The details of the Daviault case were particularly horrible, which other members recounted earlier, and they actually caused Parliament to act fairly quickly in 1995 to restore the prohibition on the use of extreme intoxication as a defence by inserting section 33.1 of the Criminal Code. That is the section the Supreme Court now has said is unconstitutional once again.

I want to stop here and remind everyone that simple intoxication has never been a defence in Canada for crimes of violence of any sort, including sexual assault, and nothing about the current Supreme Court decision or about Bill C-28 changes that. Simple intoxication is not a criminal defence in this country, but there has been a great deal of misinformation, particularly online, that has misled people into thinking that somehow simply being drunk is a defence in criminal law in Canada.

We have to remember that extreme intoxication is a very specific and limited circumstance, a specific circumstance where impairment is so severe that people have no control over their bodies, their minds have no control over their bodies or, in common language, they are unconscious about what they are doing. Even though these cases are rare, like other members who have spoken before me, I am glad to see us acting quickly to restrict the possibility of anyone being able to escape responsibility for their actions by using the extreme intoxication defence and avoiding responsibility, therefore, for the harms that they have caused others.

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Many groups have urged us to act quickly, but I acknowledge that there are some others who are concerned that we risk not getting it exactly right by moving too quickly. That is why I am glad to see that the motion we are dealing with tonight has a provision in it for hearings at the justice committee in the fall. It is unusual for us to conduct hearings on a law so soon after passing it, but I think it gives us a chance to review what we are doing here tonight to see if we have in fact had unforeseen problems or to see if in fact there is more that we need to do. That is why I am confident with us moving ahead tonight because we will do that review in the fall.

The Supreme Court of Canada itself pointed out a couple of options available to us as parliamentarians to restrict the possible use of an extreme intoxication defence while still respecting the charter. I believe that Bill C-28 does this well, in ways that would effectively re-establish the principle that in almost all cases, extreme intoxication is no defence.

How would Bill C-28 do this? It would do it in two ways. In order to make a claim of extreme intoxication, defendants will have to provide expert evidence in their own cases that their intoxication was so severe as to amount to what in law is called automatism. This is a well-known legal concept and a specific state already defined in law that the mind is not in control of the body. Therefore, defendants have to present evidence in their own cases, not that it is possible that they were extremely intoxicated and not just claiming that they were extremely intoxicated, but that they were, according to expert evidence presented, in a state of extreme intoxication. That evidence, of course, will have to be presented in court and can be tested in court.

- (2205)

The second way in which Bill C-28 would make it difficult to use this defence is that the prosecution would be able to argue that even if the accused has proved that they were in a state of extreme intoxication, they failed on the standard of criminal negligence because they failed to take the measures a reasonable person would have taken to avoid causing harm.

If a person takes intoxicants or combines prescription drugs and illegal drugs or combines alcohol and magic mushrooms or whatever it is that the accused was doing, and if they, as a reasonable person, should have known the possibility of losing control and the possibility of violence, then they should have taken measures to limit that possibility, and if they did not, then they could not use this defence.

My summary, in plain language, is that the Supreme Court of Canada cracked open the door on the use of extreme intoxication defence, and what we are doing with Bill C-28 is shutting that door as far as possible while still being consistent with the Charter of Rights.

The Minister of Justice has presented a charter statement for Bill C-28 that certifies that Bill C-28 is in fact charter compliant and consistent with the decision of the Supreme Court in *R. v. Brown*. I have no reason to doubt the content of that charter statement.

As likely the last speaker on Bill C-28 tonight before we adopt it, I do not want to risk going on at too great a length, but let me say that after a House sometimes has had a bad reputation with the pub-

lic for being overly partisan and polarized and unable to look after the public good, I believe we are demonstrating something different here tonight.

Through the confidence and supply agreement between the Liberals and New Democrats, I believe we have already demonstrated that in a minority Parliament we can co-operate and work together to get things done, but Bill C-28 demonstrates an even broader ability of parliamentarians from all parties to come together co-operatively and to act swiftly in the public interest. That is what we will be doing tonight when we pass Bill C-28 a little over a month after a Supreme Court decision that cracked that door open to escaping responsibility for violent acts by claiming extreme intoxication.

What we are doing tonight is once again, as I said, making that a remote possibility. We are making it the remote possibility that it should be.

I hope we come across other opportunities in this Parliament to have the same zeal for working together. One of those opportunities is on the issue of coercive and controlling behaviour, and there is a link here because we are talking about violence primarily against women.

Twice the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights has recommended to the House that the government introduce legislation to make coercive and controlling behaviour a criminal offence. Such legislation would recognize that coercive and controlling behaviour is in itself a form of violence, but it would also recognize that it is very often a precursor to physical violence.

As I said, twice now the justice committee has recommended this to the House, and I hope we will find an opportunity to get the same all-party agreement and the same ability to move forward on that piece of legislation as well.

In conclusion, sometimes I am very proud to be a part of this Parliament, and tonight, on Bill C-28, is one of those nights.

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Madam Speaker, it warms the heart to hear my hon. colleague is proud to be a member of the House tonight. I commend him for his work on the justice committee.

In light of the compressed timeline we are dealing with, we all recognize the government needed to act with extreme urgency when this decision came down. Is the member open to working with members of all parties on the justice committee in the fall to hear from witnesses who may have ideas on how this legislation, which will have already passed by then, could perhaps warrant further amendments to the Criminal Code to best close this loophole?

Mr. Randall Garrison: Madam Speaker, I want to state again, as I have many times, that the hon. member for Fundy Royal and I have a good working relationship, despite the fact there are many things we might not agree on. Sometimes there is common ground, as there is tonight.

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Certainly I agree with him. Though it was not our idea and I believe it may have been his idea, the motion we are dealing with would order the justice committee to conduct such hearings in the fall. As I said in my speech, it will give us the opportunity to see whether we have done the right thing and whether there is more we can do on the issue of violence against women through extreme intoxication.

Absolutely, the answer is yes.

• (2210)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his very thoughtful presentation today. I also want to thank him for his co-operation at the justice committee and for his hard work.

I want to ask him what he is hearing from key stakeholders. I know we have been engaged with a number of key stakeholders who are quite supportive of the legislation. His co-operation is essential to getting this passed. I want to know what his stakeholders are telling him about this legislation and if there is any feedback on its overall intent, as well as the balance that we were able to find in coming forward today.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Madam Speaker, my experience is the same as what the minister and others have expressed, which is that the vast majority of people I have heard from in this short period of time, especially ordinary citizens, would like to see us move very quickly to close this possible loophole. The majority of organizations that are more active in legal reform have also said they think this bill accomplishes what we need to do.

As I said in my speech, there are some, but only a few I have heard from in the past few days, that think that we could do more or that we could make closing the door even tighter. I am not sure they are correct about that, given the Supreme Court decision, but I am certainly willing to hear from them in the hearings we will conduct this fall.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, in terms of the stakeholders that did come forward, I know that LEAF has shown support for this piece of legislation. However, LEAF specifically called for a great deal more education within the justice system, and more advocacy for women who deal with, and have to go through, the criminal justice system when they experience violence.

Could he talk about what the government should be doing in order to address those concerns that LEAF brought forward?

Mr. Randall Garrison: Madam Speaker, in justice, when talking about a number of issues, there is always an area where we need to do more. That is the issue of violence against women. We have heard the Liberal government talk about its action plan for quite a long time now, and I think most of us are ready to see that plan and would like to make sure there is actually action in the action plan.

As I mentioned toward the end of my speech, the issue of coercive and controlling behaviour is a form of violence, but it also usually leads to physical violence eventually. We have had all-party agreement at the justice committee; we achieved that twice. We

have held hearings at the justice committee. I express my hope, and I do it again, that sometime very soon in this Parliament we will get the same all-party agreement to move quickly on that issue as well.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There being no further members rising, pursuant to order made on Tuesday, June 21, the motion is deemed adopted and Bill C-28 is deemed read a second time, referred to a committee of the whole, deemed considered in committee of the whole, deemed reported without amendment, deemed concurred in at report stage and deemed read a third time and passed on division.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time, considered in committee of the whole, reported without amendment, concurred in, read the third time and passed)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We have a point of order. The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I believe, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to see the clock at 12 a.m.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to see the clock at midnight?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

• (2215)

[*English*]

TAXATION

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Madam Speaker, Canadians are struggling with soaring gas prices and the highest increase in food costs and inflation in 40 years. While Canadians are struggling, the government has refused to provide relief, despite the fact that it is raking in billions off the backs of consumers. Worst of all, the government is filling its massive fuel slush fund by the taxing of taxes. I speak, of course, of the HST being applied to the federal excise tax on fuel, the federal carbon tax on fuel and the provincial tax, never mind the product. My god, I am sure that if the Liberals could get away with it, they would put a tax on a tax on a tax.

This is why I am going to ask the government, for a fifth time now, to please help Canadians.

I know that my colleague will likely have some government talking points. I am going to help him out, so that we can really get to the substance of this debate.

The Liberals are likely going to cite child care. Yes, child care is great. I support child care, but how does \$10-a-day child care help Canadians if they cannot afford the gas to take their child to day care? What about those of us who do not have kids or whose kids are adults now?

The Liberals will tell us that inflation is a challenge that multiple countries are facing. They might even list the countries where inflation is worse than in Canada, but our concern should be our constituents and Canadians here. How does the fact that it is worse elsewhere help those of us struggling here at home?

The Liberals might mention that payments are coming from the carbon tax and list the projected amounts that families are supposed to be rebated. When? People need help now. Can people expect payments when they can still afford to make a mortgage or rent payment or when they can still afford to put food on the table?

The Liberals will likely also cite how supply chains and many things are outside of the government's control. Do members know what the federal government has complete control of? It has complete control over how it chooses to use the massive slush fund of at least \$2.5 billion. That is \$2.5 billion extra that the government had not budgeted for or earmarked, the windfall.

Doing nothing is a choice. If the government wants to choose to continue to tax taxes, that is its prerogative, but I will plead with my hon. colleague to please put himself in the shoes of people who dread the end of the month and who wonder whether or not they will be able to make their bill payments. People are at their breaking point. They need help.

I hope that the fifth time is the charm and that this fifth call on the government will be enough to persuade it to help struggling Canadians.

Therefore, I ask my hon. colleague this: Will the government stop taxing taxes and will it please help Canadians who are struggling?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member is starting to sound more and more like our Conservative colleagues across the way, not so much in terms of concern about inflation but more in the rhetoric and manufactured outrage, in my opinion, that he seems to be displaying.

I apologize to him that he has asked this question five times. I hope he listens carefully, because my answers will be extremely direct. I will not talk about child care, I will not list countries and I will not talk about payments coming back to people from the price on pollution, despite the fact that they are all extremely important programs.

Indeed, I will talk about affordability being top of mind for our government, just as it is for most Canadians these days. We understand that Canadians are worried about inflation and that they are rightly asking what their government is going to do about it.

The current high inflation is a global phenomenon, driven in large part by the lasting impacts of a once-in-a-generation pandemic and amplified by China's ongoing COVID-zero policies and Russia's illegal invasion in Ukraine. These are not excuses; I am putting out the facts so that the member clearly understands where the problem originated.

As inflation is a global and multi-faceted issue, our government understands the importance of taking targeted measures here at home to help Canadians make ends meet. How have we supported

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Canadians, and what are we going to do to continue to support them? To answer the member's question directly, this was top of mind when the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance highlighted, just last week, the five real and tangible steps we are taking to help get inflation under control and make life more affordable.

First, the government recognizes the central role of the Bank of Canada. For more than three decades, it has been the bank's responsibility to tackle inflation here in Canada, and we will let the bank continue to do this important work.

Second, as we made clear in budget 2021, we will also address the shortage of workers in this country. Our plan to do so is part of a set of measures that Janet Yellen, U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, has described as modern supply-side economics.

Third, our government also understands that fiscal restraint is key in combatting inflation. Our government is determined to see our debt-to-GDP ratio continue to decline and our deficits continue to be reduced.

Fourth, our government is also committed to making sure that there are enough good middle-class jobs for Canadians. By doing so, we will continue to see our economy be prosperous, as we know that the middle class is so critical in ensuring that prosperity.

Last, we will help Canadians directly with the challenge of affordability, in issue the member has raised. Through the affordability plan, we will provide just under \$9 billion in new support for Canadians. Our plan includes enhancements to the Canada worker benefit; a 10% increase to old age security for seniors over 75; a \$500 payment this year to nearly one million Canadian renters who are struggling with the cost of housing; lower child care fees for families across the country; and benefits indexed to inflation, including the Canada child benefit, the GST credit, the Canada pension plan, old age security and the guaranteed income supplement.

This is how we will make life more affordable for Canadian families while controlling expenditures and maintaining Canada's AAA credit rating.

• (2220)

Mr. Kevin Vuong: Madam Speaker, my colleague listed a number of things that he says his government is doing. Who is paying for these things? It is Canadians. It is Canadians' hard-earned taxpayer dollars that are being used to fund these things.

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However, I did not really hear anything beyond great, grand commitments. How does that help someone who is struggling? It is cold comfort to someone who is sitting at the table at the end of the night, wondering whether they can feed their family next week.

What I hope my hon. colleague could help me to better understand is not a rehashing of things that have already been announced but what Canadians can expect, what my constituents can count on as they struggle to pay their bills.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, this is what they can count on.

They can count on the Canada workers benefit, a 10% increase to old age security for seniors over 75 and a \$500 additional payment this year to nearly one million Canadian renters who are struggling with the cost of housing. Families across the country can rely on lower child care fees. They can rely on the fact that there will be indexation to inflation for the Canada child benefit, the GST credit, the Canada pension plan, old age security and the guaranteed income supplement.

I regret that the member seems to think that these policies are being rehashed and re-laid out and that he does not see the tangible benefits these policies have for Canadians. I am sure that if he goes back and talks to Canadians who are receiving these benefits and explains to them how the changes will further impact their lives, they would see the benefit of them.

HOUSING

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the chance to come back to my question to the Minister of Housing from a couple of weeks ago on the housing crisis in this country, and specifically those who are experiencing homelessness and living unsheltered. I had asked the question because decades of underinvestment in both housing and mental health and addiction support are hitting my community hard. As one example of what this looks like, over the past several months an encampment has grown in downtown Kitchener to now upwards of 50 people living in tents in the downtown. My community is reeling.

At the time, I was told the solution was the reaching home program. It is part of Canada's homelessness strategy. It supports the goals of the national housing strategy, and the aim is to reduce chronic homelessness by 50% by 2027-28. Just last summer, the Parliamentary Budget Officer reviewed that plan, and here is what he had to say about it. I quote:

...we project that in the absence of additional spending the number of households in housing need would have increased to approximately 1.8 million households with a \$9.3-billion aggregate affordability gap by 2025-26.

Turning back to my community, this seems like an example of the increase that the PBO was expecting. In 2018, there were 333 people experiencing homelessness in Waterloo Region. Going fast-forward to our most recent point-in-time count study last fall, we see that it tripled. There are now over a thousand people experiencing homelessness in Waterloo Region, 412 of whom are living unsheltered, for example in tents downtown. The rest are in emergency shelters or in transitional housing. There might be the hidden homeless, or people in institutions such as a hospital or a domestic violence shelter. It is clear in my community, and from the PBO's

report in other communities across the country, that these plans are not working.

We also need to be clear that the encampment downtown is not only the result of insufficient federal funds for housing. It is the result of mental health as well. Despite using the right words—for example, we can all agree that mental health is health—the reality is that the funding is not there. In the last election campaign, the governing party promised billions in a new Canada mental health transfer to the provinces. When it came time for the 2022 budget, though, there was not a cent budgeted for this transfer; instead, it got a three-line mention to stay tuned for more.

The fact is that we cannot expect municipalities to take on the housing and mental health crises on their own. They need support from the provinces and, yes, the federal government as well. I appreciate that the parliamentary secretary is with us this evening. She is a person I respect. I wonder if she would be willing to join me to meet people at the encampment in downtown Kitchener. Most importantly, will she share this: Will the federal government step up? If so, what would that look like?

● (2225)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Kitchener Centre for his question and his concern for homeless people in his community. I share that concern.

We believe that all Canadians deserve to have a roof over their heads and to live in dignity, but there is a lot of work to do to get there. Some 35,000 people across the country experience homelessness on any given night. That is why we developed the first national housing strategy in Canada using a human rights-based approach. This comprehensive 10-year strategy, supported by an over \$72-billion investment plan, gives priority to the most vulnerable members of our society.

Over the past two years, these people have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. During that time, we increased the number of projects for them under the national housing strategy. Thanks to budget 2022, we will soon be able to launch measures that will help them even more. For example, the rapid housing initiative is a very successful program that has helped thousands of Canadians who were living in precarious housing during the pandemic.

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Two and a half billion dollars has already been allocated to the program, which will quickly create over 10,000 new affordable homes for Canadians who need it most. In this budget, we are proposing an additional \$1.5 billion over two years to extend this initiative, based, in particular, on comments that were made last year. This new funding is expected to help create at least 6,000 new affordable housing units, of which at least 25% will be allocated to housing projects for women.

As my colleague from Kitchener Centre might already know, three housing projects in his riding were made possible through the rapid housing initiative. Together, they will create more than 70 permanent, affordable housing units for the people who need it most. One of those projects is oneROOF. It will soon be able to give people experiencing homelessness, people with mental health or addiction issues, and indigenous peoples a place to call home.

Our government also remains committed to ending chronic homelessness through Reaching Home, Canada's homelessness strategy. We have committed over \$3 billion to address homelessness, including doubling annual funding for four years in response to the pandemic. With budget 2022, we will provide \$562 million over two years to continue providing doubled annual funding for this program. We will also support research on eliminating chronic homelessness and a new veteran homelessness program.

Our government is making significant and sustained investments in housing. We are working hard to make housing more affordable for Canadians. As my colleague surely knows, and he would agree with me, our federal leadership and the significant investments we have made in housing across the country through the national housing strategy are some of the most significant we have seen from this government and in Canada in over 30 years now.

• (2230)

[*English*]

Mr. Mike Morrice: Madam Speaker, I think it is important to note that it is true that the federal government is not doing nothing, and organizations like oneROOF are doing incredible work. The projects she mentioned are important projects that are benefiting people in my community every day, but what I think is also really critical for her to understand is that the trend is going the wrong direction. It is insufficient. It is not nothing, but it is insufficient.

Specifically, as I mentioned, we tripled the number of unhoused individuals in my community in the last three years alone. This is a time when the governing party has had the opportunity to do more, and it has not. I am sure this is not only in Kitchener this is happening, but certainly, if the parliamentary secretary wants to, she can come downtown and see people who are living in tents as a result.

My question is the same. While I appreciate what has already been done, and the rapid housing initiative is important, I would like to see her do far more.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Madam Speaker, again, stable and affordable housing offers a refuge at a time of uncertainty. We agree. We need to do more. That is precisely the message we sent in budget 2022, a budget that was focused on housing.

The budget centred on housing and a commitment to work on ending homelessness. I would like to say to my colleague that if he is inviting me to visit his riding, I would be pleased to go meet with him and his constituents.

[*English*]

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Madam Speaker, a strange sort of slow-motion sparring match has been taking place in the Commons since March 22, when I first rose to ask the Minister of Public Safety about the government's plans for a potential goat farm at Joyceville Institution. I have asked questions over and over again on a very specific matter: Will the government guarantee that it will not permit CORCAN, the profit-making prison industry arm of the Correctional Service of Canada, to establish a goat farm?

Various spokesmen for the government, sometimes the minister, sometimes the parliamentary secretary and on one occasion the member for Kingston and the Islands, have answered that there is at present no goat farm and no contract to start building one. A typical response is this one from May 30: "Correctional Service Canada does not possess any goats, and there are no contracts for the sale of goat milk."

Now, I do not doubt that this is true, but what I want is something different: a commitment from the government that it will absolutely, permanently close off the option of starting a goat operation. There is a real need for a definitive policy statement.

It is abundantly clear that the Correctional Service of Canada remains very much committed to creating a commercial goat farm. Every time we get a definitive-sounding answer in the House of Commons, like the one I just recited, we get the opposite from correctional services. For example, two days after I was told that there are no goats and there is no contract, CSC restated to the media that while at present there are no plans for dairy goat operations, it would "reassess at a later date", which means that a goat farm employing convict labour at below-market rates appears to still be on the table.

Meanwhile, a \$10-million contract has been issued for the construction of a dairy cow barn at Joyceville, despite the fact that the correctional service is legally prohibited from using this milk to feed the inmate community. It is also legally prohibited from selling it externally because it has no dairy quota. The sole plausible purpose for this cow's milk must be the one that correctional services intended from the start: to feed the baby goats whose own mothers' milk is being sold commercially.

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Of course, there is this important detail: The site plan embedded in the \$10-million contract contains something labelled “Future Goat Barn. Not in Contract”, and something called “Future Septic System for Goat Barn”. The part of the contract labelled “project description” could hardly be less ambiguous on this point: “It is the intent of Correctional Services Canada to construct two livestock barns, one for Cattle and one for Goats at the Joyceville Institution. The proposed Goat barn will have an approximate footprint of 6500 square meters.” It is abundantly clear that this contract is simply stage one of a two-stage construction project for a commercial goat farm.

While I am confident that the Correctional Service of Canada still does not own any goats and still does not have any contract for the sale of goat milk, I ask this once again, as I did on June 10: Will the government order the Correctional Service of Canada to end the possibility of any future reassessment of the goat farm, and will the government stop spending millions on the infrastructure for that goat farm, the one that it claims it does not want? Specifically, will the government commit to instructing the Correctional Service of Canada that no second Joyceville construction contract will be issued?

• (2235)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a lot to unpack there, but I will start by saying that the only reason why correctional institutions do not supply regular dairy fresh milk to inmates is because Stephen Harper's government actually completely removed that and substituted it with powdered milk several years into its mandate. That is the reason why inmates are no longer drinking fresh milk, but that is beside the point of why we are here today.

I want to take the opportunity to address some of the things that I heard today from the member, and indeed, leading into today's question and to the various different ones. I will start by reiterating that the Correctional Service of Canada does not currently possess any goats for use in a penitentiary agricultural program. It also does not have any contracts or agreements with any third parties, either domestic or international, for the sale of goat milk.

I will remind the member opposite that the operations at the Joyceville and Collins Bay institutions, at this time, are currently focused on full implementation of dairy cow operations. I am very proud to note that the construction of the dairy cattle barn at the Joyceville Institution, which the member referenced, commenced in April. Once completed, the barn will facilitate the Correctional Service of Canada fully implementing its dairy cattle operation.

When it comes to operations and programming, the Correctional Service of Canada has engaged, and will continue to engage, with community members and stakeholders. I would also encourage interested parliamentarians to visit these sites, if they have not already done so, to see for themselves first-hand what correctional interventions are offered to promote rehabilitation.

On that note, I am proud to speak to the successes associated with the offender employability program, which includes the penitentiary agricultural program. Through this CORCAN program, of-

fenders can participate in various types of interventions and services, including on-the-job vocational and essential skills training.

While this allows them to acquire skills related to a specific industry, what they learn is also transferable to a variety of types of employment. This is something that the former Conservative government completely neglected to acknowledge when it decided to close those programs.

Finding and maintaining employment in the community is key to recidivism. CSC has research documents dating back even earlier than 2014 that note a connection between employment and positive reintegration results. I will note that the reports cited by the hon. member, which have subsequently been supported in other research since that time, noted the following: that inmates who participated in CORCAN employment programs while incarcerated were more likely to be granted parole, that they were more likely to get a job in the community, and that they were more likely to have a reduced rate of returning to prison.

These points note that the earlier release on day parole and increased likelihood to obtain employment leads to a reduction in offenders repeating and re-entering into correctional programs.

Finally, despite the claims that have been made, I would like to emphasize that when it comes to the operations of these farms, private industry does not benefit financially from the involvement of inmates. Revenues generated from these operations are reinvested directly into the offender employment and employability program.

* * *

• (2240)

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing the House that the Senate has passed the following bill, to which the concurrence of the House is desired: S-5, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, to make related amendments to the Food and Drugs Act and to repeal the Perfluorooctane Sulfonate Virtual Elimination Act.

The hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston.

* * *

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a very brief question for the parliamentary secretary. I am aware that he is not in a position to make a statement on behalf of the government, so I will simply ask him to take this back to the Minister of Public Safety.

It is the question that I ended with. Will the government commit to instructing the Correctional Service of Canada that no second Joyceville construction contract will be issued? If that is done and that instruction is issued, that would end the possibility of a goat farm. It would also end the possibility of any further questions from me, which must be a very welcome prospect for the hon. member.

He is my neighbour and friend. I just want to take this opportunity, as we come to the end of the Parliamentary session, to wish my hon. colleague and friend a very happy summer. It sounds like he has some very nice plans put together. He has a wonderful family to share the summer with, and I wish him the very happiest summer vacation possible.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, that sentiment is reciprocated to the member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston. I know that in the House it quite often seems like we are continually sparring, but the member and I just had a great opportunity to have a very civilized personal conversation prior to this debate, despite the fact that we might be at odds on this particular issue.

I obviously do not have a direct answer to the member's question, but I also do not understand how this demand is coming for-

Adjournment Proceedings

ward through this question and answer period. If the member wants to put forward a policy objective of the government, he should do so through a motion or various other forms where he can do that. In the meantime, I do not think that it is indicative of the government in any regard to say that it can guarantee one way or another that it will do one thing or another. If the member is interested in changing the policy of the government, there are ways to do that, but I do not believe that this back-and-forth is the proper place.

[*Translation*]

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

(The House adjourned at 10:44 p.m.)

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