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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

PETER GODWIN CHANCE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is my extreme honour to take the floor today to pay tribute to someone I knew and loved. When I start to describe his life, I think members will find it extraordinary that such a brave war hero continued to be so busy in his community. Peter Godwin Chance died April 19 at 103 years old.

I cannot begin to tell colleagues about his exploits as a naval commander in the war, surviving a sinking by German subs, involved in the Dunkirk evacuation, D-Day, and then the Korean War. Over and over again, he served his country and his king with such distinction. I have to tell my friends in this place about one of the things he said kept him going. When he hit 100, he said, “Well, longevity is a case of luck and the occasional belt of scotch.”

I also have to say that this was a man who loved life. He will be missed.

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ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Paul Chiang (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, May marks Asian Heritage Month, a time to celebrate the contributions of Asian Canadians to our great nation. This year's theme, “Preserving the Past, Embracing the Future: Amplifying Asian Canadian Legacy”, highlights the resilience of Asian Canadians over adversity.

Canadians of Asian heritage from over 40 countries enrich our society with diverse cultures and traditions. These Canadians and their communities have been a part of shaping Canada's heritage and identity for centuries. However, the rise in anti-Asian hate crimes is alarming and unacceptable. We must unite, condemn racism and strive for a safer, more inclusive society.

Let us stand together, combat systemic racism and honour the enduring legacy of Asian Canadians.

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RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when a child becomes sick, the whole family hurts. We know that when families stay together, sick children get stronger. This is where Ronald McDonald House Charities Canada comes in. RMHC operates an essential mission in Canada today, as the only national organization enabling access to Canada's pediatric health care system.

Today is a special day because it is McHappy Day, in which a portion of the proceeds from every menu item purchased at McDonald's Canada will directly contribute to supporting RMHC.

RMHC houses provide families with accommodation, meals, mental health and wellness programming, peer support, support for siblings, respite, laundry and school, as well as many other services to take care of the entire family while their child is being treated at a nearby hospital. I have seen the impact of these services, where RMHC Southwestern Ontario's house, at the London Health Sciences Centre, served over 280 communities and over 4,600 families in the past year, allowing families to focus on what matters most, their kids.

Today, on McHappy Day, support Canadians and support the Ronald McDonald House.

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GENDER EQUALITY

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, I had the pleasure of attending Embrave's second annual Celebrate Gala and the Zonta Club of Brampton Caledon's 50th celebration.

Statements by Members

Embrace Agency to End Violence, for the past 40 years, has been working hard to eradicate gender-based violence and provide essential support to survivors of violence. Similarly, for the past 50 years, the Zonta Club of Brampton Caledon has been working hard in the Peel region on gender equality and expanding access to education for women and girls.

Last week, I also met with Shelina Jeshani and Sharon from the Safe Centre of Peel, a unique centre providing support services for Bramptonians to fight gender-based violence and intimate partner violence and to support victims.

Organizations like these are on the ground doing real work and champion equality and justice. When we empower women today, we create a just and equitable tomorrow, and a safe place for all women.

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RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES

Hon. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is McHappy Day, an annual celebration of giving to support Ronald McDonald House Charities. Across Canada, 16 Ronald McDonald houses and 18 Ronald McDonald family rooms give families a place to stay together while their child is being treated at a nearby hospital.

I was honoured to announce \$9.3 million for the expansion of the Ottawa house, only 167 steps from the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, through our government's green and inclusive community buildings program. This funding will more than double the size of the current Ottawa house and help with the future needs of families who have to travel from across Ontario and Nunavut to seek medical care for their children.

Today, on McHappy Day, I am proud to thank McDonald's Restaurants of Canada and Ronald McDonald House Charities for all they do to support Canadian families when they absolutely need it the most.

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● (1410)

WAR CHILD CANADA

Ms. Anna Gainey (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the work of War Child Canada on its 25th anniversary. War Child is a globally recognized leader in creating and implementing comprehensive programs for children living with war and violence.

It was founded by Dr. Samantha Nutt in 1999 to address what she saw as significant challenges in the way in which support was being provided to children in areas of conflict. War Child's model of humanitarian action is rooted in collaboration. It is locally driven and locally led. They work to foster the capacity of children, their families and their communities to develop resilience, self-reliance and self-determination in overcoming the impacts of violence and displacement. Today, War Child Canada is operational in Afghanistan, Uganda, South Sudan, Sudan, Yemen and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Please join me in congratulating Dr. Nutt and the War Child Canada team on 25 years of service.

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CURLING

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Manitoba's very own Jennifer Jones on her legendary curling career.

Jennifer was born with a broom in one hand and a rock in the other. Time and time again, she showed us how to win. She saw angles and runbacks that no one else could see, and there was nothing more exciting than watching Jennifer make a miraculous shot to put a double or a triple on the board.

A six-time Scotties Tournament of Hearts champion and two-time World Women's Curling champion, Jennifer made Canada proud every time she wore the maple leaf. Her undefeated run at the Sochi Olympics in 2014 to win the gold medal cemented her place as one of the greatest curlers of all time. Jennifer is a tremendous leader and a beacon of inspiration for an entire generation of young women to take up the sport of curling.

I wish Jennifer, Brent, Bella and Skyla all the best for the years to come. Here is to Jennifer, who leaves the curling rink with a rock-solid legacy.

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RED DRESS ALERT

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, May 5 marked National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, also known as Red Dress Day.

Alarming, despite comprising only 4.3% of the population, indigenous women are four times more likely than non-indigenous women to be the victims of violence, making up 16% of all female homicide victims and 11% of missing women. Since last year, I have been working with my friend, the member of Parliament for Winnipeg Centre, to implement a red dress alert system to rapidly notify the public when an indigenous woman, girl or two-spirit person goes missing. I have been honoured to take part in the consultations that have been indigenous-led and informed.

I am also thrilled with the rapid action our government has taken on this, in particular, the former and current Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, leading to the announcement last week, in partnership with the Province of Manitoba, to implement a regional red dress alert pilot program.

*Statements by Members***ACCESSIBILITY ACTIVIST**

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Milton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Mark DeMontis is one of Canada's leading accessibility strategists. As the chief accessibility officer at The Substance Group, he helps organizations to harness the potential of the eight million Canadians with disabilities. He has a unique perspective as someone who has experienced life both with and without sight and has over 15 years' experience making brands and organizations more accessible for consumers and workers with disabilities.

After losing his NHL dream unexpectedly at the age of 17 from sudden sight loss, Mark established Canadian Blind Hockey, which offers programming and competitions for Canadians who are blind and partially sighted of all ages. He has also in-line skated over 8,000 kilometres across Canada to raise money for the cause. I am thrilled that Canadian Blind Hockey was a recipient of our government's community sport for all initiative, supporting physical activity and recreation at the grassroots level right across Canada.

His story has been featured on *Hockey Night in Canada*, CTV's *W5* and TSN's *Breaking Down Barriers*. He is a recipient of the Terry Fox Humanitarian Award, and this week he was named one of three finalists for the 2024 NHL Willie O'Ree Community Hero Award. I could not agree more. He deserves it.

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FOOD AFFORDABILITY

Mr. Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of this NDP-Liberal government, two million Canadians per month now use the food bank. This includes seniors, veterans and members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

At the Angus Food Bank, I was told that without the support of local grocers Justin & Stacey's, it would have to shut its doors. The CEO of Food Banks Canada says that food banks are becoming "unsustainable". To make matters worse, a new report by Canada's food professor Sylvain Charlebois finds that almost 60% of Canadians now eat expired food. People are risking getting sick in order to save money on groceries.

The NDP-Liberal government may talk a big game about reducing poverty, but in its Canada, soldiers line up at food banks and families eat expired food in order to make ends meet. It is time to axe the tax and restore food affordability here in Canada.

* * *

● (1415)

[Translation]

JEAN-FRANÇOIS GIRARD

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to once again praise the people of Beauport—Limoilou for their solidarity and their love for arts and culture. Tomorrow, these two themes will coalesce around Jean-François Girard, the man behind Limoilou en Vrac and the organizer of Limoilou en Musique. Wherever there is talk of arts and culture, we can be sure that Jean-François is not far away. Tomorrow, the opening event for Limoilou en Musique will be the shaved head challenge in solidarity with Jean-François, who has been diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer. We stand together with him.

We all have someone in our lives who has faced or is currently facing cancer. The people on my list include Jean-François, my dad, my aunts Rosalyne, Marie-Lourdes and Nathalie, my uncles Francis and Ghislain, and my friends Carolane, Luc, Kirsty and Patricia. Everyone has a list of people that they can think of. Everyone needs to support research and local organizations as Beauport—Limoilou is doing.

In solidarity with Jean-François, in chorus and in music, we shall overcome.

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HOUSING

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, can anyone here imagine a country where young couples, 24 and 26 years old, are forced to leave their apartment and move back in with their parents in the hope of one day becoming homeowners? Can anyone here imagine a country where the housing crisis has become one of the main causes of stress among psychiatric patients? Can anyone here imagine a country where a woman is thinking about living in a minivan because she cannot find an affordable place to live? Can anyone here imagine a country where renters are contacting housing advocacy groups and expressing serious suicidal thoughts because they are not only desperate, but they see no way out and want to give up?

Unfortunately, that country is Canada, as described in the papers day after day, after nine years of this Liberal Prime Minister. With \$500 billion in inflationary spending, supported by the Bloc Québécois, this Prime Minister has created the worst inflation crisis in 40 years. The crisis caused the interest rates to go up, made home ownership an unattainable dream, doubled the cost of housing and will force thousands of people out into the street. Canada was not like that before this Prime Minister, who is not worth the cost, and, fortunately, it will not be like that anymore once the next Conservative government brings back common sense.

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[English]

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the Prime Minister is not worth the crime, chaos, drugs or disorder. His disastrous decision to legalize hard drugs in public in British Columbia has failed miserably. Some have called his judgment nothing short of wacko.

Statements by Members

Let us be clear: It is wacko to have parents searching fields before their kids play sports or to allow meth or crack to be smoked in a hospital as doctors and nurses try to do their job. It is wacko that it took two weeks for the Prime Minister to reverse course. The most wacko of all this is the fact that the Prime Minister will still not rule out expanding this crazy experiment to Toronto and Montreal, where it would inflict the same chaos we have seen in B.C.

There was a time when someone said there was a “small fringe minority” in Canada, talking about apparently radical and wacko views. It turns out it is alive and well: It is today's Liberal Party and the Prime Minister.

* * *

[Translation]

MÉLANIE NOËL

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Mélanie Noël, a writer from Sherbrooke, was recently named the Eastern Townships artist of the year by the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec. Following a distinguished career as a journalist, during which she won the prestigious Prix Judith-Jasmin, Mélanie is now employing her talents as an author and lyricist.

Her three books present poetic, sensitive and touching tales that spark the imagination through the magic of her writing, while her lyrics can be found on three albums that won Félix awards at the ADISQ gala. For her, writing is a way to express love, and anyone who allows themselves to be carried away by her stories is sure to fall under her spell. As a mother, a romantic and an adventurer, she finds inspiration in life's little pleasures.

Mélanie's work will continue to move and influence many people. I applaud her for the impact she makes through her words.

* * *

● (1420)

[English]

RED DRESS DAY

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Sunday was Red Dress Day, a day to raise awareness of, remember and honour missing and murdered indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse people. It is vital that we hold these people in our hearts and minds. More than that, it is important that we, as legislators, work to implement the calls for justice from the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

[Translation]

The homicide rate among indigenous women and girls is still six times higher than that of their non-indigenous counterparts.

A year ago, members of this Parliament unanimously supported a motion declaring the deaths and disappearances of indigenous women and girls a Canada-wide emergency.

[English]

The recent partnership between the federal government and Manitoba, to implement a red dress alert pilot program notifying the public of missing indigenous women, girls, two-spirit and gender-

diverse people, is an important step. However, we must do more to end gender-based violence against indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse individuals.

There should be no more stolen sisters.

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[Translation]

PIERRE LEFEBVRE

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, history buffs will recall that on the night of May 7, 1944, in the midst of World War II, the frigate HMCS *Valleyfield* was torpedoed by a German ship, resulting in the deaths of 125 crew members. In a plot worthy of a Hollywood film, the frigate *Valleyfield* was carrying a top-secret decoder that enabled the allies to send each other secure, strategic messages.

The whole saga is being researched, shared and publicized by an outstanding Salaberry—Suroît resident, Navy Lieutenant Pierre Lefebvre. His passion for naval history led him to have a major monument erected in honour of the frigate *Valleyfield* in 2000 and to reunite survivors of the attack for the occasion. Mr. Lefebvre also founded the 329 Valleyfield sea cadet corps.

On the eve of his retirement from the armed forces after 46 years of service, I salute Mr. Lefebvre for his remembrance efforts and thank him for his involvement in the community.

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[English]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government is not worth the cost; neither is the CBC.

Under the leadership of the CEO, Catherine Tait, viewership, trust and revenue are all down. Despite this abysmal performance, the Liberal government has rewarded Ms. Tait by extending her contract and granting another \$60,000 bonus. That is more than most Canadians make in an entire year.

Another \$15 million was handed over to the executives as more bonus money. After this, the CEO had the nerve to come to committee and claim that the CBC is chronically underfunded. She then announced that she would be cutting 800 jobs.

Then, just weeks ago, the Prime Minister announced that he would be giving \$140 million more to the same failed institution. This means that now the CEO can continue to give herself and the top executives big fat bonuses.

Greed and incompetence are exactly what is dragging this organization down.

Common-sense Conservatives are calling on the Liberal government to instruct the CBC to stop awarding themselves big fat bonuses.

* * *

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, May 3 commemorated World Press Freedom Day, a day when we celebrate journalists for the work that they do and the risks they take to keep us informed. They pay a high price, with attacks by groups from authoritarian regimes to criminal enterprises. Journalists risk life and limb pursuing truth.

This year, the price was high. It was the deadliest year on record, with 115 journalists dead in conflict zones. They worked with the word “press” emblazoned on their flak jackets, sharing stories that we need to hear. Hundreds more languished in jail.

As the Leader of the Opposition and others, as we have just heard, boast about putting “for sale” signs on the CBC, many around the world are putting up gravestones instead. It is a short trip from rhetorical attacks on the press to actual violence. As journalists perish in jails and newsrooms dim their lights, truth and fiction become harder and harder to distinguish.

I am proud to be part of a government that stands with journalists, champions facts over misinformation and reinforces the democratic values we hold dear.

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1425)

[Translation]

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have a common-sense plan: axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. Still, this Prime Minister is not worth the cost. He has doubled our national debt only to double the cost of housing, or triple it in Montreal, to be honest.

As the end of the month draws near, Quebeckers are worrying about paying the rent. Will the Prime Minister finally reverse his inflationary policies, which are putting Quebeckers at risk of losing their houses or apartments?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, instead of stirring up anxiety with misinformation, the member should give Canadians the true facts.

The fact is that Canada's fiscal position is the strongest of the G7 countries. We have the highest credit rating of almost any country

Oral Questions

in the world. We are investing responsibly to ensure that we are putting the government's assets in the service of Canadians and their interests. Our investment in housing is based on a highly comprehensive plan to create housing for all generations.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, is he seriously accusing me of causing Quebeckers anxiety? It is like he is saying that Quebeckers would never have noticed that their rent has doubled if I had not mentioned it. Does he think Quebeckers cannot read numbers? He says the economy is not about numbers, but rents are numbers. The prices we pay when we buy food at the grocery store are numbers.

Will he finally look at the numbers and see that he is not worth the cost?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for months, years even, we have heard the Conservatives say that our policies of investing in Canadians are the reason Canadians are facing challenges.

On the contrary, Canada has the strongest fiscal position in the G7. We are investing and using that strong position to help families who are struggling. These investments in housing, dental care, senior care and child care are all investments that help Canadians and put the government in service of Canadians.

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[English]

FINANCE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while common-sense Conservatives will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime, the Prime Minister is not worth the cost after nine years. He has doubled the debt and doubled housing costs. He has increased spending by nearly 80%. What did we get for the money? We got the worst per person income growth in the entire G7 and the worst mortgage debt of all those countries.

When will the Prime Minister realize that the more he spends, the worse things get?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have been talking down the economy for a long time now, without understanding that Canada actually has the strongest macroeconomic performance in the G7.

Oral Questions

Our perspective is to put that solid footing of the Government of Canada in service of Canadians by investing in housing, by investing in dental care, by investing in child care and by investing in the supports that Canadians need in this difficult time. His solution is for governments to invest less in Canadians, for ideological reasons, and to be there less for people when they need it most.

* * *

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is more proof that the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. He tells Canadians they have never had it so good. He doubled the debt, doubled housing costs and forced two million people to a food bank. He brags that he spent \$87 billion on housing programs, and what did it get us? It got us the worst housing inflation of any country in the G7, the second worst out of nearly 40 OECD countries.

Why does the Prime Minister always spend the most to achieve the worst?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think Canadians will take no lessons from a former housing minister who was in a government that did not believe in investing in housing.

Obviously, over decades, the federal government underinvested in housing, and it has led to the challenges we are facing now. That is why we are putting and have been putting, in service for Canadians since 2017, the solid fiscal position of the federal government to invest in Canadians, to invest in communities, to invest in housing and to help solve the challenge people are facing around the world. We are solving it despite—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is absolutely right that we did not waste the billions of dollars that he has now put into his programs, but here are the results.

The average rent for a one bedroom when I was the housing minister was \$973, and we built 80,000 apartment units at that low rate. Now the cost has more than doubled. Meanwhile, Stats Canada reports that incomes are down \$17,000 per family.

Why are Canadians making \$17,000 less to pay double the price for a home?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here is the question Canadians should be asking the Leader of the Opposition.

Given that Canada has one of the strongest economic balance sheets in the G7 right now in a country-to-country comparison, should we invest in supporting Canadians and creating housing with that solid balance sheet, or should we, as the Conservative leader is proposing, cut programs, reduce investment and do less for Canadians?

We should be putting the strong fiscal position of the government in service of Canadians. That is what we are doing. That is what the Conservative leader opposes.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister seemed to endorse the vulgar slurs used by his MP, who made what I will call the “M-word” famous in the French-speaking world. It is all a bit of a distraction, however, because the real issue is actually the issue of funding for francophone universities.

In order for us to move on from this and avoid getting tarred as foul-mouthed barbarians, could the Prime Minister ask the member to resign as chair of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie and to apologize to our partners throughout the Francophonie?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, far be it from me to interfere with the poetic argument of the leader opposite, but the reality is that the word he referred to has been known around the world for a very long time. Our member was not the first to use it. He was certainly overzealous, but he apologized and withdrew his remarks.

The fact remains that we will continue to be there to protect francophones across the country, and we will continue to be there to defend French in Quebec and to do something the Bloc Québécois can never and would never do, which is defend francophones outside Quebec.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we have an expression in Quebec that goes, “je ne peux rien lui faire qu'il ne se fera pas lui-même”. In other words, he is his own worst enemy and keeps digging himself into a deeper hole.

It has gotten to the point where he is doubling down and continues to endorse comments that make absolutely no sense by trying to do something that he is not particularly good at. Quick little jokes are not his strong suit.

Could he take responsibility, tell the joker next to him to keep quiet and force the member to resign from the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois leader's responsibility is to pick fights with Ottawa.

The federal Liberal government's responsibility is to defend official languages across the country. We are here to defend French in Quebec, but also to defend the French fact everywhere in Canada. We will be there to defend linguistic minorities across the country.

It should not surprise anyone that the Bloc Québécois's latest battle is to attack a Franco-Ontarian. It is no secret that they do not like francophones who speak French outside Quebec.

• (1435)

[English]

GROCERY INDUSTRY

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are struggling to put food on the table. What are the Liberals doing? They are giving \$25 million to Costco and Loblaws. What are the Conservatives doing? Their leader is too busy wining and dining corporate lobbyists in private dinner clubs.

New Democrats have a clear plan, which is to tackle corporate greed. We need to make sure we bring down the prices and stop giving millions of dollars to corporate grocery stores.

When will the Prime Minister stop giving big grocery a free ride?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, not only are we continuing to move forward on our grocery code of conduct, but we are working on a project to make food more affordable through competition reform. Now, we are creating a national school food program, which is expected to provide meals for more than 400,000 kids a year and save the average family with two children as much as \$800 per year on grocery costs.

We are also ensuring that the wealthiest pay their fair share. Indeed, there are measures in the House right now that will crack down on predatory pricing, and the NDP has the opportunity to support us as it goes through the House.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives have the courage to take on corporate greed, which is driving up the cost of food, but we do.

[Translation]

While people are having a hard time filling their fridge, the Prime Minister is giving \$25 million to Loblaw and Costco when they are making record profits.

What will it take for this Prime Minister to understand that these corporations that are pocketing billions of dollars do not need this money?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are continuing to make progress on the grocery code of conduct and continuing our efforts to make food more affordable through competition reforms.

We are also creating a national school food program, which should provide meals to more than 400,000 children every year and enable an average two-child family to save up to \$800 a year in grocery costs.

There are also measures in the fall economic statement, which the House is currently studying, to crack down on predatory pricing. The NDP has the power to help us get this passed.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP leader was just asking about why the Prime Minister gave tens of millions of dollars in corporate handouts to powerful grocery chains. The answer, of course, is that he voted to let the Prime Minister do that. Not a single penny of that money could have gone without the vote of the NDP coalition partner.

Oral Questions

However, we learned something else, which is that this might have been due to the influence of the NDP leader's spokesman and brother whose company is a lobbyist for Metro. Would the Prime Minister support an investigation into whether or not the NDP leader's spokesman and brother has been unduly influencing the leader of the NDP?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we can see very clearly that all the stories out about lobbyists' connections with the Leader of the Opposition are actually hurting the Leader of the Opposition, which is why he is asking the question on the NDP.

However, the Leader of the Opposition has an opportunity right now to make it clear that he stands with Canadians and stands to ask the wealthiest to pay a little more by announcing now that he will support our measure to increase the capital gains imposition on Canadians, asking the wealthiest to pay a little bit more. He has dodged that question since the budget came out. Does he support the increase on the capital gains inclusion rate?

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do support the Prime Minister paying more tax on the trust fund where he sheltered all of his money, absolutely. He does not, unfortunately, support his own policies, which is why he will not put them into a budget bill.

However, one tax the Prime Minister is increasing is the carbon tax on food, and he is doing it with the help of the NDP. We already have the second-highest carbon tax in the entire developed world, yet if the NDP-Liberal government is re-elected, it plans to quadruple that tax to 61¢ a litre on the farmers and truckers who bring us our food.

How will Canadians afford to eat, heat and house themselves?

• (1440)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, Canadians saw that the Leader of the Opposition avoided pronouncing on whether or not he supports our increase to the capital gains inclusion rate.

However, in regard to his deflection to carbon pricing, carbon pricing works. We are on track to meet our emissions for the first time for any government in Canadian history, and Canadians get more money back in their pockets, thanks to the Canada carbon rebate. Families are already using that rebate to help pay their bills and plan their monthly budgets. Meanwhile, the Conservative leader continues to oppose every measure we put forward for both affordability and fighting climate change.

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, just like his carbon tax, is not worth the cost. The tax is already up to 17¢ a litre, higher than he promised it would go, and he plans to quadruple it further to 61¢ a litre; this, after it is a proven environmental failure. Canada ranks 62 out of 67 countries when it comes to fighting climate change, and this is precisely because what he has is a tax plan and not an environmental plan.

Why will he not adopt our common-sense plan for technology and not taxes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition wants to present an actual plan to fight climate change, we would love to see it, but he has refused to take any measure to fight climate change, period. He does not even recognize that pollution has a cost, which will only keep rising if we do not fight climate change, with extreme weather events and health impacts increasingly impacting Canadians. Indeed, the Conservative leader thinks it should be free to pollute and that we should not be giving more money to Canadians through the Canada carbon rebate.

We will continue to have an effective plan to fight climate change, which is reducing emissions and putting more money back in Canadians' pockets with the CCR.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since the Prime Minister introduced his carbon tax on the farmers who grow the food and the truckers who ship the food, it has raised the price on all who buy the food, with a record-smashing two million visits to food banks every single year, 50% of Canadians buying food past best-before dates and 20% of them becoming sick as a result of it. The Prime Minister promised he was going to help the middle class and those working hard to join it. Now the so-called middle class cannot afford food and homes.

Is that what he meant by help?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, eight out of 10 Canadians, middle-income and lower-income Canadians primarily, do better with the Canada carbon rebate that lands in their bank accounts four times a year because of the price on pollution.

If the leader opposite actually cared about affordability and supporting vulnerable Canadians, he would be standing up to support our measure on dental care, which has now delivered dental care to 30,000 vulnerable seniors across this country already, in just a few weeks. He would be supporting our initiatives to help families. He would be supporting our initiatives to help with child care.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have to do this all over again with him. The Parliamentary Budget Officer produced a report. I am going to read the title so he can google it right now. It is the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report on the distribution of costs and benefits under the carbon pricing program. He can look at page 3, where every single province that has the tax sees middle-class Canadians and 60% of families paying more in tax than they get back in benefits.

Why will he not get to know the facts and axe the tax?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as opposed to the Leader of the Opposition's campaign to simply axe the facts, we are going to continue to stand with the science, the evidence, the research and the economists, who have all pointed out, including the Parliamentary Budget Officer, that the Canada carbon rebate puts more money in the pockets of eight out of 10 families in the jurisdictions across the country in which it is and is effective in bringing down our emissions while creating economic growth as we invest in cleaner technology and good jobs and careers for the future. We have a plan for the economy and the environment. He does not.

• (1445)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with his comedy routine, I was going to say that he should not quit his day job, but actually, he should quit his day job. He should not go into number crunching whatever his next job is, because he does not believe the economy is about numbers. I do not blame him, because if I had his economic record, I would not want to talk about numbers either.

It might help him to go to the library and quietly study just a little. Will he commit to reading page 3 of the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report, which demonstrates Canadians pay more than they get back in the tax?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer and far many more experts and economists have clearly demonstrated that the money that returns to Canadians through the Canada carbon rebate four times a year is greater than eight out of 10 Canadians pay every year with the price on pollution. Those are the simple facts. We will continue to invest in Canadians. We will continue to support with affordability. We will continue to put the best balance sheet in the G7 in the service of Canadians through investments and support, unlike the cuts he is proposing.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as far as the Prime Minister is concerned researchers who use the same figures as Statistics Canada are just looking for a fight, but not his MP, who insults Quebec and has made all of the Francophonie question his choice today.

What would not count as a fight for the Prime Minister? Supporting the scatological little tantrum of his MP and friend?

The Speaker: I would like to remind all hon. members to be very mindful of the words they use to ask or answer questions and to keep everything parliamentary.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member apologized and withdrew the offensive word.

We will continue to be there to defend French and the francophonie around the world and across Canada. Unfortunately, the Bloc Québécois cannot say the same after attacking a Franco-Ontarian and minority language communities across the country.

We are always going to be there. We will be there to defend French in Quebec, with billions of dollars in investments, and we will be there for minority communities across the country, as we have always been.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, the word that I used and that you called me out on is not nearly as bad as the word that the member over there used and that nobody said anything about.

The Prime Minister is trying to sow division between francophones in Quebec and francophones in Canada. I would like to remind him that, in the last election, I wanted to talk about francophones outside Quebec during the English debate and I was told that that was not the place and that we could not talk about French during the English debate.

Is that not picking a fight?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would be delighted to be able to work with the Bloc Québécois to defend francophone communities across the country, but if French starts doing better and better in Canada, that it will be bad for their dream of separatism. That is why they do not care about the fate of French outside Quebec. They want to show that Quebec is the only place where French can be protected.

We need to protect French in Quebec and that is why we are investing to do just that, but we will also protect French everywhere in Canada.

* * *

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, this Prime Minister is not worth the cost of housing, which has doubled across Canada.

The crisis is now more urgent than ever in Quebec. Non-profit organizations report meeting people who are contemplating and planning suicide because they have no idea how they will pay their rent next month.

Will the Prime Minister finally stop his radical plan to fund more bureaucracy instead of more homes?

• (1450)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have invested \$900 million in Quebec alone through the housing accelerator fund. It has been so well received by Quebecers that the Quebec government chose to add \$900 million to the

federal investment, because it knew the program would deliver housing across Quebec.

We are here to work in partnership with municipalities and provinces to invest in more housing, while the ideologically driven Leader of the Opposition calls for austerity and cuts, saying that if the government spent less, people would have more homes.

That is not true. He is wrong.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, now he is spending more to deliver fewer homes.

It is certainly true that he is spending hundreds of millions of dollars, billions of dollars, tens of billions of dollars. He has a new number every year, a new program worth billions more. However, people do not live in the billions and millions of dollars. They live in apartments and houses that now cost twice as much as they did when he took office.

Does the Prime Minister finally understand, after spending nine years creating the worst real estate crisis in the G7, that the more he spends, the more it costs?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as people are well aware, it takes years for investments in housing to have an impact.

When he was the minister responsible for housing and his former government was in power, they spent virtually nothing on housing. They made no investments in housing for 10 years. Then the Conservatives were surprised to see a housing crisis beginning in 2015, 2016 and 2017. Of course that was because the Conservative government had underinvested in housing for so long.

We have been there to invest in communities and to help Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have already celebrated the fact that our programs would cost a lot less and accomplish a lot more.

An apartment would cost \$973 a month. Currently it costs nearly \$2,000. Average monthly payments would be about 38% of the average paycheque. Currently they amount to nearly 64%.

When will the Prime Minister realize that just because his programs are expensive it does not mean that they are good?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we clearly see the fundamental choice Canadians are facing in the next election.

Should a government put its fiscal position in service of Canadians to invest in communities and invest in housing, or should it make cuts to programs to further improve its fiscal position, which is already the best in the G7?

The Conservative leader wants ideology-driven austerity and cuts. We want to make investments for Canadians.

Oral Questions

I know what Canadians are going to choose.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since he implemented his big spending plan, interest rates have skyrocketed. Doubling the national debt inflates interest rates. Who could have foreseen this? In fact, anyone could have.

Any plumber or mechanic could have told him that this is always what ends up happening. That is why Canada has the worst mortgage debt and housing costs in the G7.

Will he finally follow my common-sense plan to have a dollar of savings for every dollar of new spending to reduce interest rates and inflation?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thanks to our sound fiscal management, inflation is coming down and is back in the Bank of Canada's target zone. Interest rates will also begin to fall in the months ahead, we are almost certain of it.

The reality is that the Leader of the Opposition is conflating two things: the government's very strong fiscal position and the situation of families who need more help.

I suggest using the government's strong position to help families. The Conservative leader, in contrast, says that the government should cut services to Canadians. He is wrong.

* * *

• (1455)

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, last month the United Nations special rapporteur visited Canada. He confirmed what indigenous peoples already know: that the right to clean drinking water is not being upheld. The Prime Minister has millions of dollars for the North West Company, Loblaw and Costco but asks indigenous people to wait for clean drinking water.

Will the Prime Minister stop fighting these solvable issues and ensure that all first nations have access to clean water?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will continue to end boil water advisories across the country. When we took office in 2015, there were 109 long-term boil water advisories. We have now lifted about 135 or 140, perhaps even a few more. We are going to continue to lift long-term boil water advisories in ways that are building infrastructure, supporting communities and solving this generations-long problem.

We are here to continue to work with indigenous communities on solving these problems, in true partnership, in building for the long-term future every Canadian and indigenous person deserves.

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THE ECONOMY

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as the cost of living continues to soar, more people in Nanaimo—Ladysmith are barely scraping by. Rent is up. Groceries are up. The number of households living below the poverty line continues to rise.

Instead of helping those who need it, the Liberals are handing \$60 billion to the ultrawealthy. What about the Conservatives? They will always choose the side of lobbyists and rich CEOs.

When will the Prime Minister stop propping up rich CEOs at the expense of people in Nanaimo—Ladysmith and across Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our latest budget is actually focused on equality for every generation, and a big cornerstone of that is asking the wealthiest Canadians to pay a little more so we can invest even more in housing, invest even more in pharmacare, invest even more in child care and invest even more in programs like our school food program that is going to help 400,000 kids across the country.

We know there continues to be more to do, and we are stepping up because not only do we know that helping with affordability for Canadians matters, but we also know that confident countries invest in themselves, their people and their future, and that is exactly what we are doing.

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PHARMACARE

Ms. Valerie Bradford (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government's groundbreaking pharmacare program will provide free contraceptives to millions of women across Canada. While access to free contraceptives is fundamental for every woman to plan their future on their time, the Conservative leader has chosen to deny women this basic freedom.

Can the Prime Minister tell the House why a pharmacare program that guarantees free contraceptives is so important?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative leader opposes pharmacare and our plan to provide free contraception prescriptions to Canadians, and we all know why. The leader and his caucus' ideological objection to reproductive freedoms is putting all Canadians at risk.

Yesterday the member for Peace River—Westlock sponsored an anti-choice petition. The member for Yorkton—Melville has introduced several private member's bills that would serve as a sneaky back door to limit women's bodily autonomy.

One would think that someone who claims to stand for freedom would be there for women as well, but the Conservative leader is not.

* * *

[Translation]

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, this Prime Minister is not worth the cost, the crime, the drugs and the disorder.

Groups that provide child care services are considering relocating after a man died of an overdose in the backyard of day care centre.

Is the Prime Minister going to go so far as to accept the Montreal mayor's request to legalize crack, heroin and other hard drugs, as he did in British Columbia?

• (1500)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is shameful that the Leader of the Opposition uses tragedies to exploit people's fears and fundraise for the Conservatives.

The reality is that he has his facts wrong. No one in this country, apart from the Conservative leader, is talking about legalizing hard drugs. We are focused on science, compassion and a public health approach. That is what people need: housing, services and help.

We are making that happen.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is actually the Prime Minister's government that is talking about legalizing drugs. It did it already. It legalized hard drugs in British Columbia, and the NDP in that province pulled back just before the provincial election.

The Prime Minister now has in his possession an application from the City of Toronto to repeat the same nightmare in that city. The minister responsible says the application is "dormant". It is not dead; it is dormant. Dormant means asleep.

Is that not really the Prime Minister's plan: to wake it up after the election so he can impose the same thing on Toronto as he did in B.C.?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is shameful to hear the Leader of the Opposition misleading the House and misleading Canadians for his own fundraising political gain. There is nobody in this country talking about legalizing hard drugs, with the possible exception of members of the Conservative Party themselves.

The government's approach is focused on a public health approach grounded in science, compassion and community safety. We are talking about wraparound services like housing, mental health treatment and harm reduction that are helping people around the country, and we will continue to work with provinces and jurisdictions in their approach.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is playing word games again. He pretends there is a difference between legalization and decriminalization. It is basically the same thing, but we will use his word. He brought in decriminalization in British Columbia, which led to a 380% increase in overdose deaths. There were 2,500 deaths last year, the worst death count in any province's history.

Will the Prime Minister admit that his decriminalization in B.C. was a deadly disaster, or will he admit that he plans to do it again right across the country, everywhere, after the next election?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier, the Leader of the Opposition was suggesting that I do my

homework. One would think that on an issue that the Leader of the Opposition is making so much fundraising money off of, he would have actually done his work and would have realized there is a difference between legalization and decriminalization. That is one that really matters.

We, yes, responded to a request for a pilot project by British Columbia to continue to try new approaches in solving this toxic drug overdose epidemic. We will continue to work with British Columbia, as we have, as they choose to make adjustments to their pilot project because we know saving lives and keeping communities safe is the most important thing.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just asked now, four times, whether the Prime Minister plans to replicate, in Montreal, in Toronto or anywhere else, the radical experiment that he has had to backpedal on in British Columbia. He will not answer the question. He has a request from the Montreal mayor, the Toronto City Hall, and we do not know what other municipalities.

Either (a) the Prime Minister believes the experiment was a disaster, or (b) he plans to repeat it. Which is it?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have answered this question many times by saying that the only way we move forward on any proposals across this country, around decriminalization or other methods to fight toxic drug overdoses, is when provinces step up and actually ask for them. Failing that, we will not be moving forward on any modifications. However, there are provinces that are choosing to reduce their harm reduction measures.

We will continue to increase harm reduction and public health responses to overdoses and to safe supply issues right across the country.

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• (1505)

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let us touch briefly on extremism. Last week, a party leader was expelled from the House, partly for using the word "extremist" without apologizing. Today, the Prime Minister is congratulating his friend for saying exactly the same word to guests in committee.

Is this a double standard or will he consider expelling his friend from the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, I expected the member to apologize and withdraw his comments, and that is exactly what he did.

Oral Questions

At the same time, we will continue to defend the French fact across Canada and around the world through our participation in the Francophonie, based on our conviction that not only must we protect our two official languages across the country, but also be there to invest in protecting French in Quebec. We are the first government to do so, and we will continue to be there to protect French across the country.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I just heard that we need to protect both official languages. Where does English need protecting?

This summer in Montreal there is going to be the equivalent of a global conference of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie that will be chaired by his friend, who, by his own actions, is embarrassing us on the world stage.

I think I get it: The Liberals are trying to have everyone believe that French is just fine in Quebec and there is no need to do anything to make Canada's anglophones happy.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we are the first federal government to recognize that we have a special responsibility to protect French in Quebec and to contribute to that protection. No other government has done that before. It is because we recognize that more needs to be done to protect French. Unlike the Bloc Québécois, we are not going to focus on what needs to be done in Quebec. We are going to keep protecting French in the entire country. We are going to do so in Acadia, in Ontario, in Manitoba, in the Far North, across the country—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

[English]

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, not only is the Prime Minister refusing to rule out future decriminalization across the country, which has just failed in B.C., but also he has now just announced that he plans to spend even more tax dollars on narcotic opioids. According to the Vancouver chief of police, 50% of the recovered hydromorphone originated with government programs handing it out as a so-called safe supply. That program has led to a 166% increase in drug deaths across the country since it was brought in.

Why will the Prime Minister not accept my common-sense plan to stop giving out deadly drugs and to start giving out treatment?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition proposes to return to the failed Harper-era approaches on opioids that Harper's former adviser Benjamin Perrin called obsolete and "immoral".

Over the past number of years, we have invested in a compassionate, science-based, evidence-grounded approach that includes harm reduction through a public health lens. It also includes investments in housing, in mental health supports, in frontline workers, and in addiction treatment and recovery programs. These are the things that move us forward.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when we were in government there were 60% fewer overdose deaths. This problem accelerated after the Prime Minister brought in these radical programs, which are not done anywhere else, to give corrupt pharmaceutical companies money to hand out more drugs.

David McEvoy, an addiction outreach worker right here in Ottawa, said that he witnessed the so-called safe supply clients "diverting their taxpayer-funded drugs to the black market", and that they were given an "insane" quantity of drugs.

Will the Prime Minister stop giving out insane quantities of heroin-grade opioids and start bringing treatment so we can bring our loved ones home drug free?

• (1510)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know that any Canadian would think that adding more ideology to our approach to public health in dealing with the opioid epidemic is a solution, yet that is the only thing the Conservative Party seems to offer.

We will continue to be grounded in a compassionate, science-based approach that works with local partners and that attempts to provide the kinds of wraparound services in housing, in health care, in addiction treatment and recovery or in culturally appropriate services to those who need them. We will continue to be there to help heal people, not to imprison them.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): The Liberals are there to help kill people right now. That is exactly what they are doing.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The Speaker will come back to this issue. I will allow the hon. member to continue his question.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, not only is the Prime Minister's policy killing people, but he is by far the most radical ideologue who has ever occupied that job.

Always with these radical policies come profiteering by the companies making the money off of the opioids that are funded by Canadian taxpayers. It is indeed sick.

Will the Prime Minister agree to release all of the contracts for those pharmaceutical companies?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are facing, right across the country, a toxic drug and opioid epidemic that is taking lives left, right and centre, that is hurting communities and that is hurting family members who are losing loved ones at an alarming rate, and that is something we need to respond to.

We have continued to work, jurisdiction by jurisdiction, in thoughtful ways to try to do everything possible to keep communities safe, to keep families from suffering these further losses and to support people who are struggling with addiction. We will continue to be grounded in evidence and support.

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HOUSING

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as members know, more Canadians are renting than ever before. These renters, many of whom are seniors or whom are on fixed incomes, face rising rents and renoviction threats.

Can the Prime Minister tell the House what our government is doing to help them—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I know that it is Wednesday, that members have come out of caucuses and that they are ready to go, but it is really important that we take the opportunity to listen to the questions. It will be from the top because the Speaker could not hear it.

The hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge from the top, please.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: No. The hon. member is an experienced member. He knows there are no points of order during question period. The hon. member can raise a point of order after question period.

The hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge from the top, please.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, as you know, more Canadians are now renting than ever before. These renters, many of whom are seniors or whom are on fixed incomes, face rising rents and renoviction threats.

Can the Prime Minister tell the House what our government is doing to help them stay in their homes and enjoy affordable and stable accommodation?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge that more needs to be done for renters. That is why we are unlocking well over 600,000 new rental homes across the country for the middle class, investing \$1.5 billion to keep affordable apartments affordable and introducing a new renters' bill of rights to protect renters.

The Leader of the Opposition does not seem to worry about renters. He was housing minister in a government that pulled out of housing. Now, he wants to raise the taxes on apartment construction, and he continues to delay debate on his own housing proposal because he knows it does not measure up.

We will not rest until we level the playing field for renters.

Oral Questions

• (1515)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the Prime Minister is not worth the corporate crime and corruption. According to the Criminal Intelligence Service, there are \$113 billion a year of money laundering. That is the equivalent of twice the entire GDP of Nova Scotia. That money laundering, all of it here in Canada, drives up housing costs, pays for drugs and stolen cars.

Why is it that the Americans had to be the ones to catch TD and to charge them with money laundering linked to fentanyl. Why did our federal government not crack down on that?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is obviously a very concerning situation. We are making sure that all the appropriate authorities are properly engaged. We know that we need to continue to invest in our national police, and we need to continue to invest in our intelligence services. That is exactly what this government has been doing and will continue to do.

Unlike the previous Conservative government that cut policing and that cut intelligence services, we will continue to invest in keeping Canadians safe, in countering the rise of organized crime and in making sure that people are confident about the future we are growing into.

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[*Translation*]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell used foul language when addressing witnesses from Quebec who had come before the committee to defend the French language. He is more than just a Liberal MP. He is the chair of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, a diplomat for Canada. He has no other choice but to resign.

Will the Prime Minister ask his friend to resign in order to show some respect for the Francophonie?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we see the reaction of the francophone members of the Conservative Party when their leader finally shows some concern for the fate of the French language in Canada.

We are here to talk about and defend the Francophonie. We are here to defend the French fact across the country. The member has apologized and has withdrawn his comments.

We also saw that their party's heritage critic could not even stand up for Radio-Canada when she asked a direct question. We know that the Conservatives want to make cuts to the CBC and Radio-Canada. They should be more clear about exactly what they are doing.

*Oral Questions***CBC/RADIO-CANADA**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he is the one making cuts to Radio-Canada. He and his CEO are the ones who want the CBC to swallow up Radio-Canada. We are the ones who are going to protect Radio-Canada and, yes, we are going to get rid of the CBC's vast bureaucracy.

Why does this Prime Minister keep defending big bonuses for the CBC's gigantic bureaucracy, which Canadians firmly oppose? Why not protect Radio-Canada services instead?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no one in this country who speaks French expects that the Conservative Party is going to defend Radio-Canada. They have heard the same old song too many times. They know full well that the Conservative Party's ideological opposition to public broadcasters is too deeply ingrained, and that the CBC and Radio-Canada will face cuts under a future Conservative government. That is why they know that they have to fight the Conservative ideology.

I encourage the leader of the Conservative Party to say in English what he just said in French.

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WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a woman's right to control her own body is a fundamental right. The current government has always defended that right, but the Conservative Party cannot say the same.

Can the Prime Minister explain to the House why women should be the only ones who get to control their bodies and their futures?

• (1520)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is playing politics at the expense of Canadians' rights and freedoms. He clearly will not protect women's freedom of choice on abortion.

He bragged about being able to use the notwithstanding clause to violate Canadians' rights. A woman's right to choose should not be up for debate in the House in 2024, and yet, that is what is happening because of him.

I hope that the entire Conservative caucus will be here in the House tomorrow for Canadians, rather than going to oppose reproductive health. That is what Canadian women deserve.

* * *

[English]

LABOUR

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, our public servants give their very best to serve our country and Canadians every day, but time and time again, the Liberals show them disrespect.

The union has been blindsided by the government's new rules forcing workers back to the office when it does not even have enough space for them. For a government that claims to care about workers, it gives zero regard for their well-being. Could the govern-

ment tell us if it has consulted with the union on these changes, or did it act unilaterally without any respect for workers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this was a decision made by the professional public service. This is a reflection on the need to continue to deliver high-quality services for Canadians and move beyond the pandemic. We know that there were some extremely difficult times, and we know that Canadian public service members stepped up to extraordinary degrees to help Canadians through the pandemic.

We will continue to ensure that our public service is delivering at the level necessary for all Canadians. We will work with unions and all public servants to make sure that happens in the right way.

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CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, it should not need to be said that the climate crisis we are in requires a reduction in oil consumption. One would then think that, when the government speaks of a "great national project", it would be speaking of fully electrified, high-speed rail. Instead, sadly, it is proudly celebrating \$44 billion of our money being wasted to accelerate the crisis by building a pipeline to export some of the world's dirtiest oil. When will this PM realize that climate leaders do not build pipelines?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this project was in the national interest. It will mean more jobs, more GDP and more capacity to pay for the transformation of our economy to be lower emission, and it is fully factored into Canada's climate plan.

With the project now completed, the federal government got the job done. However, I will be honest, it is not the federal government's intention to continue to operate a pipeline. We look forward to divesting it to partners.

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PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Enrique Manalo, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order regarding the inappropriate comments made by the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell at the Standing Committee on Official Languages. We discussed the matter here in the House of Commons yesterday, during question period.

This situation is unacceptable. This Liberal member insulted witnesses who had been invited to share their expertise and knowledge as part of a committee study. The member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell said that the researchers were “pleins de merde”, in other words, “full of shit”. It is unacceptable for a parliamentarian to speak to a witness like that.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to condemn that behaviour. I hope you would agree that he used unparliamentary language and ask the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell to apologize formally here in the House.

The Speaker: I thank my colleague from Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier for raising this point. However, as he well knows, the Chair can intervene when members use unparliamentary language on the floor of the House of Commons. We will wait for the committee to submit its report.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

• (1525)

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

NATIONAL DEFENCE

The House resumed from May 2 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3:25 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion to concur in the eighth report of the Standing Committee on National Defence.

Call in the members.

• (1535)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 754*)

YEAS

Members

Aboulttaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Angus	Arnold
Ashton	Bachrach
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Block
Boulerice	Bragdon
Brassard	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chabot
Chambers	Champoux
Chong	Collins (Victoria)
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	Desbiens

Desilets	Desjarlais
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferrieri	Findlay
Fortin	Gallant
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Généreux	Genuis
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Green	Hallan
Hoback	Hughes
Idlout	Jeneroux
Jivani	Johns
Julian	Kelly
Khanna	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Kwan
Lake	Lantsman
Larouche	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lemire
Leslie	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
MacGregor	Maguire
Majumdar	Martel
Masse	Mathysen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
McPherson	Melillo
Michaud	Moore
Morantz	Morrice
Morrison	Motz
Muys	Nater
Normandin	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Perkins	Perron
Plamondon	Poilievre
Rayes	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ruff
Savard-Tremblay	Scheer
Schmale	Seeback
Shields	Shipley
Simard	Singh
Small	Soroka
Steinley	Ste-Marie
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Thériault
Therrien	Thomas
Tochou	Tolmie
Trudel	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Vien
Viersen	Vignola
Villemure	Vis
Vuong	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williams
Williamson	Zarrillo
Zimmer — 173	

Orders of the Day

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Arseneault

Orders of the Day

Arya	Atwin
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Battiste
Beech	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Blois	Boissonnault
Bradford	Brière
Carr	Casey
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Dong	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fillmore
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Gainey	Gerretsen
Gould	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Ien
Jaczek	Joly
Jones	Jowhari
Kayabaga	Kelloway
Khalid	Khera
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod	Mendés
Miao	Miller
Morrissey	Murray
Naqvi	Ng
Noormohamed	O'Connell
Oliphant	O'Regan
Petitpas Taylor	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Rota
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Sorbara
Sousa	St-Onge
Sudds	Tassi
Taylor Roy	Thompson
Trudeau	Turnbull
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Weiler
Wilkinson	Yip
Zahid	Zuberi — 152

PAIRED

Members

Sinclair-Desgagné

Virani— 2

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The House resumed from May 6 consideration of the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion to concur in the 18th report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

● (1550)

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

(Division No. 755)

YEAS

Members

Abouttaif	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Alghabra	Ali
Allison	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Block	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Bragdon
Brassard	Brière
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	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	Dalton
Damoff	Dancho
Davidson	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
Desbiens	Desilets
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Doherty	Dong
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Epp
Erskine-Smith	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS***[English]***IMPACT ASSESSMENT ACT**

The House resumed from May 3 consideration of the motion that Bill C-375, An Act to amend the Impact Assessment Act (federal-provincial agreements), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-375 under Private Members' Business.

• (1600)

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

*(Division No. 756)***YEAS**

Members

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

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

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Battiste
Beech	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Carr	Casey
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Gainey
Garrison	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gould
Green	Guilbeault
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly

Private Members' Business

(Division No. 757)

YEAS

Members

Jones
 Julian
 Kelloway
 Khera
 Kusmierczyk
 Lalonde
 Lamoureux
 Lattanzio
 LeBlanc
 Lightbound
 Longfield
 MacAulay (Cardigan)
 MacGregor
 Maloney
 Masse
 May (Cambridge)
 McDonald (Avalon)
 McKay
 McLeod
 Mendès
 Miao
 Morrice
 Murray
 Ng
 O'Connell
 O'Regan
 Powlowski
 Robillard
 Rogers
 Rota
 Sajjan
 Samson
 Scarpaleggia
 Serré
 Shanahan
 Sidhu (Brampton East)
 Singh
 Sousa
 Suds
 Taylor Roy
 Trudeau
 Valdez
 van Koeverden
 Vandenbeld
 Wilkinson
 Zahid
 Zuberi— 177

Jowhari
 Kayabaga
 Khalid
 Koutrakis
 Kwan
 Lambropoulos
 Lapointe
 Lauzon
 Lebouthillier
 Long
 Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
 MacDonald (Malpeque)
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Martinez Ferrada
 Mathysen
 May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
 McGuinty
 MacKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 McPherson
 Mendicino
 Miller
 Morrissey
 Naqvi
 Noormohamed
 Oliphant
 Petitpas Taylor
 Qualtrough
 Rodriguez
 Romanado
 Sahota
 Saks
 Sarai
 Schiefke
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Sorbara
 St-Onge
 Tassi
 Thompson
 Turnbull
 Van Bynen
 Vandal
 Weiler
 Yip
 Zarrillo

Aboutaif
 Albas
 Alghabra
 Allison
 Anandasangaree
 Arnold
 Ashton
 Bachrach
 Bains
 Baldinelli
 Barrett
 Barsalou-Duval
 Beaulieu
 Bergeron
 Bérubé
 Bibeau
 Blair
 Blanchette-Joncas
 Block
 Boissonnault
 Bradford
 Brassard
 Brock
 Calkins
 Carr
 Casey
 Chagger
 Chambers
 Champoux
 Chen
 Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
 Cooper
 Coteau
 Dalton
 Dancho
 Davies
 Deltell
 Desilets
 Dhaliwal
 Diab
 Dong
 Dreeshen
 Dubourg
 Duguid
 Dzerowicz
 El-Khoury
 Epp
 Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
 Fast
 Fillmore
 Fisher
 Fortier
 Fragiskatos
 Freeland
 Gaheer
 Gallant
 Garrison
 Gazan
 Genuis
 Gill
 Godin
 Gould
 Gray
 Guilbeault
 Hallan
 Hardie
 Hoback
 Housefather

Aitchison
 Aldag
 Ali
 Anand
 Angus
 Arseneault
 Atwin
 Badawey
 Baker
 Barlow
 Barron
 Battiste
 Beech
 Berthold
 Bezan
 Bittle
 Blanchet
 Blaney
 Blois
 Boulerice
 Bragdon
 Brière
 Brunelle-Duceppe
 Caputo
 Carrie
 Chabot
 Chahal
 Champagne
 Chatel
 Chong
 Collins (Victoria)
 Cormier
 Dabrusin
 Damoff
 Davidson
 DeBellefeuille
 Desbiens
 Desjarlais
 Dhillon
 Doherty
 Dowdall
 Drouin
 Duclos
 Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
 Ehsassi
 Ellis
 Erskine-Smith
 Falk (Provencher)
 Ferreri
 Findlay
 Fonseca
 Fortin
 Fraser
 Fry
 Gainey
 Garon
 Gaudreau
 Généreux
 Gerretsen
 Gladu
 Goodridge
 Gourde
 Green
 Hajdu
 Hanley
 Hepfner
 Holland
 Hughes

PAIRED

Members

Sinclair-Desgagné

Virani— 2

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

* * *

FOREIGN POLITICAL INTERFERENCE, VIOLENCE OR INTIMIDATION

The House resumed from May 6 consideration of the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 112 under Private Members' Business in the name of the member for Surrey—Newton.

• (1615)

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

Private Members' Business

Hussen
Iacono
Ien
Jeneroux
Johns
Jones
Julian
Kelloway
Khalid
Khera
Kmiec
Kram
Kurek
Kusmierczyk
Lake
Lambropoulos
Lantsman
Larouche
Lauzon
LeBlanc
Lehoux
Leslie
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lightbound
Lobb
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maguire
Maloney
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod
Melillo
Mendicino
Michaud
Moore
Morrice
Morrisey
Murray
Naqvi
Ng
Normandin
Oliphant
Patzner
Pauzé
Perron
Plamondon
Powlowski
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Robillard
Rogers
Rood
Ruff
Sajjan
Samson
Savard-Tremblay
Scheer
Schmale
Serré
Shanahan
Shields
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Small
Soroka
Steinley

Hutchings
Idlout
Jaczek
Jivani
Joly
Jowhari
Kayabaga
Kelly
Khanna
Kitchen
Koutrakis
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Kwan
Lalonde
Lamoureux
Lapointe
Lattanzio
Lawrence
Lebouthillier
Lemire
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lloyd
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Majumdar
Martel
Masse
May (Cambridge)
Mazier
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLean
McPherson
Mendès
Miao
Miller
Morantz
Morrison
Motz
Muys
Nater
Noormohamed
O'Connell
O'Regan
Paul-Hus
Perkins
Petitpas Taylor
Poilievre
Qualtrough
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Rodriguez
Romanado
Rota
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Schieffe
Seeback
Sgro
Sheehan
Shiple
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Singh
Sorbara
Sousa
Ste-Marie

Stewart
Strahl
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Therrien
Thompson
Tolmie
Trudel
Uppal
Van Bynen
Van Popta
Vandenbeld
Vidal
Viersen
Villemure
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Wilkinson
Williamson
Zahid
Zimmer

St-Onge
Stubbs
Tassi
Thériault
Thomas
Tochor
Trudeau
Turnbull
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandal
Vecchio
Vien
Vignola
Vis
Wagantall
Waugh
Weiler
Williams
Yip
Zarrillo
Zuberi — 326

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Members

Sinclair-Desgagné

Virani — 2

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

STOPPING INTERNET SEXUAL EXPLOITATION ACT

The House resumed from May 7 consideration of the motion that Bill C-270, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (pornographic material), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-270 under Private Members' Business.

● (1625)

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

(Division No. 758)

YEAS

Members

Abouttaif
Albas
Alghabra
Allison
Anandasangaree
Arnold
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Baker
Barlow
Barron
Battiste
Beech
Berthold
Bezan
Bittle
Blanchet
Blaney

Aitchison
Aldag
Ali
Anand
Angus
Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Bains
Baldinelli
Barrett
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bergeron
Bérubé
Bibeau
Blair
Blanchette-Joncas
Block

Private Members' Business

Blois	Boissonnault	Lloyd	Lobb
Boulerice	Bradford	Long	Longfield
Bragdon	Brassard	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
Brière	Brock	MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire
Caputo	Carr	Majumdar	Maloney
Carrie	Casey	Martel	Martinez Ferrada
Chabot	Chagger	Masse	Mathysen
Chahal	Chambers	May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Champagne	Champoux	Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
Chatel	Chen	McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinity
Chiang	Chong	McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)	McLean	McLeod
Cooper	Cormier	McPherson	Melillo
Coteau	Dabrusin	Mendès	Medicino
Dalton	Damoff	Miao	Michaud
Dancho	Davidson	Miller	Moore
Davies	DeBellefeuille	Morantz	Morrice
Deltell	Desbiens	Morrison	Morrissey
Desilets	Desjarlais	Motz	Murray
Dhaliwal	Dhillon	Muys	Naqvi
Diab	Doherty	Nater	Ng
Dong	Dowdall	Noormohamed	Normandin
Dreeshen	Drouin	O'Connell	Oliphant
Dubourg	Duclos	O'Regan	Patzer
Duguid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi	Perkins	Perron
El-Khoury	Ellis	Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Epp	Erskine-Smith	Poilievre	Powlowski
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)	Qualtrough	Rayes
Fast	Ferreri	Redekopp	Reid
Fillmore	Findlay	Rempel Garner	Richards
Fisher	Fonseca	Roberts	Robillard
Fortier	Fortin	Rodriguez	Rogers
Fragiskatos	Fraser	Romanado	Rood
Freeland	Fry	Rota	Ruff
Gaheer	Gainey	Sahota	Sajjan
Gallant	Garon	Saks	Samson
Garrison	Gaudreau	Sarai	Savard-Tremblay
Généreux	Genuis	Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Gerretsen	Gill	Schiefke	Schmale
Gladu	Godin	Seeback	Serré
Goodridge	Gould	Sgro	Shanahan
Gourde	Gray	Sheehan	Shields
Green	Guilbeault	Shipley	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Hajdu	Hallan	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Hanley	Hardie	Singh	Small
Hepfner	Hoback	Sorbara	Soroka
Holland	Housefather	Sousa	Steinley
Hughes	Hussen	Ste-Marie	Stewart
Hutchings	Iacono	St-Onge	Strahl
Idlout	Ien	Stubbs	Sudds
Jaczek	Jeneroux	Tassi	Taylor Roy
Jivani	Johns	Thériault	Therrien
Joly	Jones	Thomas	Thompson
Jowhari	Julian	Tochor	Tolmie
Kayabaga	Kelloway	Trudeau	Trudel
Kelly	Khalid	Turnbull	Uppal
Khanna	Khera	Valdez	Van Bynen
Kitchen	Kmiec	van Koeverden	Van Popta
Koutrakis	Kram	Vandal	Vandenbeld
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek	Vecchio	Vidal
Kusie	Kusmierczyk	Vien	Viersen
Kwan	Lake	Vignola	Villemure
Lalonde	Lambropoulos	Vis	Vuong
Lamoureux	Lantsman	Wagantall	Warkentin
Lapointe	Larouche	Waugh	Webber
Lattanzio	Lauzon	Weiler	Wilkinson
Lawrence	LeBlanc	Williams	Williamson
Lebouthillier	Lehoux	Yip	Zahid
Lemire	Leslie	Zarrillo	Zimmer
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Zuberi— 327	
Liepert	Lightbound		

Routine Proceedings

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Members

Sinclair-Desgagné

Virani— 2

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS*[English]***INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS**

Mr. James Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-United Kingdom Inter-Parliamentary Association's bilateral visit to the United Kingdom, including London, England, Cardiff, Wales, and Edinburgh, Scotland, from November 13 to 17, 2023.

I would like to add my thanks to all of the members who participated, but in particular to our clerk and other staff members who made the trip worthwhile and helped us tremendously.

* * *

*[Translation]***COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 23rd report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in relation to Bill C-273, an act to amend the Criminal Code (Corinne's Quest and the protection of children).

[English]

The committee studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with an amendment.

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 65th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of committees of the House. If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the 65th report later this day.

• (1630)

HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 20th report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Dis-

abilities in relation to the motion adopted on Monday, May 6, regarding the Canada disability benefit.

INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the following two reports of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs. The first is the 13th report, entitled "Braiding Learning and Healing: A Pathway to Improving Graduation Rates and Successful Outcomes for Indigenous Students", and second is the 14th report, entitled "'We Belong to the Land': The Restitution of Land to Indigenous Nations".

I would like to thank all the witnesses and staff for their help with these two reports.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive report in response to each of these two reports.

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the 65th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House earlier this day, be concurred in.

[Translation]

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

It is agreed.

[English]

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

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

FIREARMS

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these petitioners wish to present an issue to the House. They are seeking to support the health and safety of Canadian firearms owners.

The petitioners recognize the importance of owning firearms, but they are concerned about the impacts of hearing loss caused by the damaging noise levels of firearms and the need for noise reduction. They acknowledge that sound moderators are the only universally recognized health and safety device that is criminally prohibited in Canada. Moreover, the majority of G7 countries have recognized the health and safety benefits of sound moderators, allowing them for hunting, sport shooting and reducing noise pollution.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners are calling on the government to allow firearm owners the option to purchase and use sound moderators for all legal hunting and sport shooting activities.

FIRST RESPONDERS TAX CREDIT

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a huge honour to table this petition on behalf of residents from Ucluelet, including fire chief Rick Geddes.

This petition was obviously done before the budget, but this is on behalf of 120,000 volunteer firefighters and 10,000 search and rescue volunteers who are calling on the federal government to increase the volunteer firefighter and search and rescue tax credit from \$3,000 to \$10,000. They did not quite get that \$10,000, but it was doubled.

It is a privilege to table this petition, and I want to thank members from each party who tabled a petition in support of my bill, Bill C-310.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition that I am honoured to present on behalf of folks who note that, first of all, Statistics Canada makes it clear that there are 4.8 million Canadians who do not have a regular doctor. The petitioners go on to note that this is a number that has remained stable over a number of years. It is even worse in rural communities, although it is quite bad in urban centres as well.

The petitioners have a very simple recommendation. They are calling on the House of Commons to ensure that the Government of Canada works with all provinces and territories across the country to come to a holistic and fair solution to Canada's family doctor shortage.

FIRST RESPONDERS TAX CREDIT

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to present a petition on behalf of the good people of Hairy Hill in Lakeland. It calls on the government to increase the tax credits for volunteer firefighting and search and rescue services.

Volunteer firefighters make up about 71% of Canada's total firefighting essential first responders, and approximately 8,000 essential search and rescue volunteers respond to thousands of incidents every year. Most rural communities and regions, like those all across Lakeland, completely rely on local volunteer firefighters and search and rescue volunteers.

Those essential volunteers put their lives on the line and sacrifice their time, training and heroism on behalf of their fellow Canadians and allow cities and municipalities to keep property taxes lower than paid services. Increasing the tax credit would allow those essential volunteers to keep more of their hard-earned money in the communities where they live and would help retain volunteers at a time when volunteerism is decreasing.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to support Bill C-310, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, to increase the amount of the tax credit for volunteer firefighting and search and rescue volunteer services.

• (1635)

BASIC INCOME GUARANTEE PROGRAM

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to present petition e-4746 on behalf of some of the residents of my riding of Davenport. It is on guaranteed basic income.

Whereas Prince Edward Island has brought forward a guaranteed basic income proposal that is supported by the provincial government, which would serve as an ideal model for evaluating potential GBI programs and funding mechanisms, and due to the changing geopolitical landscape, today's world is highly unpredictable and unstable. The world of work is also changing with the rise of automation, artificial intelligence, and other technologies.

In order to look at how best to modernize our social safety net to better support Canadians in the 21st century, the undersigned Canadians who support a guaranteed basic income call upon the Government of Canada to implement a national framework for GBI that would test various funding and implementation models and their effects on poverty, inequality, innovation, and labour productivity.

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, this petition from residents of Saanich—Gulf Islands and beyond concerns Canada's engagement with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, otherwise known more familiarly as NATO.

The petitioners point out that the Minister of National Defence's primary responsibility is to protect Canada within its borders and that the Minister of National Defence is not mandated to engage in wars in other countries or make treaties that encroach on other territories of other sovereign states. They make the point that the Canadian military does, in fact, participate in invasions in other countries by being a partner in NATO. The petitioners call on the House of Commons to immediately withdraw all connection, co-operation and material support from NATO from Canada.

PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo. In this case, it is in support of a petition that implores the House, in brief, to pass Bill S-210 from the Senate, the protecting young persons from exposure to pornography act. Those who have studied and are aware of this bill know this is in regard to age verification to access pornography.

Government Orders

FAITH OBSERVANCE

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, and today I am doing so with respect to a petition to reverse religious discriminatory practices and allow chaplains to pray for fallen soldiers during Remembrance Day. This is obviously in relation to the Department of National Defence's recent changes that essentially make Remembrance Day ceremonies areligious.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise to present a petition on behalf of constituents.

I rise for the 36th time on behalf of the people of Swan River, Manitoba, to present a petition on the rising rate of crime. The community of Swan River is demanding that their voices be heard. They live in the chaos caused by the Liberal government's soft-on-crime laws, such as Bill C-5, which allows criminals to serve their sentences from home. The Manitoba West district RCMP reported that in 18 months, just 15 individuals racked up over 200 charges. The people of Swan River are calling for jail, not bail, for violent repeat offenders.

The people of Swan River demand that the Liberal government repeal its soft-on-crime policies, which directly threaten their livelihoods and their community. I support the good people of Swan River.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

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 at this time.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1640)

[English]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2024, NO. 1

The House resumed from May 7 consideration of the motion that Bill C-69, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget

tabled in Parliament on April 16, 2024, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about budget 2024 and the budget implementation act. In the budget report, the Liberal government makes a claim that the GDP, the gross domestic product of our economy, is set to grow by 3.5% this year. GDP is a good measurement because it talks about the health of the economy, and admittedly, a 3.5% growth is not bad, if that is indeed what it is going to be, but members are not to forget that this is just a forecast. However, factoring in unprecedented population growth in Canada, and we are 3.5 million people more now than we were in 2019, the statistics look rather anemic.

David Williams, vice-president of policy at Business Council of British Columbia, notes that annual GDP per person in the province of British Columbia is actually shrinking. Per person GDP has been decreasing steadily under the Prime Minister. The calculations have been done by economists, and it works out to about \$4,200 per person. Canadians are not getting richer, despite the optimistic spin the Liberals and the finance minister are putting on what is really an anemic economic performance.

Budget 2024 also announces once again, just as the Liberals have done in every budget since I was elected five years ago, that their economic policies will improve Canada's productivity numbers. Our poor productivity metrics is a well-known problem, which has been admitted to by our current Minister of Finance.

It works out to the following: For every \$100 an American worker produces, their Canadian counterpart pumps about \$72 into our economy, so only 72% is efficient. That does not mean Canadians are not working as hard as Americans. We are probably working as hard or harder than our American counterparts, but we do not have the tools, the technology or the investment to grow the economy. As America's productivity improves, Canada's is lagging due to mismanagement and bad leadership by the Prime Minister.

His former minister of finance, Bill Morneau, in a book he published shortly after he resigned from his position as the finance minister, said that he tried try to get his boss, the Prime Minister, to focus on the problems with Canada's lagging productivity, but the Prime Minister showed little interest. He said that the Prime Minister was more focused on wealth redistribution rather than on wealth growth, looking at the things that grow the economy, such as encouraging private investment in innovation and resource development, making strategic tax cuts and deregulation, getting new Canadians working sooner and developing strategies for scaling up our technology sector so that job growth happens here in Canada rather than south of the border in Silicon Valley, Boston or Texas.

Government Orders

I would add to this as well that a strategy for growing our productivity is freeing up interprovincial trade. Economists say that would add substantially to our productivity. What are we getting instead are tax increases on Canadian investors, which is scaring people away so their investment dollars might just go somewhere else.

I pointed out that the current Minister of Finance has also commented on this, and she has recently said that economic growth, business investments and productivity are an urgent challenge for Canada, if not the most important challenge for Canada. It sounds like the Minister of Finance understands that this is a challenge for Canada, as did the former minister of finance, but in Canada, our Prime Minister admits he does not spend a lot of time paying attention to these sorts of things, such as monetary policy or the impact his fiscal policy might have on inflation and interest rates.

Leadership sets the tone. What we have here again is lots of promises. The Liberals will say, “Sunny ways are just around the corner”, and that we should just believe them this time. As always, our Prime Minister gets an A for announcements and an F on delivery.

• (1645)

In talking about the budget, I just want to touch on inflation, interest rates and debt servicing. Under the misguidance of the current Prime Minister, Canada's inflation hit an all-time high. The Bank of Canada had to respond with higher interest rates, which are having a negative impact on citizens, on homeowners and on businesses, as well as on the national economy. With a debt of over a trillion dollars now, interest rate payments are over \$50 billion a year, which is more money than Canada transfers to provinces for health care.

I just want to summarize with this: Struggling families cannot afford higher taxes and more inflationary spending that drives up the cost of everything and keeps interest rates high. There used to be an understanding here in Canada, an unwritten social contract saying that if one worked hard, got an education or on-the-job training, and then got a good job and a powerful paycheque, that one could save up to buy a house. One could buy the house, maybe pay the mortgage off in 25 years, or if one made a few extra payments early on, in 20 years, and then save up for one's retirement. It was simple but secure. Under the Liberal government, that dream is all but dead. To hear the Liberals speak, sunny ways are just around the corner. The Liberals have been around for nine years, promising that “this time you can believe us”, but they are not delivering.

It is time for the Conservative Party to take over the governing side of the House to get Canada's economy back on track. It is time to turn the hurt that the Liberals have caused into the hope Canadians desperately need.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I request that the ordinary hour of daily adjournment of the next sitting be 12 a.m., pursuant to order made Wednesday, February 28.

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Wednesday, February 28, the request is deemed adopted.

* * *

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2024, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-69, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 16, 2024, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the member across the way that, in fact, Canada is not broken and that we are on the right economic track. The Conservatives are very good at spreading misinformation. That should not be a surprise to anyone who follows the debate.

For example, the member said that we are scaring away investors. Last year, Canada was number one in the G7 countries for GDP, based on the population base in terms of direct foreign investment for the first three quarters. Worldwide, we were number three on a per capita basis.

How can the member or the Conservative Party across the way try to mislead Canadians by saying we are scaring away investment when we see that kind of reality staring us in the face?

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would point out that, with Canada's very high real estate costs, many of our investment dollars are going into real estate. One economist called it a “black hole” for investment. That money could otherwise be going to much more productive industrial use.

I believe this is what Canada is lacking: investment in technology and industries that are really going to grow our economy. That is one reason our productivity rate is so much below the rates of other competing nations and, in particular, the United States, our closest trading partner.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member raising the cost of housing as a prime issue. He called it a “black hole”. I would say that, in some regards, the financialization of housing is parasitic, particularly when it comes to workers and working-class people.

The hon. member raised the way in which housing costs have ballooned out of control. I would put to colleagues the parable of the carpenter. Some 10 or 15 years ago, the average wage for a carpenter was about \$42 an hour. The house that they would build would be about \$300,000 to \$350,000 for a home. If we fast-track to today, this present moment, the same carpenter, that master craftsman, has an average salary of \$49 an hour, but the homes they build are \$700,000 to \$800,000 for a home.

Government Orders

Does the hon. member agree in the economic theory stating that the surplus value of workers' wages is being redistributed to the ultra-wealthy and captured by the banks, the financial class and the real estate class of this economy, which do not actually produce the wealth? It is the worker who produces the wealth in this regard.

• (1650)

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Mr. Speaker, I agree that the average worker should be able to afford a home in this country. A well-paid carpenter should be able to afford an average house. It may not be the luxury house that he happens to be building or framing; however, every person in Canada who has gone to the effort of getting an education or on-the-job training, and who has a good job, should be able to fulfill the dream of owning a house.

As for the black hole, I just want to clarify that the cost of real estate is so high and there is so much money going into real estate. Sometimes the government states that our debt-to-GDP ratio is not that high, but if we factor in all the debt, private debt for mortgages, the numbers are quite astronomical, and that is a drag on our economy.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, we do not really have a lot of time in this place to dive into things like productivity. What increases Canada's productivity? Why do we lag in productivity? I have long found a line by Paul Krugman, a Nobel Prize-winning economist, pretty compelling. It is, "Productivity isn't everything, but in the long run, it's almost everything."

I have heard answers to that over the years, and I know I do not have time now to get into the research of why that is. The notion that Canada and our economy is based on hewers of wood and drawers of water makes our productivity quite low. Countries with high productivity have value added in their exports. They do not ship out raw logs, raw bitumen or raw product. They have a lot of value added with worker contributions.

As our exports increasingly become low-value, unprocessed resources, productivity falls. However, I do not hear from many of my colleagues in this place, or anyone, decrying that we are shipping out raw bitumen or raw logs. That is what hurts productivity.

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for that very thoughtful comment. Indeed, shipping out raw materials is not as productive as actually further manufacturing products. However, I made a point in my speech about the importance of Canada developing its high-tech sector, to scale it up into international competitive standards. We are failing in that.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the wonderful opportunity to be able to speak to Bill C-69, the budget implementation act, on behalf of the residents of Davenport, who I am so privileged to be able to represent.

I voiced support for Bill C-69 right off the bat for a very simple reason. As do many of us here, I want a better future for young Canadians, who are going through adulthood in a world that is plagued by crises ranging from war and climate change to global inequality and economic instability. Our federal government wants their hard work to be rewarded, as it has been for us.

We want them to see and believe that our country can work for them and for their future children. That is why budget 2024 is so important.

Budget 2024 is our plan to build a more resilient, affordable, inclusive Canada where every Canadian can afford to buy or rent their own home; where everyday bills are not a major source of stress; where corporations no longer take advantage of hard-working, middle-class families; and where everyone has a fair chance at a good middle-class life. Passing Bill C-69 is how we will arrive at that destination.

I am going to focus on three key sections of what is a very big budget implementation act, but I will say that the theme of the overall budget this year is fairness for every generation. While I might focus a lot on gen Z and the millennial generation, there is fairness for every generation in our budget and in our budget implementation act.

The first section I am going to talk about is with regard to cheaper Internet, home phone and cellphone plans. A major part of our plan is making life cost less.

Inflation has now been back within the Bank of Canada's target range for three months in a row. However, more work is needed to help reduce the cost of living, including the cost of essential services in day-to-day life.

Last year, we made a commitment to reduce the cost of cellphone plans by 25%, as too many Canadians still pay far too much for their cellphones and Internet. That is why budget 2024 announces our intention to amend the Telecommunications Act, to better allow Canadians to renew or switch their Internet, home phone or cellphone plans.

Through these amendments, carriers would be prevented by the CRTC from charging Canadians extra fees to switch companies. In addition, they would be required to help customers identify new plans, including lower-cost plans that exist, at the end of a contract, and they would also have to provide a self-service option for customers to switch between or end their plans.

Government Orders

Together, these amendments would help more Canadians save money by getting fairer prices and paying fewer fees, no matter where they live. In addition, to ensure that Canadians can keep their expensive devices working for longer, budget 2024 announces that we will launch consultations this June to develop a right-to-repair framework with the goal of increasing product durability and repairability. On top of saving consumers money, this framework would aim to facilitate a more circular economy by reducing the number of products in landfills, a win-win if I have ever seen one.

The next thing I want to talk about is more affordable and modern banking. “Fairness for every generation” also means a banking system that is more flexible. We all know that banks charge a multitude of fees, from ATM fees to monthly service fees and non-sufficient funds fees, or NSF fees, which are charged when there is not enough money in a bank account to cover a cheque or pre-authorized transaction.

Budget 2024 states our intention to support Canadians who are struggling financially by introducing regulations that will cap these punitive fees at \$10. These new regulations would also require banks to alert consumers when they are about to be charged an NSF fee, provide a grace period to deposit additional funds and restrict multiple fees for the same transaction and the number of fees that may be charged in a 72-hour period.

I know that a number of banks already do some of these things already. What we want to do is make this uniform right across all financial institutions in Canada.

Because more and more transactions happen online, our government is also working to modernize the services offered by Canadian banks to keep up with the needs of Canadians.

• (1655)

Budget 2024 announces that the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada, or FCAC, is in negotiations with banks to secure enhanced agreements to offer modernized zero dollars per month and up to four dollars per month bank accounts that reflect today’s banking trends, including more transactions. This would especially help youth and students who are just opening their first bank accounts.

That is not all. Bill C-69 also includes legislative amendments to expand the mandate of the FCAC to supervise Canada’s consumer-driven banking framework. Budget 2024 proposes to provide \$1 million to the FCAC to support preparation for its new responsibilities and to begin development of a consumer awareness campaign. It also proposes \$4 million over three years to the Department of Finance to complete the policy work necessary to establish and maintain oversight over this framework, including a national security regime.

However, before we go any further, let me explain what this could mean for Canadians. Known to many as open banking, consumer-driven banking allows consumers and small businesses to safely transfer their financial data to service providers through a data-sharing channel known as an application programming interface, or API. This happens quite literally at the click of a button. Currently, an estimated nine million Canadians share their financial data by providing banks, credit unions and other providers with their confidential banking credentials. This process, known as screen scrap-

ing, is incredibly unsafe and puts both consumers and our entire financial system at risk.

A Canadian consumer-driven banking framework would empower Canadians to access and share their financial data without having to share access to their bank account. It would also provide access to new products and tools to help Canadians better manage bills, track a budget, make more informed financial decisions, secure a loan and even help young Canadians when it is time for them to buy their first home.

An era of open banking is here, and Canada deserves to be part of it. I would add that it cannot come too soon. We know that most countries around the world have already moved forward with open banking. Also, having spoken recently to the Canadian Bankers Association, I know it is very supportive of open banking and has indicated that open banking will also put a regulatory regime in place that will protect against fraud and other risks to Canadians online.

The last section I want to talk about is doing more to crack down on predatory lending. In terms of protecting Canadians, our federal government is also working to prevent more vulnerable individuals, like newcomers, low-income Canadians and youth, from being deceived and trapped by illegal lenders who try to bypass the criminal rate of interest. Last year, our federal government advanced amendments to change the definition of “criminal rate” in the Criminal Code from an effective annual rate of interest that exceeds 60% to an annual percentage rate, or APR, that exceeds 35%.

Building on these changes, federal budget 2024 proposes additional Criminal Code amendments against offering or advertising credit at a criminal rate of interest. These amendments empower law enforcement by prohibiting offering credit at a criminal rate of interest and allowing for prosecutions of illegal and predatory lenders without needing the approval of the Attorney General.

Federal budget 2024 also announces that we intend to work with provincial and territorial governments to harmonize and enhance consumer protection measures in respect of consumer lending, focusing in particular on high-cost loans and payday loans. Actions taken could include everything from capping the costs of optional insurance products for high-cost loans, including payday loans and strengthening payday loan regulations, to enhancing monitoring and data collection practices in the high-cost loan market. These proposed measures would limit the risk of harmful debt cycles and help more Canadians keep more of their hard-earned money in their pockets.

Points of Order

Our government is taking action to build a fairer Canada, with transformative measures that will give people back control over their personal finances and banking choices, cap banking fees and give Canadians better access to digital banking, lower-cost accounts and stronger consumer protection. We can unlock the promise of Canada so that younger generations can build a better life, as their parents and grandparents did before them, but we cannot do it alone.

I hope that my hon. colleagues will support Bill C-69 and join us in our vision of a better, brighter future.

• (1700)

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I enjoy working with the hon. member on the finance committee. We have both spoken about the importance of productivity in the economy, though maybe from different perspectives.

The government has been in power for nine years now and this is its latest budget. There is a gap between U.S. and Canadian incomes and GDP per capita, which is now at a record deviation, meaning that the gap between what Canadians are earning and what Americans are earning has never been greater. At what point will that gap start to be reduced?

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, I, too, enjoy working with my hon. colleague on the finance committee.

The issue around productivity and business investment is not a new one in Canada. Actually, we have been tackling productivity for more than 30 years, and business investment for the last 20-plus years. I would say that it is not just federal budget 2024 where we have made huge investments in our economy, in our economic infrastructure and in Canadians so that we can continue to give Canadians the tools and the skills to be able to succeed and for Canada to have a prosperous economy, both now and in the future. I think a number of the measures that we have in our budget will help with the productivity issue, as well as with the business investment issue.

• (1705)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in 2021, the Centre de recherche sur les milieux insulaires et maritimes, CERMIM, set up the LOREVA project. This is a project to locate, recover and recycle ghost fishing gear. Ghost fishing gear refers to the snow crab traps that have remained on the bottom of the St. Lawrence. The project was financed by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' ghost gear fund. We developed a technique using an underwater robot that preserves the seabed. It is one of the finest techniques currently available for preserving marine species. We collected over 200 traps and more than 35 kilometres of rope. That is the equivalent of five tonnes of plastic material that was recovered from the St. Lawrence.

There is nothing in the budget that renews funding for this ghost gear program. I wonder why the government refuses to extend funding for this project.

[*English*]

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question, but I actually do not know the answer.

I will say that I am very proud that we have made a historic amount of investment in research, scholarships and new strategic research infrastructure in our federal budget 2024. We have put \$5.9 billion, which includes \$2.4 billion for core research grants and to foster top-tier Canadian talent via more scholarships and fellowships through Canada's research granting councils. I am not sure if any of those dollars will actually help with the very important issue that my colleague has mentioned, which should be addressed.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was really disappointed in the budget. As I have said very clearly, I think auto theft is an issue in this country, but the government put \$45 million toward auto theft and \$22 million toward the issue of murdered and missing indigenous women and girls. That sends a really strong message that this country values cars more than it values indigenous peoples. I am hoping that the government can do better, because that was shocking.

Today, my private member's bill will be put forward for second reading. It is in support of putting in a framework for a guaranteed livable basic income in response to call for justice 4.5 of the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls, which is something all parties have committed to uphold, all 231 calls for justice. I am wondering whether the hon. member will support my call to implement a guaranteed livable basic income.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the hon. member's bill. In the last Parliament, I also had a private member's bill to introduce a guaranteed basic income. I was very proud to do so, so I am very happy that the member is also supportive of that.

On indigenous peoples in Canada and funding in the federal budget 2024, I am very proud of the historic investments our government has made over the last eight and a half years that we have been in government. I know that we have a lot more to do, and I look forward to working with the member and other colleagues in this House to continue to strengthen and invest in a new nation-to-nation relationship.

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POINTS OF ORDER

RESPECT FOR THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHAIR

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am rising to add to the intervention made by the member for the New Westminster—Burnaby on Wednesday, May 1, in relation to respect for the authority of the Chair.

Page 311 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, in relation to functions performed by the Speaker with respect to enforcing the rules that guide the work of this place, states, “the Speaker presides over debate in the House and is responsible for enforcing and interpreting all rules and practices and for the preservation of order and decorum in the proceedings of the House.”

The Speaker has the ultimate authority regarding the interpretation and application of the rules of the House and its Standing Orders. The Speaker is the final authority on these matters. Since 1965, Speakers' rulings have been closed to appeals. They are final.

Page 319 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, in relation to the rulings by the Speaker, states, “Once the Speaker has ruled, the matter is no longer open to debate or discussion.” This applies not only to procedural matters, but also to questions for the maintenance of order and decorum. Our procedural authorities are definitive on this particular point.

Page 319 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, in relation to addressing the maintenance of order and decorum, also states:

The Speaker can call to order any Member whose conduct is disruptive to the order of the House. For example, if it is a question of unparliamentary language, the Speaker usually asks the Member to rephrase or withdraw the word or expression.

If the Speaker has found it necessary to intervene in order to call a Member to order, he or she may then choose to recognize another Member, thus declining to give the floor back to the offending Member.... The most severe sanction available to the Speaker for maintaining order in the House is “naming”, a disciplinary measure reserved for Members who persistently disregard the authority of the Chair.

It is both unusual and unfortunate that the Speaker has had to invoke this sanction. We need to be mindful that these extreme situations do not become normalized in our proceedings.

Finally, I would like to address the allegations of bias on the part of the Speaker that have been raised by some members in the House and outside the House.

Page 323 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, on the impartiality of the Chair, states:

Reflections on the character or actions of the Speaker (an allegation of bias, for example) could be taken by the House as breaches of privilege and punished accordingly.

On two occasions, newspaper editorials were found to contain libellous reflections on the Speaker and were declared by the House in one instance to be a contempt of its privileges and in the other a gross breach of its privileges.

In 1981, a Minister complained that remarks directed to Speaker Sauvé by the Leader of the Opposition constituted an attack on the former's authority and impartiality. The following day, the Minister rose on a question of privilege calling for the matter to be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections. However, the Leader of the Opposition withdrew his remarks and the matter was taken no further.

Despite this clear precedent, we have seen many recent examples of Conservative MPs engaging in exactly this conduct, including numerous tweets that can be found on X from April 30. In one day alone, the Leader of the Opposition referred to the “Liberal Speaker”; the member for Edmonton Manning also referred to the “Liberal Speaker” and stated, “The speaker is doing [the Prime Minister's] bidding”, and so on; the member for Edmonton West referred to “The shamelessly partisan Liberal Speaker”; and the member for

Points of Order

Kelowna—Lake Country referred to the “Liberal Speaker” and repeated this in a video that she also posted on X.

• (1710)

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: This is not necessarily something that should have clapping from across the way.

Mr. Speaker, also on April 30, the member for Sturgeon River—Parkland tweeted, “The partisan Liberal Speaker”. The member for King—Vaughan also referred to the “Liberal speaker”. The member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes referred to, again, the so-called Liberal Speaker in a video on X and said that the government is “being protected by a Speaker who is obviously biased to ensure that they have the protection from accountability and questions”. Finally, on the same day, the member for Northumberland—Peterborough South referred to “the Liberal Chair”.

Furthermore, on May 1, the member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry stated in a tweet how partisan the Liberal Speaker had been the day before, while the member for Lethbridge, in a May 2 post on X, referred to the “Speaker's partisan decision”.

Members need to be mindful that the actions of the Speaker must not be criticized in a frivolous manner. It undermines not only the authority of the Chair but also the authority of the chamber. Page 323 of the third edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* states, “The actions of the Speaker may not be criticized in debate or by any means except by way of a substantive motion.”

On December 15, 2023, the House leader of the official opposition moved a substantive motion regarding the conduct of the Speaker. The motion did not find consensus, and as such, the matter is closed, but despite this, Conservatives continue to ignore the rules, ignore the precedent, and openly criticize the Speaker, which is very serious.

The Leader of the Opposition wants to declare himself to be above the law by vowing to take away the rights of Canadians through the abuse of the notwithstanding clause. He also wants to destroy any institution that gets in his way, which includes the House of Commons. While the official opposition wants to destroy our institutions, we will continue to stand up for them.

I urge the Speaker to reflect on the behaviour of members of the official opposition. One need only reflect on the Conservatives' reactions as I was reading this important address on the issue.

• (1715)

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for the input.

I believe that the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill is rising on the same point of order.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you consider the following.

Government Orders

Many times, people of all political stripes in this place will raise concerns about the term “misinformation”, or something is happening with misinformation. It is actually a serious problem. However, we cannot characterize “misinformation” as language that is used to criticize government policy. That is often what happens with the government; it tries to characterize the word “misinformation” as language that criticizes the government.

When we talk about decorum and about use of language, we have to be very careful to not define unparliamentary language as language that is used to hold the government to account. I understand that the government might not like being held to account. However, it is the job of the official opposition, as the Standing Orders lay out, for us to do that. I would ask you to consider that.

With respect to my colleague's other point he made about the Speaker, it is fact that the Speaker of the House of Commons made a video in his parliamentary robes that was shown at a Liberal Party convention. Much contention erupted in this place over that. Not only is it incumbent on people in this place to maintain decorum in their relationship with the Speaker, but it is also incumbent on the Speaker to maintain neutrality and its appearance in this place, without fail. I would also say that it is the role of the Speaker to bring the light, not the heat, to the House of Commons.

Those are all things I hope the Speaker considers when responding to my colleague's rather inflammatory comments.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the member for the further update.

I believe that the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby is rising on the same point of order.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the precedent in the House was established by the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle when he was Speaker. It is very clear that for a member of Parliament to viciously attack the Speaker of the House of Commons is a serious transgression of our rules and the precedent that has been set.

I certainly want to review the blues from what was just presented. I find the comments, quite frankly, outrageous, and they are not in keeping with the rules of the House of Commons.

In the past, when there has been that serious of a transgression, it has been incumbent on the member of Parliament to rise in the House and apologize to the Speaker. That has certainly been the process we have undergone in the past when there have been these kinds of transgressions. Certainly, the members who have been cited could help their situation, because of course they have the option of deleting the social media posts and of apologizing in the House.

Of course, the Chair has the ability to ask for those apologies, and I would ask the Speaker to consider that as he is looking at what has been clear precedent set in the House in the past: that one cannot attack or insult the Speaker of the House of Commons, elected by all members of Parliament.

• (1720)

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. members for their further input.

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2024, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-69, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 16, 2024, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. The bill before us is a combination of the worst features of Liberal budgets over the past nine years. It is more out-of-control spending, more massive deficits, higher debt, higher interest payments and more waste.

After nine years of Liberal budgets, everyone agrees that Canada is a mess. Listening to the Prime Minister over the last few weeks, we have heard him say just how broken he believes that this country has become since he became the Prime Minister. His admissions have been frank. He has said that Canada is no longer fair for Canadians. He said that life sucks under his leadership. He has said, “It used to be that the deal was, if you worked hard at a good job, you could afford a home. That doesn't seem the case anymore.”

He has talked about the hardship that he has caused:

In today's Canada, more people are renting than ever before and that number is growing at double the rate of those able to buy a new home compared to a decade ago. Nearly two thirds of young Canadians rent their homes and they spend a greater share of their income on housing than other generations.

He has talked about the desperation that he has caused: “The idea of a really strong, exciting future seems further and further away now than it did just a few years ago...[the] loss of hope and optimism is devastating for people's morale.” He also said:

Maybe young people want to start a family, but they don't know how they can afford something bigger than a one-bedroom apartment and with the costs of groceries, monthly bills and all the other realities of life going up, up, up, well, that can make it hard to save for the future, hard to get ahead.

The Prime Minister is right. Over the past nine years, Canadians' lives have become harder. People are suffering more today than at any other time in recent generations.

Over two million Canadians are lining up at food banks every month because they cannot afford to feed themselves. There are networks of Canadians sharing tips on how to dumpster-dive because they do not have enough money to pay for food. Mothers are adding water to their kids' milk so that it will go further. Homeless encampments are now popping up in communities that have never witnessed this type of homelessness or hopelessness before. Seniors are turning down the heat in their homes during freezing winters because they are unable to afford to heat their home anymore.

Canadians are suffering, and the Prime Minister has been forced to admit it, but he seems curiously oblivious as to how all of this happened. At least he wants people to believe he has not intentionally devastated their lives. He seems legitimately dumbfounded by it all. I half expect him to launch an inquiry to try to figure out who did this to Canada. Who has been in charge for the past nine years?

It is not a secret: He did it. His recklessness and extremist economic policies have devastated the lives of Canadians of every generation across this country. Over the past nine years, he has doubled the national debt, driving inflation to 40-year highs and forcing interest rates to skyrocket faster than at any other time in our history. Over the past nine years, he has made it easier on his wealthy friends to become wealthier, while the middle class and those trying to join it no longer dream of doing better. They just hope that they can survive.

Seriously, over the past nine years, the Prime Minister has added more to the national debt than every other prime minister before him combined. That is a staggering stat. He has doubled the national debt in Canada in just nine years. He has added more to the debt while he has been Prime Minister than all 22 previous prime ministers added together over 147 years.

He was warned that the debt would cripple our national economy. He was warned that his policy of printing and pouring \$600 billion into the economy, not backed by economic growth, would drive up inflation, followed by sharp increases in the interest rates. He laughed it off, saying that the interest rates are at record lows, and he disregarded the simplest of economic principles by claiming that interest rates would remain low for a very long time.

• (1725)

However, his ignorance of economic and monetary policy did not save Canadians from the inevitable fallout of his reckless deficit spending. Inflation skyrocketed to levels not seen in 40 years, driving up the price of everything. Food, homes, vehicles and all of life's essentials became more expensive as the Prime Minister's newly printed cash chased fewer goods.

In response to the Liberal-created inflation crisis, the Bank of Canada tried to douse the flames by increasing interest rates, just like the Prime Minister had been warned would happen. Rates shot up faster than at any time in our history. Those higher rates forced some families out of their homes. Those needing to refinance or renew their mortgages faced higher payments, and some of those have doubled. Those who were forced to sell or who lost their homes are now forced into an overheated rental market, driving up rental rates even further.

Since the Prime Minister got elected, mortgages have doubled, interest payments have doubled, and now rent has doubled, and the crisis has grown and expanded. Unlike he promised, everyone is paying higher interest rates. Everyone who has a student loan, small business loan, line of credit or who has any loan of any type, is now paying the price for the Prime Minister's extremist and lazy economic policy.

The horrifying reality is not only that Canadians are being forced into austerity in their personal lives by this Prime Minister's reckless deficit spending, but also that Canadians are now paying the price at the national level as well, with higher interest rates on the national debt, a debt that is now twice the size from when the Liberals took office. The devastating information found in the Liberals' budget document, which was just released a couple of weeks ago, is the revelation that Canadian taxpayers are now paying more in interest payments on the national debt than they are for health care

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for all Canadians. That is the cost of running up the national credit card way past the max.

As a matter of fact, put a different way, every penny that is collected from the GST, in every transaction across Canada, is now being sent to wealthy bankers and bondholders for the interest on the Prime Minister's destructive debt. The devastating news that is found in the budget document is that the Prime Minister now intends to add \$300 billion more in binge borrowing. The Prime Minister said that under his leadership, the wealthy are getting richer, while regular Canadians are getting left behind. He is right.

However, the Prime Minister's buddies who are the bankers and bondholders are not the only ones getting rich under his leadership. The Liberals have opened the floodgates of the public treasury to the consultant buddies as well. The government is now handing over \$21 billion, every year, of borrowed money to these guys for projects—

• (1730)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member will have one minute for debate the next time this matter is before the House, plus his questions and comments.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR A GUARANTEED LIVABLE BASIC INCOME ACT

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP) moved that Bill C-223, An Act to develop a national framework for a guaranteed livable basic income, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Madam Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support Bill C-223, an act to develop a national framework for a guaranteed livable basic income. This bill, in fact, addresses many of the critical issues that we are facing today, and I hope my colleagues will join the NDP in voting in favour of this bill and sending it to committee for consideration.

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Before I go on, I would like to remind all of my colleagues in the House, across party lines, that every single party has committed to implementing all 231 calls for justice at the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. One of the key calls for justice that is being advocated to end the ongoing genocide against indigenous women and girls is call for justice 4.5 to put in place a guaranteed income for indigenous peoples and for all other Canadians. My bill is merely heeding that call, particularly in support of ending gender-based violence for all people, including indigenous women.

This bill is essential because we know that Canada's current social safety net has become totally inadequate. I will give a couple of examples. The guaranteed income supplement for seniors is an income guarantee that is not livable. As we hear disability advocates lobby government across the country with the new disability benefit, once again, what is required to live in dignity is not being provided.

We have income guarantees in this country. My bill is actually not offering up a new idea. What my bill would do, however, along with over 100,000 advocates across the country, is urge elected officials to ensure that everybody in Canada has what they need to live in dignity, and that is not happening. According to a recent study by Statistics Canada, one in 10 people lives in poverty in Canada as of last year. We have also seen a disturbing rise in child poverty in recent years. Some of the poorest children in this country, in an urban centre, live in my riding of Winnipeg Centre, and even though we have been talking about how to lift people up in Canada, nobody has put anything on the table that achieves it beyond cheap political sound bites.

Ed Broadbent, in 1989, passed a motion to end child poverty by the year 2000. However, here we are with piecemeal approaches to deal with poverty that contributes directly to a gender-based violence crisis that has been noted in some urban centres as an epidemic. We talk about families struggling to buy food. In 1989, Ed Broadbent called for the eradication of poverty in the year 2000. We are now in the year 2024 and inequality is increasing, as we see a growing disparity between the ultrarich and those who are barely making ends meet, if they are.

● (1735)

We are seeing a rise, for the first time, in people becoming unhoused. Families are rolling onto the streets. Why? It is not that we do not have a solution that has been studied, as I will speak to, but it is that members of Parliament have not joined in unity and political will to uphold human rights in this country, to uphold our Canadian Charter of Rights and to ensure that nobody has to live in poverty.

Poverty is something I have called one of the most violent human rights violations. If we want to talk about a mental health crisis in this country, we have one. I can tell members that when we do not provide people with their basic human rights, such as housing, as my colleague from Nunavut brought up today, access to clean drinking water, food security or the ability to know that the next day one would be able to survive, that is bad for one's mental health. It is guised in the House, as I hear lately, as this visceral, cruel rhetoric around people struggling, particularly those with ad-

ditions, and around poor-bashing, bashing people who are already down instead of talking about comprehensive solutions to lift people up.

It is for these reasons, for the things that I see every day on the streets of Winnipeg Centre and around the country, for the wonderful people who surround me, for the human beings living in encampments and are my constituents, whom I visit, have relationships with and have respect for, I put forward this bill. If we are going to complain about people living in encampments and about people struggling with mental health, if we are going to talk about issues around ending gender-based violence, I do not want to hear about it in this place anymore, unless people are willing to do what they need to do to make sure that people can live in dignity.

In the case of violence, should people choose to leave, they should have the financial resources to do so. They should have a guaranteed livable basic income in addition to other programs and supports meant to meet specific and special needs as my bill stipulates, such as affordable housing with rent geared to income and extra benefits for persons with disabilities so that they have what they need to pay for extra costs, for medications and for things to help them physically should they need them.

I am offering us an opportunity to do the right thing and lift people out of poverty, including the number of children in care in my riding. They age out of care and, at age 18, get dropped off at the Salvation Army without any income or housing, and we wonder why things are the way they are today.

Then I have to listen to Conservatives, even though as a teacher, I know that families and children have been struggling with hunger longer than the last 10 years. I know that families have had housing insecurity, longer than the last 10 years, that has been made worse by Conservative and by Liberal governments that have failed to invest in affordable social housing with rent geared to income and that have failed to provide people with income guarantees that allow them to live in dignity.

We can do better. That is why I put forward this bill. For anybody over the age of 17, including students, refugee claimants, temporary foreign migrant workers, kids who would age out of care into income insecurity and without housing, and any seniors in my riding who are currently on the verge of being houseless, it would provide them what they need, especially for women.

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• (1740)

Many seniors who worked in the unpaid care economy and who do not have pensions cannot live off what they get from the guaranteed income supplement. Is this how we want seniors to live in this country? Is this how we want children to live in this country? Is this how we want the disability community to live in this country? We turn a blind eye to human rights violations, turn a blind eye to gender-based violence and turn a blind eye to ageism, targeting primarily women. We do not have to. A lot of people say this is going to cost a lot of money, so why implement a guaranteed livable basic income? We have inflation right now. It is out of control.

Let us talk about the high cost of poverty. I want to talk about, specifically, the Dauphin study in Manitoba that an NDP government put forward in the 1980s. What they found was that folks who participated in the program had higher rates of graduation and their mental health improved. In fact, although there were a lot of myths, which have not ever been proven by research, that people stopped working, what they found was that they saved in health care costs. What they found was they saved costs by not having to provide what was needed to support good mental health, which includes ensuring that people have what they need to live in dignity.

In research, a lot of the myths around guaranteed incomes do not add up. In fact, the Government of Ontario, in 2017, launched a basic income pilot that provided 4,000 low-income people with cash transfers to help with their cost of living. Observers found that work placements and community involvement actually increased, not decreased. School retention improved. Health outcomes, especially mental health, were more positive, as reported by program recipients, affirming the findings from the study in Dauphin in the 1980s.

It is not like Canada would be the first. In fact, there are countries around the world that have implemented a guaranteed livable basic income, where people feel the happiest, and, in fact, those countries have growing economies.

I do not want to hear in the House about the cost of living. I am tired of hearing poor bashing and bashing people with addictions in the most grotesque, pathologizing and stereotyping terms. I am so tired of governments talking about lifting people up when we have something before us that is a good economic policy and, in fact, is a cost saver.

If we do not have the political will to implement a guaranteed livable basic income, I question our commitment as parliamentarians to eradicating poverty in this country. I question our commitment as parliamentarians to doing what pretty much every single women's organization that deals with violence has stated very clearly, and I say "pretty much" because I have not talked to every one. We need a guaranteed livable basic income now.

It is through that, through respecting our charter and through respecting human rights, we will build a better country for all.

• (1745)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am not sure if the member is aware, but I was actually elected to the Manitoba legislature back in 1988 and had the oppor-

tunity to experience both a provincial Conservative government as well as a provincial NDP government. I was very much aware of the fact that this experiment had taken place in Dauphin. Many were surprised that neither administration, whether the NDP for now 20-plus years or the Conservatives for 15-plus years, had taken the initiative any further or had had that discussion or debate, at least while I was there, in any real way that led to a resolution or a recommendation to Ottawa.

I wonder if the member could maybe expand upon what she believes Manitoba's actual position is with respect to that, because I was never really clear on that.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Madam Speaker, I would like to correct the record, because that is not factual. The fact is that the NDP government was in power and it was then taken over by the Conservative Party, which cancelled the program. It is not that the Manitoba government did not want it go forward at the time. Unfortunately, it was stopped by a Conservative government.

I would like to remind the member that it is an NDP member, with the support of the federal NDP caucus, who has actually been pushing this forward, including my bill for a guaranteed livable basic income. It is a little rich to say we are not moving on it when I am standing today, with the support of my whole caucus, supporting a guaranteed livable basic income.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have much respect for the member for Winnipeg Centre.

Currently, there are a number of places in the Income Tax Act where individuals who earn less than \$30,000 pay more than 50% in income tax and clawbacks. Would the member agree with me that we should reduce those clawbacks to enable people to keep more of their paycheques?

Ms. Leah Gazan: Madam Speaker, I would like to frame it a little. I certainly agree that the ultrarich are not paying their fair share in this country, and I would point to things like tax havens and tax loopholes for the ultrarich.

In this discussion, we often forget about those who do not work. People with complex mental health and addiction issues might be able to work two days a week, not five. There are many people who cannot work. The problem and why we see so much growing inequality in this country is that we make a person's value and human rights about whether they are able to work or not.

Private Members' Business

For seniors, are we going to tell grandma she needs to get back to work? For a person suffering with mental health issues, are we going to tell them to get back to work, that they need to work five days a week and if they do not they are going to end up on the streets? Do I think we need to adjust our tax system so those making less pay less taxes? Absolutely. I hope the Conservatives eventually support that.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, one of the critiques that often come up for programs like this is that some will say that it is a Conservative ruse to actually take away social programs on the back end. The Conservative member did reference clawbacks, and oftentimes it is provincial Conservative premiers who claw back on good social assistance programs.

Could the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre, whom I thank for her work, perhaps dispel any myths about how this bill would harm social programs and talk about what safeguards we can have to ensure greedy premiers do not claw it back in order to have tax cuts for the ultrawealthy?

• (1750)

Ms. Leah Gazan: Madam Speaker, this bill is very clear that a guaranteed livable basic income would be in addition to other supports and services meant to meet specific and special needs. That would include things like extra supports that may be required by certain communities. The disability community often has higher expenses. Their cost of living is often much higher than for other folks, so we cannot get rid of those other programs. That is certainly not the intention. It is about improving our social safety net. It is about improving current income guarantees to make sure they are livable.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments from the member for Winnipeg Centre. However, at the end of the day, I think that we need to take a broader look at how it is, as a society, we are there to support and the types of support programs that are put in place.

Canada's social safety net is something that has evolved. We have jurisdictional responsibilities in different areas, and some governments have been more successful than other governments in trying to eliminate poverty, in particular with a focus on children, and I would like to give some attention to that.

However, I want to emphasize that, every year, the national government hands over, in the form of a social transfer, hundreds of millions of dollars. It is somewhere in the neighbourhood of over \$15 billion a year. That is to go to provinces to provide all forms of social support, which is the reason I raise the issue.

I was first elected in 1988 and, through the years, there has always been a great deal of discussion on how we ensure that the people who need the support get the type of support that is necessary. However, on having an income that we guarantee for everyone, I do not know if Canada is ready, and I know the member would be upset with that statement. I do not know and I am not convinced that Canada is in a position to do what it is that the proposed legislation is asking for. I do believe that we need to take a look at how government is able to lower the poverty rate and target

funding. I have yet to be convinced, but I am open to the issue before us.

When I look at what, for example, we have been able to accomplish through targeted actions, it is very significant. I have talked about, for example, the Canada child benefit program and how that program lifted thousands of children in Winnipeg North out of poverty. I can talk about the guaranteed income supplement, something the member made reference to, and again how hundreds of the poorest seniors in the country are being lifted out of poverty as a direct result. There are ways in which governments, both at the provincial level and at the national level, can target in order to support people.

When we came into government, the poverty rate was just under 15%. Today, it is actually around 10%. I suspect that is because of the targeted actions we have taken as a government, and those are direct dollars. It does not take away from other types of investments that the government makes. For example, I was very proud of the fact that we came up with a \$200-billion, over 10 years, commitment towards health care. That commitment is going to ensure that people, no matter what their income levels are, will be provided quality health care services into the future.

In recent budgets, we have seen an expansion, for example, with the dental program. When that is completely rolled out to Canada's population of 40 million people, we are talking about over nine million people who are going to have access to that dental program.

In this budget, I believe the single largest expenditure, and I stand to be corrected on this, is going towards the disability program that we are putting out.

• (1755)

We look at it as a very important first step, and it is going to have a positive impact in our communities. Some will ask why it is only \$200. However, before this amount, it did not exist. When we talk about the hundreds of thousands of applicants and use the multiplying factor, this is a very good start.

There are other programs we have brought in through the budget. The pharmacare program is going to provide life-saving medications for some individuals in Canada. If we think of the numbers, they will be going to hundreds of thousands of people who are affected with diabetes. I do not know the actual numbers. Now we have a national government that is going to be there in a very real and tangible way.

These programs that are specifically targeted make a difference in our communities until, at least, I feel comfortable knowing that what is being suggested through the legislation is not going to take away from the enhancement of programs that I know are having a positive impact. When I say "take away from", we are also talking about the financial commitments.

We increased the OAS for people 75 and above by 10%; we were criticized by members because we made a commitment to do just that. If we think about when people are hitting 75, some of their retirement money is starting to diminish and their medical needs increase. They also have that sense of independence as a senior. We now have a government that says that it is going to find the resources to ensure that they get that substantial 10% increase. That, in itself, helps a great number of seniors.

The government is able to look at ways it can actually make a difference, such as the child care program and the billions of dollars it cost. Who here, outside the Conservative Party, would say that was a bad program? We all got behind it and supported \$10-a-day day care, which is going to help every region of our country.

When we think of programs, there are some that we do not necessarily get to talk about that often. With respect to the CPP program, there are approximately six million people who have retired and look to the CPP. It is something we worked on with the provinces in order to ensure people would get increases during their retirement.

I may look at ending it on that, because the way I started was by saying that I was familiar with what took place in the province of Manitoba, maybe not in great detail, but I was around during the discussions that followed in the Manitoba legislature for almost 20 years. I did not see or hear the Province of Manitoba, which is a fairly progressive province, advance with either a Progressive Conservative or NDP government that it wanted the country to be moving in this direction. There were no Liberal provincial governments, although we tried. I suspect that it did not say this because it saw the value of having targeted ways to bring people out of poverty. The government has demonstrated that through many budgetary measures we have taken, virtually since 2015. As a direct result, the poverty rate has gone down dramatically. I think this is viable, in a healthy way, moving forward.

• (1800)

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Madam Speaker, before I get into the heart of my speech, I want to address a couple of comments from the member for Winnipeg Centre, whom I greatly respect. I just want to make it clear that Conservatives are very open to working with the NDP and any other party that wants to go after tax loopholes and tax evaders.

I have heard the member for New Westminster—Burnaby talk a lot about the Panama papers. Just yesterday at the Standing Committee on Finance, I asked CRA officials about how many convictions there have been and how many dollars have been collected from the Panama papers. I believe the answer is still zero. I am very happy to work with the NDP to close those loopholes and go after the ultrarich tax avoiders.

I also want to thank the member for putting forward this private member's bill, not only for its substance but also because it tells those who are struggling right now that the NDP cares about the most vulnerable. Quite frankly, and from my heart, we heard from the member across the aisle that there seems to be an absence of recognition of the struggles Canadians are going through. I thank the NDP for acknowledging that.

Private Members' Business

I want to talk about the affordability crisis. I know my NDP friends will probably not be as happy about these remarks, but they will give the important context that surrounds all of where we are today.

Specifically, I want to talk a bit about productivity and where we are as an economy. Ultimately, it is the economy that will drive the wealth of the nation. If we have a strong, productive economy, we will be wealthier. We can certainly argue about how to divide that pie, and the NDP has contributed greatly throughout its existence and had meaningful discussions about how to split it, but it has to be stated unequivocally that growing the pie is a good thing. Quite frankly, we have not seen that pie growing.

Over the last decade, we have seen almost zero GDP per capita growth. What that means is that we are facing a loss decade here in Canada. Our GDP per capita has grown by 4.73%, which is the actual number. We can contrast that to the United States, which is nearly 50%. Their economy has been growing 10 times as fast as ours over the last 10 years.

Strong productivity will lead to higher wages. As I said, we can certainly have discussions with the NDP about making sure we have a framework in place for things such as competition, which the NDP has been outspoken on and we agree upon, as well as other frameworks to make sure that pie is divided equally. However, we also have to talk about increasing that pie. If the pie shrinks, the reality is that the most vulnerable will suffer the most. Experts and economists say this.

Carolyn Rogers, who is the senior deputy governor of the Bank of Canada, in a now famous speech on productivity, recently talked about the “time to break the glass” and the corrosive impact of a lack of productivity. It hurts inflation. An economy that can produce more goods and services, simply by virtue of that, reduces the cost of everything. We can think of this as the basic rules of supply and demand. If, in fact, an economy produces more goods, the costs of those goods go down, and the effect of inflation is decreased.

Carolyn Rogers went on to say that the level of productivity in Canada's business sector is more or less unchanged from seven years ago, as I talked about. She stated:

Back in 1984, the Canadian economy was producing 88% of the value generated by the US economy per hour. That's not great. But by 2022, Canadian productivity had fallen to just 71% of that of the United States. Over this same period of time, Canada also fell behind our G7 peers, with only Italy seeing a larger decline in productivity relative to the United States.

Canada's productivity has fallen for the past 13 quarters. That is incredible. “Productivity” is fancy economist jargon but, really, all this word means is our ability to make goods and deliver services. Are we making goods more efficiently and more effectively?

• (1805)

Certainly, we can imagine those last 13 years. We have seen tremendous innovation, the rise of digitalization and even, now, the beginnings of artificial intelligence. However, our productivity in Canada has not increased.

Private Members' Business

A study published by the Fraser Institute found that, from 2014, business investment per worker declined by 20%. That is a bit of the story, too: We are not attracting or maintaining investment here in Canada.

I know what my NDP friend would say. I can say his name now, as he is not here: Daniel Blaikie. Mr. Blaikie would talk about the fact that the lack of competition was driving the lack of corporate spending. I do not disagree entirely with that thesis. In fact, I think that is an area where the NDP and the Conservatives could actually work together.

What we cannot do is bring uncertainty into the markets. We cannot overly restrict or unduly regulate businesses either. If we shrink their resources, we will shrink their ability to invest in our workers.

Canadian workers are the best in the world. They work as hard as, if not harder than, anyone else. The reason their productivity is not increasing is that businesses are not investing in their equipment and their machinery.

One can imagine productivity in Canada being like this: We have workers with shovels, but the Americans have workers with backhoes. As hard as our workers work, they will never be able to compete until we make the proper investments going forward.

Over the past five years, productivity in the business sector has fallen 0.3%, while it has grown by 1.7% in the U.S. That is our problem.

Longer term, the OECD projects Canada to rank dead last among the OECD members in real GDP growth out to 2060. Canada's 10-year average in GDP per capita is at its lowest level since the Great Depression. Cumulative growth has been about 2% in Canada versus 12% in the United States.

A lack of productivity has very real consequences. Unfortunately, across the aisle, we hear the same solutions over and over again: more taxing and more spending. Every time I hear this rhetoric, I always have, in my head, the great line from Winston Churchill: "I contend that for a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle."

The Liberals seem hell-bent on taxing prosperity, productivity and investment and making anyone with a dream of succeeding in this country feel as though what they want is bad. However, we need prosperity, achievers and success.

Certainly, as I said at the start of my speech, we need to make sure that all Canadians pay their fair share. Conservatives have been clear and unequivocal on that point. However, we also need to recognize those exceptional individuals who start from nothing, pull themselves up by their own bootstraps, make a success of it and create jobs, wealth and prosperity, not just for themselves but for our communities.

In conclusion, once again, I would like to thank the member for recognizing the terrible challenges that many Canadians are facing across this great country. What we really need in Canada is to bring back prosperity to this land through greater investments by our businesses, through an entrepreneurial spirit, through renewal,

through rewarding success and through looking forward, with optimism, to future prosperity.

• (1810)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to this bill. I want to commend my NDP colleague for initiating this debate on a guaranteed livable basic income.

We need to know how to recognize the social issues in our society, such as guaranteeing everyone enough income to live. In Quebec, there are studies that talk about a livable income, which is more than a minimum income. This type of income is supported by Quebec's Institut de recherche et d'informations socioéconomiques. That, too, is an interesting concept. No matter what region a person lives in, they need more than just a basic income. That is where the concept of livable income comes from. We addressed this issue during the study of Bill C-319, which pertains to seniors.

All that to say, I do not believe that prosperity alone will bring about equality or equity. It takes robust social measures to ensure income equality in our societies.

As many know, no matter what it is called, be it guaranteed minimum income or universal allowance, this idea is not just being championed by the left. The right has also used it in its own way, saying we should dismantle social programs and give everyone a basic income. That, too, is a vision.

In Quebec, similar discussions have taken place regularly, particularly since the 1960s, when labour activists promoted them. Then the pandemic hit and nine million jobs suddenly vanished, laying bare just how fragile the system is. EI used to be a social safety net, but sadly, it no longer plays that role. During that time, we saw just how many people fell through the cracks.

These debates are ongoing in Quebec, in the other Canadian provinces and internationally. In Quebec, as I said, we have been having this debate since the 1960s.

Sorry about the noisy papers.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I must interrupt the hon. member.

The rustling of papers on the hon. member's desk is bothering the interpreters. I must advise her of this because it is quite loud. If she could try to avoid making such loud noises, that would be wonderful.

The hon. member has the floor.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Madam Speaker, that is very important and you did the right thing. We have to protect our interpreters, who perform such essential work in the House.

There is one problem with my colleague's proposal: Social safety nets and social programs are not Ottawa's responsibility. They fall under provincial jurisdiction. One basic principle of a guaranteed minimum income is that it would replace other social programs, thereby preventing vulnerable people from falling through the cracks, which we do not want.

What social programs would basic income replace? Considering that all the social programs are in Quebec, and that our social programs are strong, I do not think that we are debating this issue in the right place. In Quebec, for example, we have other social safety net programs apart from EI. EI comes under federal jurisdiction because Quebec constitutionally agreed to give it up. I think that was a mistake. It should be repatriated, but how we repatriate programs under the Constitution is another matter.

Most of the programs are Quebec initiatives. I am talking about the social solidarity program, the occupational health and safety program, the Quebec pension plan, the child benefit and the disability benefit. Since 2023, in addition to the social solidarity program, Quebec has had a basic income program to help people who have severe employment restrictions. It may not be a livable income, but it is a very important social safety net program.

I am going to talk about our universal early childhood education services program in Quebec. It is a social safety net program for everyone. For families or parents who have social solidarity income, there is no contribution. From an equity perspective, we want to ensure that we have a significant social solidarity safety net and major social programs. In Quebec, we have shown that social programs help support the most vulnerable, those we need to help.

All this to say that these social programs belong to Quebec. It is constitutional. Adding a guaranteed livable minimum income at the federal level is like saying that Quebec's social programs are being transferred to Canada. That is a no. That would be against the Constitution and I do not think it would be beneficial. Let me explain.

One of the programs that is part of Canada's social safety net is employment insurance, although that is no longer a true social safety net. It has become an insurance plan that six out of 10 workers cannot access, despite having paid into it, and one that self-employed workers cannot access. In addition, people who work in atypical jobs, primarily young people and women, cannot access it because of its strict criteria. When it was first introduced, it was meant to be a social safety net against the worst thing that can happen, that is, losing a job. I think we need to strengthen the social safety net and its programs.

• (1815)

We talked about the guaranteed income supplement. The GIS is the social assistance component of old age security. The federal government ranks poorly among OECD countries when it comes to support for seniors, and to compensate for the low incomes of some OAS recipients, they receive the GIS. Ideally, the government should not need to provide the GIS. Instead, it should guarantee seniors a universal OAS benefit starting at age 65 that would bolster their incomes and raise their standard of living. However, these are not the choices the government has made, nor are they matters of federal jurisdiction.

Private Members' Business

Other social safety nets such as health and education are also the responsibility of Quebec and the provinces. Back in the day, the federal government, which has the spending power, signed a health pact with Saskatchewan, Quebec and all the provinces. The provinces had passed health legislation guaranteeing free universal medical and hospital care. Under the pact, the federal government was to fund 50% of the costs of the health care system. We are a long way away from that. We have gotten further away over time. These days, the government covers barely 25% of these costs.

Are we going to trust the federal government to manage the social safety net programs that Quebec has adopted? The answer is no. It is clear from the examples I gave that, on the contrary, the government is making people poorer. That is what is happening with the new disability benefit. When the budget was tabled, we were shocked to see that the intended objective would not be—

• (1820)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but her time has expired. In fact, I gave her an extra 30 seconds.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Hamilton Centre.

[*English*]

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, there are few opportunities to rise in the House that give me the type of honour that has been bestowed upon me to speak alongside my incredible colleague and seatmate, the member for Winnipeg Centre, on this particular issue this evening. There are few topics I could speak to that connect more with the material conditions for people in Hamilton Centre.

New Democrats come to our politics honestly. We come to them by viewing, watching and observing, and many times experiencing, the struggles, the poverty and the abject conditions that people face, the legislated poverty. Watching people suffer in my city has radicalized me over the years because there is, for some reason, a notion that it has always been done this way. There is no alternative. It always has to be this way. We have to be in this zero-sum economy of winners and losers, and the concentration of wealth and prosperity in this country always has to be distributed to the top.

Private Members' Business

We can look at what is before us in the bill for a guaranteed basic livable income. We heard something from even the Conservative members who spoke on the bill. They admit that there is an opportunity to put this bill to second reading, and to begin to have a discussion about how we can lift people truly out of poverty and raise the material conditions for people. This is not a new topic. I will share with members that in Hamilton, much like the material conditions that exist for people in Winnipeg Centre, people continue to struggle. Often we are the canaries in the coal mine. When city centres like Toronto catch a cold, we suffer the most.

I will share with members something that goes back to 2009. We first started the social assistance review, and I was in rooms with people such as Tom Cooper from the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction. It was led by people with lived experience and included the campaign for adequate welfare and disability, and people like Elizabeth McGuire, and Margie and Dan Gould, folks who were legislated to live in poverty.

In talking about that, let us put things into perspective for a moment. Forget about the ultrawealthy. We can barely conceive, in this country, what a billion dollars is. However, there is something that people who are watching tonight can understand, and it is clear. Currently, in this province, Ontario Works is \$733 a month. That is \$733 a month to live in this economy.

When we talk about the cost of living, what we are talking about is the crisis of capitalism, runaway profits and the inability for people to meet their basic needs. We are talking about the crumbling of the mythology of a liberal economy where people should be able to work hard, go to school, get good jobs and take care of their families. That is no more.

Quite rightly, my compassionate colleague refocused us with the understanding that people's worth and value ought not be tied to their employment, their productivity and our GDP. Humans have an inherent worth, regardless of how they are utilized within a capitalist economy.

I will share that people who are living right now on ODSP, sentenced to live in poverty, are receiving \$1,300 a month. How can anybody, anywhere, with a straight face, say that that is enough for people to survive? The Liberal government has the audacity to suggest that an additional \$200 a month would cover it.

There are a lot of people who think that this is the only way that things can be done and there is no alternative. The member for Winnipeg Centre brought up the example of Dauphin. Right in Hamilton, not too long ago, there was a provincial Liberal government that put in a basic income. That is not to be confused with the guaranteed livable income. The basic income project was, in fact, legislated poverty because it still sentenced people to live below the low-income cut off.

I find it abhorrent that the Liberal member for Winnipeg North stood up and completely dismissed this, when 80% of the Liberals' membership, in their last policy convention, stood for this. The Liberals continue to pay lip service to lifting people out of poverty, while standing up and having the audacity to dismiss a real discussion about this at second reading. I say shame to the member.

• (1825)

Let us talk about the Hamilton basic income pilot project that was brought up. I want people to take a moment to humanize the issue. There was some incredible work done by Jessie Golem, who put together the "Humans of Basic Income" photography series. She profiled people like my friend Tim Button, as well as my dearly missed comrade Michael Hampson, a disability justice advocate who spoke to this pilot project in Hamilton. It was a project that granted people a meagre \$17,000 a year, which is still well below the low-income cut-off. About that little lift up, he said, "It changed my life. Gave me back my dignity and faith in my community. ODSP chained me in poverty, causing high stress and poor nutritional opportunities." He said that basic income gave healing to the recipients.

This was a man we sorely lost during COVID. Today, I rise to honour him and to lift up his voice. I rise to lift up all the voices of the Hamiltonians who, for a brief moment, were given a bit of life and dignity. By having this support, people could then pursue the education options they wanted, have the opportunity to transition into jobs and, yes, flee gender-based violence. That is what we are talking about in this moment. That is why this bill is so important.

For anybody who would not have the courage to at least allow this to go to second reading and have the discussion, I want them to think about those humans of basic income. I want them to think about and look at the encampments they have in their communities. We talk about the runaway crisis of capitalism, the way the profiteering is happening and the corporate concentration of wealth. There is prosperity in this country.

Right now it is not a supply issue with housing. We have condos dotting the skies, cranes going up every day, and year after year a record number of building permits. We also have record numbers of people sentenced to live in tents in this country. In this country, New Democrats believe that everybody has the right to dignity, safety, housing, food, the necessities of life, education and opportunity.

The audacity of the liberalism that speaks about the middle-class and those working hard to join them, as though what they lie about is that the most hard-working people in this country are the ones sentenced to live in low-income, in subsistence and in deep poverty, is what we are here to change today.

Madam Speaker, before I conclude, I am going to go ahead and beat my Liberal colleagues to the punch. I withdraw the term "lie".

• (1830)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

FALL ECONOMIC STATEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-59, An Act to implement certain provisions of the fall economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 21, 2023 and certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

[English]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is one motion and amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-59. Motion No. 1 will be debated and voted upon.

[Translation]

I will now put Motion No. 1 to the House.

[English]

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC) moved:

That Bill C-59 be amended by deleting the short title.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby is rising on a point order.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, as I understand it, what the Conservatives are doing is having a debate about the deleting of the short title of the bill.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is not a point of order. It is a point of debate. The hon. member can raise that during questions and comments.

The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot has the floor.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, as always, it is an honour to rise and represent the good people of Battle River—Crowfoot in the House of Commons.

Today, I do so to enter into debate on what is, ironically, the fall fiscal update. Many people watching must be wondering why we are debating, come springtime, a bill that was tabled in the fall. I had that same question, but it simply comes down to this. While the Liberals tabled their budget a couple of weeks ago, which I will talk about here in a moment, we are still debating the fall economic statement in the spring.

That is a clear example of the utter incompetence that we have seen from the Liberal Party. The Liberals cannot manage their legislative agenda, and they certainly cannot manage the economy. We are seeing debt spiralling out of control. We are seeing pain and

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suffering in people's lives. We are seeing pain and suffering in the lives of so many Canadians. That is a perfect example.

The reason I wanted to start my speech emphasizing that is that, when folks watch this, they will look on the screen to see that it has "Fall Economic Statement Implementation Act, 2023" written across it. Earlier today we were also debating the budget implementation act, 2024, highlighting the true incompetence and inability of the Prime Minister, the Liberals and their coalition partners who prop them up. Come storm or sunny day, their coalition partners are always there to stand with the Liberals, propping up their corruption, their incompetence and, ultimately, the pain that Canadians are feeling from coast to coast. When it comes to the true root of what I hear as I travel across my constituency, related to both the fall economic statement and the budget that was tabled here a couple of weeks ago, there is crime and chaos in our streets and gravel roads.

It is interesting. I am sure many MPs and, hopefully, some Liberal and NDP members as well, keep something similar to what I affectionately refer to as my "call list". It can take some time to get through that call list, as there are a whole host of people who want to speak to me out of the 110,000 or so people I represent. I find it incredibly important to speak with individuals who are—

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am questioning the relevance of the member's speech to the motion that was put forward to delete the short title of the act. I am having a hard time trying to connect it to—

• (1835)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Obviously, the hon. member recognizes that there is some leeway during speeches. However, I do want to remind members to make sure that they are speaking to the bill that is before the House. Their speeches should be in reference to that.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I find it so interesting that, in the middle of my speaking about talking with my constituents, the member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill would suggest that somehow the pain that Canadians are experiencing is not relevant to the discussion in this place. It is that ignorance, that being so utterly out of touch, that makes it almost difficult to find words. That is why I would suggest that she take notes when it comes to what I am describing about the need to speak to our constituents.

The very basis of why this place exists is that we are the representatives of the people, rather than elites imposing their vision upon a populace who do not have a say. Those are days gone by. While that may be the pursuit of that member and so many members of the Liberal Party, that is an absolutely unacceptable attitude to have in the House of Commons, a place where the common people should have a voice.

I would suggest—

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The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I want to remind the hon. member that his comments were almost speaking to the member herself. I want to remind members that they can debate government policies and about the party itself, but they should not attack individual members. Therefore, I want to caution the hon. member on some of the comments he made because they were attacking the individual member. I am assuming that is why the hon. member was also rising on a point of order at the same time as I was.

I would caution members to make sure they speak to the bill, which is pretty wide, as I just did another check on that. I also want to remind the member that it should not be an attack on individuals themselves, but that it should be on either the government's policies or the government's actions.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would suggest that the member did attack me. It was just not veering in that direction. He made comments about my person and assumptions about what my motivation was. Therefore, I would ask the Speaker to ask him to retract those statements about me.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I ask the hon. member to retract his statements.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, on that same point of order, my colleague was simply pointing out the government's disdain for the general public. This was not—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will indicate to the hon. member that I heard the comments; there were two of them, so I would ask the hon. member to please withdraw those comments so that he can continue on with his speech.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would request some clarity.

I heard the comments, as I was listening very closely. The member did comment on the knowledge of the individual and did use the word "ignorance", which is not unparliamentary. I think you will find that Hansard is littered with the word, but I did not hear a word that was unparliamentary, so I would ask—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I did catch it the first time. However, I thought the hon. member was changing course, but there was a second time as well. Therefore, I am asking the hon. member to withdraw his comments so that he can go on with his speech.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I withdraw the comments that have caused so much offence in this place.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot can continue with his speech.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I think that the last number of minutes is just a demonstration of the chaos and the inability of that Liberal government to accomplish anything.

I would suggest that every member of the Liberal Party and every member of the New Democratic Party do what our jobs are, and that is to speak to Canadians. When we speak to Canadians, we hear stories of pain. We hear stories of uncertainty. We hear stories where vehicles are being stolen from driveways, whether that be urban driveways in downtown Toronto or whether that be gravel

roads in rural Canada. The crime, the chaos and the corruption is becoming too much for so many Canadians to handle.

What is interesting, as those Liberals try to interrupt and cast aspersions upon the important debates that we need to have in this place, is that they forget the fact that we serve, and that we need to serve, the people; they forget that. What is so unfortunate are the consequences of their forgetting that simple fact. We may disagree on policies, and I have said this before, and I will say it again, but there was a time when we could look at the government in power and understand that we may not agree with all of its policies, but we still had respect for the institutions and for the offices that those individuals held. Increasingly, I am hearing from constituents who have lost respect for the institutions. They do not trust not only the Prime Minister but also the office that he holds and the direction in which the Liberal government is leading the country. Canadians are suffering, Canadians are hurting, and I hear it constantly.

I mentioned my call list, and as I was preparing for this speech, I was scrolling through that call list. Members will understand my passion when I have heard from so many Canadians who are hurting so desperately, in need of relief, in need of hope, in need of somebody who can provide leadership in this country. However, instead, they have a government that intends to divide, a government that intends to distract and a government that, instead of being responsible, is the definition of irresponsible. The passion that I and so many of my Conservative colleagues express, is that of amplifying the voices of Canadians who have been forgotten by the Liberals and the New Democrats, who have abandoned the very basis of what it should mean to be a member of Parliament.

When we look at the budget, and similar in frame to that when we see the fall economic statement, we see that the Liberals show that there is not a responsible path back to spending within its means. We see the consequences of that. It is not just adding a few extra bonds that the Bank of Canada has to figure out. Those are complicated financial mechanisms that so many do not understand the specifics of. However, when it comes down to it, the consequence is that it raises costs. It is the same thing with the high tax agenda, which those members perpetuate. It is raising costs for Canadians.

We hear so much about how the Liberals support quadrupling the carbon tax, increasing taxes at every turn, yet the consequence of that is Canadians are paying more, and they are hurting as a result. We see that there has been a complete and utter abandonment of common sense within this place, and the result is that the country is moving in a direction that Canadians certainly did not vote for.

It is interesting that, when I travel across the country, like so many MPs, whether it is through airports in my commute or whether it is through the messages we get from folks who watch the proceedings in this place, we increasingly hear, including from some individuals who shared how they voted Liberal or New Democrat in the past, that they will not do it again because they see that what they were told is not what is being offered. The clear proof of that is exactly what we have before us in both the fall economic statement and in the budget that was debated earlier today.

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• (1840)

There has been this very interesting trend, as of late, where the NDP is criticizing its coalition confidence and supply partners over there, yet it has said that it will continue to prop up the crime, corruption, chaos and out-of-control spending.

We see how the Prime Minister seems to be quick to point out some challenges the country is facing. What is interesting is that he fails to acknowledge that, for nearly nine years, he has been the captain of the ship. What is interesting, to use and further that ship analogy for just a moment longer, is the fact that when a captain starts steering a ship, what may be a small course correction in the beginning can result in massive pain and in being directionless as the ship continues to sail on.

When one does not take responsibility for the maintenance of that ship, it begins to fall apart. While the captain, standing at the wheel, can blame everybody but himself, the buck stops at the top. The buck stops with the one who is in charge. What is so interesting is that the Prime Minister has, as of late, had revelations that Canadians are hurting. I agree with him on that, but here is the reality. It is the policies of that NDP-Liberal coalition that have caused so much hurt.

Often we hear the other side, and many Canadians, ask what the Conservatives would do differently. We have a record that we can be proud of, shepherding the country through incredible financial difficulties while understanding fiscal responsibility. We have so much potential that exists, in terms of the ability and the hope of the future of the country.

I look forward to being able to respond to some questions here because when it comes to the future of our country, the future is bright, but it seems that the solution needs to include getting rid—

• (1845)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to bring it back to the original question. The motion is that the bill, Bill C-59, be amended by deleting the short title.

I am not sure that the hon. member actually got to the motion and why the title should be deleted or not, but I want to remind members to speak to the motion as well.

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, I guess the member could be excused, since he was the one who brought in the motion.

It is truly amazing how the Conservative Party really knows no shame. Think about it; the member who moved the motion is criticizing the government because we are not getting this legislation passed because it is the fall economic statement. Well, duh. Who does one think is preventing it from passing? It is the Conservative Party of Canada. They are doing it by bringing in silly motions that the member just introduced, even though he did not even talk about it.

Can the member explain to Canadians how it is that they can justify filibustering legislation and then blaming the government because we are not stopping them from filibustering fast enough?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I am so pleased to have the opportunity to respond to that question from the member whose word count certainly is the only thing that he can point to as being successful, in terms of his service in Parliament.

Let me simply suggest this. When it comes to the very root of what we are talking about, it is the government that controls the legislative agenda. The government is quick to blame everybody else for its failures when it is that member himself who, on a number of occasions, has moved amendments similar to this, with the defence that there were important things that needed to be discussed. Therefore, when they do it, it is legitimate; when we do it, in order to make sure that the voices of Canadians are heard, it is somehow filibustering.

Let me be crystal clear. Never, in this place, is it wrong to bring up the pain and the suffering that Canadians are facing because we have to offer hope at a time when people feel hopeless. Certainly, the solution is a change in government because it is tired, corrupt and certainly out of ideas, and this fall economic statement and the budget we debated earlier today are clear proof of that.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague brought up the Conservative record. He said that it is something that could be pointed to so that Canadians could get an idea of what they could expect from a future Conservative government.

I had the benefit of actually being in the House from 2008 to 2015. My hon. colleague said that the Conservative government stewarded this country through tough economic times. What he did not tell people was that the Harper government ran seven consecutive deficits in a row, only claiming to balance the budget in the eighth year, which happened to be an election year, and that turned out to be a deficit budget as well. Conservatives did not balance the budget in a single year of their eight years in the House.

Is it the case that Canadians can expect similar behaviour from a future government, of consecutive deficits, although they promise to be fiscally prudent?

• (1850)

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, that is ironic from a member of the NDP. Seemingly, there is no promise that the Liberals can break that would force the NDP to renege on the pension and supply agreement that they seem so bent on keeping with the corrupt Liberals.

I am proud of the Conservative record. I am proud to stand and represent my constituents in this place. The member asked what Conservatives would do, and I will be crystal clear on that as well. Conservatives would axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime, because that is what Canadians are asking for. It is time that everybody in this place pays attention.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands.

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Excuse me, it is the hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques. I thought that was one of the member's colleagues back there too, but it is not.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[*Translation*]

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

There is a lot of talk about unparliamentary language. My colleague has every reason to be offended by your mistake.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is not the way I meant it. It was misunderstood. I was looking at who was getting up. I was looking this way instead. That is simply how it came out. I apologize.

The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, we are going to make history, but maybe not for the right reasons.

We are witnessing a miracle: The Conservative Party has become the party that cares about vulnerable people, the middle class and families. They call it common sense. I would like to discuss common sense with my colleague.

Currently, we are discussing the bill that implements the economic update. In the economic update, according to the last budget, there is a tax credit for the energy sector to the tune of \$20 billion. The Conservative Party has not said a word about it.

I would like my colleague to tell me if he is proud that his party supports a tax credit of \$20 billion that could help the middle class, families, access to housing. That is the question my colleague is avoiding. That is the money that will enable oil and gas companies to rake in even greater profits.

[*English*]

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I am proud to represent the heart of the Canadian energy sector, about 2.5% of Canada's economy, which contributes to the equalization that benefits the member's province specifically.

Let me suggest this: A prosperous Canada benefits everybody. For a member of a party that claims to stand up for jurisdictional rights and responsibilities within this country, I would suggest his party adopt an attitude that encourages prosperity and economic advancement, as opposed to trying to bankrupt part of the country, which would have not only a devastating effect on the people I represent but the entire country.

Instead of punishing people, let us build a country that actually builds a prosperous future for all Canadians. That is how we make a rich middle class in this country. It is regrettable that we have a coalition among three left-wing parties that refuse to do so.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to again apologize.

[*Translation*]

I thought it was a Conservative member who had risen in the corner. I wanted to make sure I had respected party parity. I am sorry.

[*English*]

I just want to reiterate to members to stay within the motion. I know it is large, but please mention the motion every once in a while. That way we can avoid points of order.

Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I can assure you I will remain very relevant. In fact, the person who moved the motion—

• (1855)

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe if you look deep into the recesses of Bosc and Gagnon, it says that if a member gets over 10 million interventions, they are cut off.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I know that is not a point of order. I think the hon. member should mention a standing order next time.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, your time starts now.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it is truly amazing. We have the Conservative Party of Canada, which many would call the Reform Party, because it is, for all intents and purposes, more the Reform Party than it is the Conservative Party, and I will try to explain to those who might be attempting to follow the debate.

We are talking about the fall economic statement, which is something that was introduced late last year. The Conservative member who moved this motion is criticizing the government for taking so long to get this legislation passed, which is truly amazing, because it is the Conservative Party that is preventing the legislation from passing by filibustering the legislation, and today is an excellent example.

What is the member actually moving? He is moving a motion to delete the short title of the legislation. What is the short title of the legislation? It is the “Fall Economic Statement Implementation Act, 2023”. This is a relatively large piece of legislation, and this member, who I hope did not require AI assistance this time around, comes up with an amendment to delete that short title. Then he says that not doing this, not passing this legislation, has a consequence. Well, the member is somewhat right, even though he does not admit that the Conservative Party, or the Reformers in the Conservative Party, are the problem in terms of why it is not passing, and many of them are rural members of Parliament.

Within this legislation is action that would double the rural top-up for the carbon rebate. This means that the Reformers across the way, the Conservative Party, are in fact keeping money away from rural communities in Canada, because they made the decision that they do not want this legislation to pass. To amplify that, they bring in a silly motion meant for one purpose, which is purely obstruction.

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Then the member asks who the Liberals are talking to, and he is critical of some of my caucus colleagues. Let me frame it in a different way. After all, the member himself said, “The buck stops with the one who is in charge”, implying the Prime Minister. Let me reverse this on the member opposite. He is trying to ask who we are talking to versus who the Conservatives are talking to, so let us talk about the leaders.

The Prime Minister of Canada came to Winnipeg one day, and we were talking about child care. He came to Stanley Knowles School in my riding, and we talked about the importance of \$10-a-day child care. What is wrong with talking to child care workers?

The next time the Prime Minister came to Winnipeg, we went to the Grace Hospital. It was the premier, the provincial minister of health, the Prime Minister and the federal Minister of Health. They talked about the \$200-billion transfer for a generation of providing services in health care on issues such as mental health, family doctors and so forth. We were surrounded by the real VIPs, which were the health care workers who were there. These are the people we are listening to.

In fact, the last time the Prime Minister came to Winnipeg, we met again with the premier and the provincial minister of housing. We also had the mayor of Winnipeg, and along with the Prime Minister was the Minister of Housing. We talked about the issue of housing and, again, we had stakeholders there.

When we think of the budget or the fall economic statement, what we will see is that they are a reflection of what Canadians are telling us.

● (1900)

Whether it is the member for Avalon, me or the member from Surrey, we take the ideas and the thoughts that constituents and Canadians tell us and bring them here to Ottawa. The budget and the fall economic statement are a reflection of Canadian values and what they are—

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

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, while I am concerned that no other Liberal seems to be allowed to speak, I would ask for a quorum call. On an issue as important as this, I would hope we could find quorum in this place.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sure the hon. member already knows we cannot do quorum calls during these debates. This is something that has been stated before.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby also has a point of order.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, we are debating six words, “Fall Economic Statement Implementation Act, 2023,” the short title. The Conservatives moved, at a cost now of \$70,000 to Canadian taxpayers, to delete those six words. That is what the Conservatives have put on the table. It is unbelievable.

I would ask my colleague from Winnipeg North, through you, Madam Speaker, to stick to those six words the Conservatives want to spend \$70,000 to delete.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member did mention the short title.

I will also note that a previous Speaker, on March 21, 2023, indicated that there is some latitude. However, members should be making their comments relevant to the motion that is before the House and should also avoid the repetition of points that have already been made. I just want to say there is some latitude, but I hope the members will reference the title from time to time.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, before the interruption, I was talking about how Liberal members are out connecting with Canadians and reporting back.

When we think of the amendment being proposed today, it is absolutely ridiculous. I believe there are very few outside of the Reformers who would actually support such a silly amendment, because they would understand it is nothing more than a filibuster or an obstruction tactic from the Conservatives.

I was reflecting on how the Prime Minister and members of the Liberal caucus do their consulting. Who do the Conservative Party members consult with? Who gave them the idea to continue the filibustering we are seeing? I have a fairly good sense. It is the MAGA right, the far right element in the Conservative Party today, the individual who wants to demonstrate, even though it is not true, that the institutions we participate in are dysfunctional. The Conservatives bring in amendments of this nature and then say the government cannot pass legislation, when they are the ones who are going out of their way to prevent legislation from passing.

This is a Donald Trump type of tactic from the MAGA right and that has seeped into the leader of the Conservative Party today. It is that far right element trying to take away the validity of what takes place on the floor of the House of Commons.

I pointed out who the Prime Minister is meeting with, but who is giving advice to the Conservative leader? Do we remember Diagon? It is a pretty far right group of people, and we have the leader of—

● (1905)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We have another point of order from the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

Can he maybe state the standing order he is rising on first?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, when it comes to the quorum call, certainly the pretense under which the bill appears to debate, the unconstitutionality—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members that we are not doing quorum calls, and I will not entertain any further points of order if the hon. member continues with regard to that.

If the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot has other questions on that, I would say that he can try to raise them during questions and comments, but, again, there are no quorum calls during this debate.

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The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it is unfortunate. I know it might please the member opposite and maybe some of the Conservatives in the back room. They do not necessarily like hearing the truth, so they stand in here to try to disrupt debate, which is something I find really unfortunate. Quite frankly, I think I should be allowed to start from the beginning.

Having said that, with regard to the Conservative Party and its attitude, where is it getting its mandate from? Who are the people that the Conservatives are trying to please? Let there be no doubt: The Conservative House leadership team, headed by the leader of the Conservative Party and his attitude toward the chamber, is being driven by the far right. Maybe some of the Reformers do not quite get that, but that is the reality.

That is the reason why the leader of the Conservative Party was very comfortable with walking in to the trailer of a member of Diagon. All of my colleagues know that it is a far right, scary group. If someone does a Google search on it, they will find out. That is who is giving the marching orders, in many ways, for members of the Conservative Party. We are starting to see more and more of that coming from them virtually every day.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. During my speech that preceded the speech of the hon. member, or at least that it is what we are considered in this place, it was made very clear that impugning an individual's motives required an apology and a withdrawal.

Out of respect for the Chair and the institution here, I gave exactly that, yet the member has now gone on at length with these tin-foil-hat-type conspiracies, impugning the good reputation of members of this place.

I would simply ask that there be a fair application of the rules of this place to all political parties.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry. I heard it but I did not see to whom it was directed or how it was directed, so I am going to look into that and come back to the House if need be.

I do want to remind members to try to keep their speech directly to the motion that is before the House, which is on the short title. I would remind the hon. parliamentary secretary of that as well.

The hon. parliamentary secretary is rising on the same point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I think that it is highly inappropriate for members to continue to stand up on a point of order on just a 10-minute speech. I do not know how many points of order there have been. It is very disruptive and does not contribute to debate.

What the member is referring to is when I made reference to the fact that one has the leadership within the Conservative Party actually meeting with organizations like Diagon. I think that most Canadians would see that as a bad thing. That is where the leadership is getting the advice to do the type of things that it is doing today.

An hon member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: The member should not be interrupting—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We will try to get the information as quickly as we can from the Hansard. We will get back to the House if need be.

The hon. Minister of Environment and Climate Change is rising on a point of order.

• (1910)

BILL C-59—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the report stage and third reading stage of Bill C-59, an act to implement certain provisions of the fall economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 21, 2023, and certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the Crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allow a specific number of days or hours for consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stages of the bill.

REPORT STAGE

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-59, An Act to implement certain provisions of the fall economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 21, 2023 and certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of Motion No. 1.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, a good way to conclude this is to say that the leader of the Conservative Party is behaving like an individual who is standing on a corner and gives a child a dollar to buy a chocolate bar, but every time the child takes a step, he sticks out his foot and trips the child. Then he wonders why the child is not getting anywhere. It is because the leader of the Conservative Party continues to prevent things from happening.

It is a conscious decision by the Conservative Party to prevent legislation from passing. It then blames the government for the legislation's not passing, and therefore argues that the House is dysfunctional. What is dysfunctional is the Conservative-Reform party of Canada today. At the end of the day, the people the Conservatives are hurting are the people we all represent.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will highlight the hypocrisy that exists on that side. When the member was interrupted by one of his cabinet ministers, a former convicted criminal, he did not complain about the interruption, yet he certainly does not like the interventions by members on the Conservative side, because the fact is that Liberal members and their cohorts in the NDP want an audience, not an opposition.

The facts are that Canadians are hurting and are demanding change and common sense, yet under the Liberals, there is untold pain and suffering from coast to coast to coast.

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Instead of the member's going on at length in this place, saying many words without saying hardly anything of substance, I would ask him to reflect upon the serious job we have, which is to represent Canadians. Canadians are certainly hurting right now, and I would sure like the member to at least acknowledge that fact.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, we have acknowledged the needs of Canadians day in and day out. That is the reason we bring forward budgets that are a true reflection of what Canadians' expectations are. We recognize that.

I would suggest to the member opposite and to all the Reform-Conservatives over there that they need to look in a mirror and ask a question. They were also given a mandate, which was not just to filibuster and kill every piece of legislation in the House of Commons. They also have a responsibility, and there are consequences to the actions they take. I would not have a problem at all debating the member or any member of the Conservative Party in front of a public school classroom about the irresponsible behaviour of the Conservative Party and how that behaviour is hurting Canadians in every region of our country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, we have just seen the Minister of Environment announce that there will be a gag order on Bill C-59, an omnibus bill of nearly 550 pages with 60 different measures and 31 acts and regulations. It is the implementation bill for last year's budget and the fall economic statement.

However, the government delayed introducing it in the House so that we could study it in committee. The government has organized its time poorly and here we are in May sitting until midnight with limited time to debate a subject as important as this.

Does the hon. parliamentary secretary agree with me that the government manages its priorities very badly?

• (1915)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, absolutely not. The Conservatives cannot make filibustering motions to try to adjourn debate in the afternoon, nor concurrence motion after concurrence motion in order to avoid debate on government legislation, and then criticize the government for not being able to get its legislation debated. Members cannot continuously filibuster legislation and then ask the government why it has not passed bills.

We need to look at what the opposition is doing. If Conservatives continue to filibuster legislation and put up roadblocks to prevent it from passing, the government has a choice. It can either admit defeat or bring in time allocation. For the sake of providing services for Canadians and being there in a real and tangible way, we have made the decision to bring in time allocation to force legislation through in order to provide the resources that Canadians need in every region.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives had the opportunity to move something substantive tonight. However, what they moved was a motion to delete “fall economic statement implementation act, 2023”, the six words of the short title, at a cost of \$400,000 for the

course of this evening. That is nearly half a million dollars in taxpayers' money running while they are debating. That is what they decided to move: a deletion of the short title. It is embarrassing and unbelievably wasteful.

I wanted to ask my colleague why the Conservatives love wasting money so much.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, that was one very good example. Let me cite another example. On one piece of legislation at committee, Conservative Party members moved over 20,000 amendments. They did not figure that out themselves; they used AI, of course. The point is that they will do anything to prevent legislation from passing, even at the cost of providing something worthwhile for Canadians, sadly.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, as we know—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will ask the member to start his speech again.

[*English*]

They want to continue the debate. Would the hon. parliamentary secretary please take it outside?

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Joliette.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, as we know, Bill C-59 is an omnibus bill that is nearly 550 pages long. It contains 60 different measures, about half of which are tax measures, and it amends or creates 31 acts and regulations. We studied this bill at length in committee. We raised various issues, and I think we managed to partially improve it. In my opinion, we made improvements in three areas.

The first good thing that we did was to strengthen the part of the legislation governing greenwashing. We worked with various stakeholders, including the Centre québécois du droit de l'environnement, Quebec's environmental law centre, which has a lot of expertise in this area. The compromise that we managed to come to does not solve all of the problems, but it reminds us of the importance of regulating that practice. I want to recognize the Liberal member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country and the NDP member for Vancouver Kingsway, who made important contributions on this subject.

The second good thing that we did was to strengthen the Competition Act. The testimony of the commissioner of competition was very important. The consumer advocacy group Option consommateurs also made a very valuable contribution. Last but not least, I want to once again recognize the member for Vancouver Kingsway for his hard work. Unfortunately, we did not have time to compare the commissioner's analysis with the senior departmental officials' analysis, which meant we had some tough decisions to make.

The third good thing we did was to strengthen the right to repair.

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During the committee study, I came away very disappointed about one aspect that still has not been clarified. I am talking about how the association representing Quebec's orders of mental health professionals is being treated. This association represents the Ordre des psychoéducateurs et psychoéducatrices du Québec, the Ordre des conseillers et conseillères d'orientation du Québec, the Ordre professionnel des sexologues du Québec, the Ordre professionnel des criminologues du Québec, as well as the Ordre des travailleurs sociaux et des thérapeutes conjugaux et familiaux du Québec. We are talking about 2,500 professionals in private practice who must charge their clients tax.

However, clause 137 of Bill C-59 seeks to remove the GST from psychotherapy and counselling services. The professionals represented by the orders I just listed work in professions that have been covered by Quebec's Professional Code since 2012, such as mental health and human relations. Ordinarily, they should therefore be included in the measure set out in Bill C-59.

I would like to quote Mr. Soucis, president of the Ordre des psychoéducateurs et psychoéducatrices du Québec, who said:

However, the Canada Revenue Agency's notice 335 concerning the exemption for counselling therapy states that the professional services provided by a person could be exempted if the person "has the qualifications equivalent to those necessary to be so licensed or otherwise certified in another province".

Under this interpretation of the bill, it would be confusing and time-consuming, for all of the authorities that participate in such a process, for a professional to have to ask another Canadian authority to verify a qualification when it has already been attested to by the permit that authorizes the person to practise their profession. In its present form, the bill would require the members of Quebec's professional orders to verify with a regulatory agency that oversees the profession of counselling therapy in another province, as is the case in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, that they have qualifications equivalent to the qualifications of the professionals in the province in question.

We would point out that under the Professional Code, our professional orders have a mandate to be the regulatory and supervisory body for their profession in Quebec and that they are capable of doing that.

In committee, the department told us that these Quebec professionals would not have to charge GST and would be included in the measure. However, this conflicts with what the Canada Revenue Agency and Revenu Québec are saying. We tried to clarify this part of Bill C-59, but we were unsuccessful. I sincerely hope that Quebec professionals are not excluded from the measure.

That was a summary of some of the work we did in committee.

However, given that the bulk of Bill C-59 was adopted in committee by the majority, we are now seized with the improved text at report stage. At this stage, again, Bill C-59 contains some good and some bad elements, but the Bloc Québécois is opposing it once again because of two measures.

The first is the \$30.3 billion in subsidies to oil companies in the form of tax credits. This means that taxpayers will be paying oil companies to pollute less, when they do not need that money.

The second is the creation of a federal department of municipal affairs called the Department of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities. This is a sign that we can expect more interference, more bickering and more delays, at a time when the housing crisis demands swift action.

• (1920)

Let us look at the oil subsidies.

On April 30, the Parliamentary Budget Officer released a study indicating that the latest budget would lead to a shortfall of \$39 billion by 2029. The budget includes \$61 billion in new spending, including tax expenditures, and there is \$22 billion in new revenue, mostly from capital gains.

Bill C-59 alone contains more than \$30 billion in tax gifts to the oil companies. Roughly half goes to wasting public money on carbon sequestration, while the other half would enable them to use nuclear energy to extract the tar from the tar sands. This represents more than 80% of the \$39-billion shortfall that the Parliamentary Budget Officer unveiled in his recent study, the same shortfall the Conservatives are making such a big fuss about.

Since 2022, the government has announced \$83 billion in tax gifts for the oil companies. That is twice the shortfall that the Parliamentary Budget Officer was talking about early last week. Need I remind the House that the oil companies do not need any gifts? According to the Centre for Future Work, the oil and gas extraction sector has made record profits these past few years, specifically \$38 billion over three years, in 2020, 2021 and 2022, and half of that in 2022 alone. Apparently, 2023 was just as profitable. Since 70% of the shareholders are foreign, that is money that has left the country.

In the last two budgets, the government announced its intention to introduce six tax credits largely aimed at oil companies. According to information provided by the Department of Finance, these tax credits will total a whopping \$83 billion by 2035.

Bill C-59 amends the Income Tax Act to create two of these tax credits, which are tailor-made for oil companies: a clean technology investment tax credit and a tax credit for carbon capture and storage. The first, worth \$17.8 billion, aims to replace the use of gas to extract oil from the oil sands with nuclear power, all in order to export more gas. The second tax credit is worth \$12.5 billion. Instead of accelerating the transition to renewable energy, the federal government would rather help oil companies pump every last drop of oil, hoping that they will pollute less in the course of their operations. That is the aim of this refundable tax credit for oil companies. It is only available to companies in Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, and not anywhere else.

As we know, carbon capture and storage is an experimental technique that is supposed to enable major polluters to recover some of their carbon emissions and bury them in the ground, usually in old, empty oil wells. Carbon capture is a central plank of the oil companies' pseudo-environmental strategy, in much the same way as cigarette manufacturers used to argue that filtered cigarettes were better for smokers' health in the 1970s.

The International Energy Agency, an OECD affiliate, believes that countries will be making a serious mistake if they put carbon capture at the heart of their environmental strategy. It believes that carbon capture is an illusion, that the technology is unproven and that, even if could someday be made to work on an industrial scale, it would deliver only marginal results at an exorbitant cost.

Bill C-59 confirms that the government has acceded to the oil companies' demands. No surprise there. The independent media outlet The Narwhal published a document it had obtained through the Access to Information Act showing that the oil company Suncor had a hand in drafting the government's environmental policy, particularly the section on carbon capture that Bill C-59 brings to fruition.

This is what former Liberal environment minister Catherine McKenna had to say about the carbon capture tax credit in an interview with the newspaper 24 heures, on December 5, 2023:

It never should have happened, but clearly the oil and gas lobbyists pushed for that.

She went on to say:

We are giving special access to companies that are making historic profits, that are not investing those profits into the transition and clean solutions. They are returning those profits to their shareholders, who for the most part are not Canadian, and then they ask to be subsidized for the pollution they cause, while Canadians have to pay more for oil and gas for heating.

Those are some of the reasons why we are voting against Bill C-59.

• (1925)

[English]

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to work with my hon. colleague from Joliette on the finance committee.

At the committee hearings on Bill C-59, the opposition members worked together to strengthen many provisions of the bill, as the member pointed out in his speech. I think at least six or seven different amendments were made to strengthen consumer protection and empower the Competition Tribunal's ability to police mergers. In particular, I want to congratulate my colleague, as we had similar motion to strengthen the greenwashing provisions in the Competition Tribunal and in consumer legislation. His motion was the one that was passed. Could he elaborate a little on why he thinks that is an important amendment to the legislation?

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, again, I want to acknowledge all the work done by my hon. colleague, the member for Vancouver Kingsway, on the Standing Committee on Finance. I was seriously impressed. During the study of this omnibus bill, he had obviously studied it thoroughly and presented several constructive amendments, the vast majority of which were adopted. That is the strength of a Parliament and a committee when there is a minority government, because opposition members can improve bills.

As for greenwashing, I applaud the government's intention to put something in place. The amendments we tabled, which environmental organizations had been calling for, sought to expand on that and require more accountability. Together, we were able to move

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forward. Greenwashing is when a company portrays itself or its products as environmentally responsible, but these claims need to be better regulated. Companies are not required to market themselves in this way, but if they do, we want their claims to be factual and verifiable, not just in terms of the product. I came to realize that it is a very complex ecosystem, but, together, we managed to improve the bill with the help of stakeholder organizations.

Once again, I want to acknowledge the work my colleague did in committee.

• (1930)

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, I do not know whether my colleague is like me. I was hoping that there would be something new in the budget. There was nothing for the agriculture and agri-food industry in the fall economic statement. There was nothing in that economic statement, just like there is not much more in the current budget.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks about the importance of developing Canada's agri-food sector.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, the question posed by the hon. member for Beauce is very important.

Every year, we, the members of the Bloc Québécois, make our budget requests ahead of the economic statement. My colleague, the agriculture and agri-food critic and member for Berthier—Maskinongé, and I always put a lot of focus on the demands of the agricultural industry.

The industry needs a hand, especially with climate change, last year's poor harvests, droughts and flooding. Several measures have been implemented. I presented that to the Minister of Finance. We presented that together. However, once again, there is nothing about it in the budget.

Is the government listening to farmers and people in the agri-food industry? I think that it needs to listen more closely because it is our economy's most strategic sector.

As they say, there is no country without farmers.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I also really appreciated my colleague's speech.

It is interesting to me that the members of the Standing Committee on Finance were able to work together. I completely understand that, and an amendment proposed by my Bloc Québécois colleague was even adopted. Nevertheless, he said in his speech that he will be voting against Bill C-59. I am trying to understand why.

I would also like an answer regarding this evening's motion. Is he for or against the short title?

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, at the end of my response, I will answer the crucial question of for or against. I understand that all my colleagues here are wondering about this. Given there is so much interest, I will keep the members in suspense.

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In committee, we manage to work collegially with my colleague from Vancouver Kingsway, but in my speech I also highlighted the important work and collaboration of the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country on greenwashing. That is one really interesting aspect of our work.

Why are we voting against it? There are good things and bad things, but \$30 billion for the oil industry is unacceptable. I do not have enough time to answer the question as to whether we are going to support the amendment or not.

[*English*]

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, for anybody who may be watching tonight, I think a brief explanation of what their tax dollars are going to is in order.

Tonight, beginning at about 6:30 p.m., due to the Conservatives' motion, we are spending five and a half hours of debate, an entire evening sitting in the Canadians' House of Commons, to debate a Conservative motion on Bill C-59, which is a bill to enact provisions that were announced in the fall economic statement in 2023.

In this long bill with hundreds of provisions in it, the Conservatives' motion and contribution to Canadian democracy is to strip the short title of the bill. I think we have already heard that this has necessitated a late sitting of the House, which is probably going to cost hundreds of thousands of dollars and hold up all sorts of legislation that is of prime importance to Canadians.

Now, one thing that I think we all agree on is that Canadians across this country, millions of them, are in fact enduring pain, hardship, worry, insecurity and need. Bill C-59, while not perfect and certainly with a fair number of problems and omissions, does contain a number of important measures that would address those needs in a myriad of ways.

While the New Democrats are working constructively as an opposition party to move that legislation forward so that Canadians can get the relief they need, the Conservatives are holding it up. When the Conservatives claim to care about the needs of Canadians who are struggling with economic uncertainty, they are going to have to explain to Canadians why they are holding up the very measures that are contained in the legislation before the House that would help ameliorate those needs.

I also want to say a few things about the business community in this country. On the finance committee, along with my colleagues, I sat through testimony for 20 hours, hearing Canadian stakeholders comment on the provisions of this bill. When they did so, there were two very clear statements that were made to us repeatedly by Canadian businesses. Number one, they wanted this bill passed quickly. Number two, they wanted certainty.

As I will talk about in a moment, this bill contains a number of measures that would provide important tax incentives and tax credits to stimulate business activity, and businesses across this country are waiting for this. They are actually holding their investments. They are holding up creating jobs. They are holding up purchasing machinery and equipment, as well as research in technology, until this bill passes.

What is the Conservatives' reaction to this? They hold the bill up. If that is the Conservatives' concept of common sense, I do not think I share the same definition.

I want to talk about some of the important things in this bill. One of the things in this bill is a measure to implement the NDP's dental care plan. It would introduce an amendment to the provision that authorizes the sharing of taxpayer information for the purposes of administering the Canadian dental care plan.

We all know that, as of May 1, about a week ago, the first one million seniors who successfully applied to the CDCP started to access the dental care they need. Over two million seniors have already applied, with children under 18 and people living with disabilities, with a disability tax certificate, able to apply in a little over three weeks.

I want to stop for a moment, because I heard the Conservatives talk about Canadians who are suffering. Let us think of a senior right now who is at home suffering with dental pain, someone who does not have dentures that fit properly or maybe does not have dentures at all. They are unable to eat an apple. They have pain in their mouth. They have a choice to make: they continue living in pain, or they scramble together some form of money and try to go to a dentist, and pay out of pocket.

The Conservatives say they care about people who are suffering economically, yet they are holding up legislation that would help get the CDCP in place so seniors can go to the dentist and have their needs paid for. Imagine a single mother with a couple of kids at home, and a five-year-old or a seven-year-old has dental pain and they do not have enough money to go to the dentist. Like every parent in this room, we know what we would do. We would do whatever we could. We would sell something, take an extra shift or borrow money to get our child to the dentist. That is what Canadians are doing.

● (1935)

What will the Canadian dental care plan do? It will provide that dental care at no cost to Canadians, freeing up their funds. At a time when Canadians are suffering, what could be of more direct assistance than to have the federal government champion a national dental care plan, which, by the way, the Conservatives do not support and will take away? Funnily enough, every one of them on that side has their dental care needs taken care of by taxpayer dollars. They get to go to the dentist, and their kids get to go to the dentist, paid for by taxpayer dollars, but they do not think that senior, that five-year-old and that single mother have the same right.

Government Orders

I will tell members this. To the NDP, dental care is primary health care, and everybody gets to go to the dentist regardless of their ability to pay. That is what this bill will help facilitate, and it is what the Conservatives are stalling. Is that the Conservative common sense? I cannot wait to go to the doorsteps in the next election and put that definition of common sense to my constituents.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Don Davies: Madam Speaker, I hear laughing on the Conservative side. Bring it on. Come to Vancouver Kingsway. I will debate Conservatives anywhere, any time, on any doorstep. We will ask the people in my riding whether they think that getting dental care free for everybody in the riding, regardless of their income, is a good move for them, and the Conservatives can make their case why it is not. I will live and die by the results of that discussion.

There are 6,500 oral health professionals who have signed up to participate and are ready to provide for these patients. Later this month, according to the fall economic statement, it will establish the oral health access fund, which will further reduce barriers that prevent Canadians from accessing oral health care. We all know that in rural and remote areas, people cannot get access to the same health care we can get in urban centres, so what did the NDP do? We insisted that there be a \$250 million oral health access fund, available in every corner of this country for stakeholders to apply to, to come up with innovative programs like mobile dental clinics, or allowing hygienists to go into old folks' homes, or maybe even outfitting a train car to travel to rural areas to provide necessary dental care to people in their communities. These are the kinds of innovative programs that are just waiting and that the Conservatives are holding up. That does not sound like common sense to me.

This bill does a lot of other things. It takes the GST off counselling services. I have heard Conservatives talk about their concern for people's mental health during COVID. We all know that counsellors across this country have to charge GST, and this bill would take that GST off counselling services, making it a bit more affordable for people. The Conservatives are holding that up. That is not good for Canadians' mental health.

This bill has measures to support affordable housing construction. It would remove the GST on new rental home construction. Conservatives talk about axing the tax. This bill does axe the tax. It takes the GST off new rental home construction. What are the Conservatives doing? They are delaying it. It seems that they only want to axe certain taxes, but they do not want to take the GST off new home construction. If we talk to any builder in this country, they will tell us that this does not make any sense at all. Not only is it not common sense; it is wrong.

There are measures to support workers in this bill by introducing labour requirements to ensure that Canadian workers benefit from Canada's clean economy investment tax credits. They would require job sites to pay union wages and provide apprenticeship training by requiring a minimum of 10% apprentice positions on every job site to get a tax credit. That is not only good for working families, but also to get more young people into the trades.

The leader of the Conservatives claims to care about working people. This is a direct, explicit provision that will help working

families and help create more trades. What are the Conservatives doing? They are stalling it tonight. Is that common sense? Not at all.

I want to talk briefly about some of the amendments we made that would help protect consumers and strengthen the Competition Tribunal's ability to prevent unhealthy mergers in this country, which is bad for our economy. The NDP got six different amendments passed to this bill, things that would allow for more honesty in pricing, putting the onus on sellers who claim false prices to prove why those prices are accurate. They would help the Competition Tribunal police mergers by making an assumption that any merger that results in a market share of over 30% will presumptively be bad for competition and reversing the onus. These are amendments that were asked for by the Competition Tribunal itself.

● (1940)

The NDP used Parliament to get those things done. What have the Conservatives done? I think we know tonight. They are stalling, and that is not common sense.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member is really struggling to understand what common sense is, and I see that struggle, but let me help explain, hopefully, and elucidate what we mean by common sense.

In the Conservative Party, we do not want to see the government take more of people's money and decide how to spend it for them. We think people should be able to keep more of their own money and decide what they want to do with it.

The NDP sees that the people are struggling because of high inflation and high taxes, but its solution is to have the government pay for more things and say, "We're going to give you this for free and that for free", without appreciating that the money for those "free things" actually comes from somewhere; it comes from taxpayers. Therefore, people have to give more money to the government, which is then used for all of these, in some cases, good things that the NDP is talking about.

However, would it not be better if people who were struggling could just keep more of their own money instead of it being funnelled through a government bureaucracy that decides where it goes? Would that not be common sense?

Mr. Don Davies: Madam Speaker, the member should know about free things from government, because he gets free dental care, and so do his children. I do not see him giving that back. I have not heard of a Conservative giving back their free dental care yet.

Government Orders

By the way, dental care, of course, is not free; it is paid for, but we believe on this side of the House that, collectively, by pooling our resources, we can make sure that every person can get access to primary health care. It is the foundation of our Canadian health care system, so I think that is a wise expenditure of money.

More to the point, I have already gone through a couple of examples where Bill C-59 would return money to taxpayers. It would take 5% of the GST off new homebuilding, which is returning money to our home builders. It would take 5% off the GST for counselling services, returning money so that people can maybe afford to get the mental health support they need.

What I would ask my hon. colleague is this: Why does he not support the bill, which would return money to important parts of our economy, instead of holding us up and costing taxpayers \$450,000 tonight to have this absolutely avoidable and nonsensical debate?

• (1945)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I was not expecting such a lively debate tonight. I thank the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway for his speech, and I congratulate him on the six amendments that he was able to get passed in committee. He touched on them briefly. I would like him to tell us more about that, but I will ask my question.

There have been a lot of changes and improvements to the Competition Act, some of which were requested by the commissioner of competition. When it comes to the Competition Act, we know that Canada had a long way to go. Bill C-56 improved the act, and Bill C-59 and its amendments are improving it even more.

Does the member think that the system is now robust enough that consumers can expect healthy competition at all times, or is there still more work to do in that regard?

[*English*]

Mr. Don Davies: Madam Speaker, I am sure there is more work to be done, but my hon. colleague gives me an opportunity to talk a little bit more about the amendments that the NDP, with help from my colleague from Joliette, was able to get.

We adopted an amendment that would ensure that sellers bear the burden of proving that their discounts are genuine. Fake discounts are a common deceptive marketing practice. In some cases, businesses promote a price as a discount when in fact the advertised price is just the ordinary price of the product. They do this on things like Black Friday. We have changed that to reverse the burden.

Another one is strengthening the right to repair provision, something that my hon. colleague from Windsor West has been working on for years. It would force companies to disclose to consumers information that they need to get diagnosis or repair of their products anywhere they want, as opposed to tying them to the seller of the product. This is a very important consumer rights measure that breaks up monopolies and promotes competition in the marketplace. It is something that I would think Conservatives would like, actually. They certainly claim that they like it, but they are holding

up a bill here that would make our marketplace more competitive, protect consumers and strengthen the Competition Tribunal's ability to make sure that we have an open, thriving, and competitive marketplace. That is not common sense.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as always, it is an honour to rise in this place as the representative for the great riding of Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill and discuss important issues of the day.

However, I must say that, this evening, I have a bit of a challenge in discussing this motion. It is a disgusting motion that we are discussing, actually, because it has been put forward to delete the short title of a very important bill, Bill C-59. Just to be clear, the long title of the bill is “An Act to implement certain provisions of the fall economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 21, 2023 and certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023”. The long title is a mouthful; therefore, as is the normal course of business, the bill has a shorter title. The short title is simply the “Fall Economic Statement Implementation Act, 2023”. The motion put forward by the Conservatives tonight, requiring debate for five and a half hours, is to delete that short title. Just so that everyone is clear, because I know this is a very important motion for the Conservative Party, we are talking about deleting the title “Fall Economic Statement Implementation Act, 2023”, not the long title.

Why would we be discussing this motion this evening? That is a question I have asked myself. There is no good answer; the answer really lies in the work that the official opposition party is doing, which we have seen them do over the past year, at least. That is to ensure that there is not productive conversation or debate and that we do not get things done in this place.

Earlier this evening, a member opposite made a comment implying that I do not speak to the constituents in my riding, but that is what I try to do most of. In fact, I think that all of us here should take the responsibility of being the representatives of our constituencies very seriously. Certainly, spending five hours here tonight to debate this motion to delete six words from a bill is not time well-spent. In fact, I could be using this time to speak to constituents. We could be saving money. As the member for Vancouver Kingsway has so aptly pointed out several times, this exercise is costing taxpayers, including my constituents, a lot of valuable money that need not be spent.

The Conservative Party purports to care about fiscal matters and represent common sense. It is quite astounding to me that Conservatives would put forward this motion to debate this evening, especially when we have a piece of legislation in front of us that actually has a lot of important content that we could be discussing or debating.

Knowing that there is a lot of leeway given on what we can discuss, even given a motion as silly and wasteful as the one in front of us, I will comment on a few of the measures in this very important bill that the Conservative Party has continually filibustered on and tried to block, as it has done with most things our government has been doing.

Government Orders

In fact, I would refer to something that happened just a couple of weeks ago. As the chair of the women's caucus, I was actually very discouraged to see the chair of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women removed.

• (1950)

I do not sit on that committee, but I spoke to every member. To a person, they felt that the work being done by the chairperson and by the committee involved collaborating very well to get important things done for the women of Canada. They felt that the chairperson was removed simply because she was allowing constructive work to be done in this place.

Members of that committee are all saddened by the fact that this member has been removed from her position. The reason I mention that in relation to this very important motion that was put forward to remove the short title of the bill is that this is another example of how the opposition party is trying to block, delay and stall any good work being done in this place.

Let us look a little at what the bill contains and what is being held up by this wasteful motion that the Conservative Party has put forward. We have heard a lot about how Canadians are struggling. In my riding, when I speak to my constituents, I hear how people want relief, particularly on the cost of food. I sit on the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food. I was part of the study that looked at addressing stability in food prices, given their recent increase. A lot of the recommendations that came up from witnesses were regarding the need for increased and improved competition in Canada.

Bill C-59, which we can still refer to by its short-form title, the fall economic statement implementation act, 2023, has many measures that are being blocked now to do just that: to modernize our Competition Act, to give it more teeth and to ensure that it can fight against the practices that have been occurring and have increased food prices in Canada.

Another thing in this important bill is support for adoptive parents, including surrogates, with a 15-week shareable employment insurance adoption benefit. To many families, this is a very important measure. My husband and I are adoptive parents. I know that, when someone brings a child into their home, especially an older child, having that time to spend where one can just be with that child and not worry about other things is very important. While I am not a child psychologist, I read a lot about adoption before we adopted two of our children, and it makes quite a difference. This is a very important measure that many parents and families would benefit from.

For me, as someone who has experienced this, I feel it is reprehensible for the party opposite to be wasting our time tonight talking about removing the short title of a bill in order to obstruct and to delay it. There are parents like me out there who would very much like those 15 weeks to spend with their adoptive children.

There has also been a lot of talk about affordability and the effect of the pollution pricing regime on Canadians. I have heard, because I have some constituents who live in a semi-rural area, that there are not always the same options. Therefore, the rebate that is being given back to Canadians, which gives back more money to 80% of

our families, is being adjusted to ensure that Canadians living in rural areas receive more. They would get a 20% top-up on the rebate that is given to other families.

• (1955)

Members of the party opposite often speak about rural ridings, people living in rural areas and the importance of agriculture, and I share their views. Therefore, how, in good conscience, can they talk about this?

I will conclude by saying that there are a lot of important things we could be—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to go to questions and comments.

The hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Madam Speaker, I really appreciated some aspects of the speech by the member opposite, but I found it really rich when she talked about the importance of passing the legislation for the 15 weeks of benefits for adoptive parents. That is precisely what the Liberals took from the private member's bill of my colleague, the member for Battlefords—Lloydminster, which they chose not to use. They voted against it and then decided to put it in their own bill. Had they simply passed the bill when it was brought forward, it would already be law; families could already be benefiting.

Does the member perhaps regret the decision she made on that bill not too long ago?

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, that is very important for us to put in place, and we have the opportunity to do that now.

This was already being worked on. It was part of the employment insurance revisions, and we knew it was coming forward. However, I would return the question and ask why you are not supporting it now.

• (2000)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am not supporting anything, nor am I against anything.

The hon. member for Joliette.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, in Bill C-59, there is a \$17.8-billion tax credit that will help oil companies reduce their use of natural gas by financing the installation of small nuclear power plants to extract bitumen from the tar sands. The gas would then be exported to Asia, including from the LNG terminal in British Columbia.

Does the member believe that this is an environmental plan to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions?

*Government Orders**[English]*

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, as a member of the environment committee and someone who cares deeply about our environment, I believe we need to take every measure we can to reduce greenhouse gases right now. We are in a crisis. Unlike the Conservatives, who keep talking about technology as the only thing that is going to solve our problem, we have a very robust and multi-faceted approach to reducing emissions.

Given the urgency of the crisis, I feel that these tax credits that will help people do what they would not otherwise do are necessary to help us meet our goals.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I was going to be critical of the Liberal government because—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I apologize. The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, as an Albertan, I would suggest that the fact that the member's jersey is promoting his hockey team is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, the Liberals have continued the infamous Harper Conservative tax treaties. It cost us over \$30 billion each and every year. The Conservatives splurged. The Liberals should have reined that in, but they have chosen not to. This means, of course, that many other things the government could be doing are not getting done.

I want to ask the member to comment on how there is more Conservative splurging tonight. They are trying to delete six words in the bill that are not substantive at all. The cost to taxpayers tonight will be nearly \$100,000 for each word. Conservatives seem to spend like drunken sailors when they have the ability. Tonight they are holding Parliament up, and it is costing us \$70,000 an hour for this debate on six words.

What does the member think her constituents would think of the Conservative waste of half a million dollars tonight?

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, the hypocrisy we are seeing right now is, unfortunately, not surprising. I do not see any common sense at all in spending this much time debating a motion that wants to remove six words from the title of a very important bill. As I said earlier, there are important things we could be debating.

I know that many constituents in my riding are questioning what exactly this Reform-Conservative-Diagolon party actually stands for and whether its members have any right to be here.

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in this chamber.

Before I start my remarks on the bill, I seek the Speaker's indulgence for just a moment.

I was notified earlier today that a dear friend and former colleague of mine, Matthew Vaccari, had passed away. He succumbed to cancer. He leaves behind two children and his wife, Heather.

Matt and I worked very closely together at Canada Life. I know a number of people at that organization who are very upset and sad and, of course, his family. Matt was a wonderful human being, someone who was full of energy and who always had a positive attitude. It is with a heavy heart that I extend my condolences to his family for their loss and to all the people who worked with him and who knew Matt. He was a wonderful human being.

It is a pleasure to speak to any financial legislation that the government brings forward. I know that there is a lot of debate tonight about the short title and some words, but the truth is that we are talking about a bill that would increase energy costs for Canadians.

In Bill C-59, the EIFEL restrictions would impose an additional cost on public utilities in this country. We had witness testimony at the finance committee from a public utility in Nova Scotia that said that the bill would directly increase the energy costs of ratepayers in Nova Scotia. I understand that it may be inconvenient for the government, or for other parties who support the government, that Conservatives are doing their due diligence, taking their time and looking at ways to slow this legislation down because it would increase the cost of energy for Canadians at a time when they can least afford it.

Wisdom has been chasing the Liberal government for a long time, but it has just not caught up with it yet. How is it possible that, in an affordability crisis, the government thinks it makes sense to introduce tax legislation that would directly increase the cost of energy for certain Canadians in this country, in particular Nova Scotia? There is no debate about it. There is no—

• (2005)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, as members would know, many interruptions have taken place this evening, saying that members needed to be relevant. The member started off talking about the amendment, and then he went right into the bill itself. I am just suggesting that if the Conservatives want us to be relevant to the actual amendment, then so should the Conservatives.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): If I may, the hon. member is being relevant because he is explaining why the stalling is necessary. That is how I understand it, and I do listen to what is being said.

The hon. member for Simcoe North.

Mr. Adam Chambers: Madam Speaker, you are tough but fair, and I appreciate you, wholeheartedly, for your very wonderful ruling. I will continue.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I would just note that occasionally we get passionate in debate, but Conservatives did not call a point of order on the previous member who spoke, the member from Cohasset, Massachusetts.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I really do not think that is an appropriate point of order. I would like the hon. member to be a little more prudent in the way he accuses colleagues of where they are or are not.

The hon. member for Simcoe North.

Government Orders

Mr. Adam Chambers: Madam Speaker, I am very proud to be from Simcoe North.

As I was mentioning, at a time when Canadians are facing an affordability crisis, the government's stated policy objective is to make energy more expensive. We are the only country on the planet that has increased the cost of energy through direct carbon tax increases and now also through an indirect increase by imposing additional taxes on public utilities, which is commonly referred to as the EIFEL restrictions. Therefore, it is with great pleasure that I speak to this bill tonight, especially on the short title.

I think we can think of many better titles for this bill, including "the Government of Canada wants people to pay more", "the Government of Canada does not think people pay enough for energy" or "the Government of Canada is just out of ideas". Those would be far better titles for the bill.

There were some competition provisions in this bill, which also raised some concern. The government has made very significant and substantive changes to competition policy in the last three budget bills. Each time, interestingly enough, it says that these provisions are monumental and that it has made these great changes to the competition policy that have never been seen before, but only a few months later, it brings in some more changes. I say that because it has had a lot of time to think about what it would do with competition policy.

The government proposed a number of substantive changes, and I have to give my NDP colleague credit, who is now the new member of the finance committee. He sliced up and diced up the government's competition provisions in this bill like never before. In fact, the government should be embarrassed that the competition provisions it put forward in Bill C-59 were completely redrafted by its coalition partner. It had multiple months and years to think about the provisions it wanted to change. When it finally said that it had the best changes, it got absolutely railroaded by its supply and confidence partner. That should be embarrassing for the government.

That is why we are here debating this bill and debating the title. If members want another title for the bill, as this is a government that is out of ideas, how about, "we think people can pay just a little more". That is what the bill should be called because energy bills are going up for people in Nova Scotia with this bill.

In addition, the number of drafting errors in this bill are significant. There was a provision called the dividend deduction rules. As soon as the budget bill was tabled, some smart individual did not think that the government understood how it was going to affect individual life insurance policyholders and that maybe somebody should call it and give it a lesson. It took eight months for it to explain how a particular life insurance product worked when participating in whole life insurance. It eventually brought in a significant amendment to fix it. This bill was delayed because of all the drafting errors in it and because the government did not even understand how these significant changes would affect the cost to Canadians.

These are the reasons for which we are trying to delay the bill. The government does not have a sweet clue about what some of these amendments do.

Now the government is saying that it has to pass the bill because the market is asking for the investment tax credits. Guess what? We can pass the bill tonight if the government wants to, and no one can use the investment tax credits because the CRA and Natural Resources Canada still have not put out the guidance required for companies to take advantage of the investment tax credits. If the government was so serious about getting this bill passed, it would have had all of its homework done, but it does not. Maybe the dog ate it. I do not know what the excuse is, but the Liberal government is not ready. It is out of ideas. It chose to delay this bill until now. It was the government that had drafting errors in the bill. It decided to make energy more expensive in the bill.

● (2010)

The government tried to indirectly make life insurance products more expensive in this bill, but then it realized that five million Canadians would have to pay more for their life insurance products because they were trying to find revenue somewhere and tax the big banks more and tax financial institutions more, not realizing that those costs for that product are passed directly to consumers.

I was very pleased to speak against the short title of this bill, if that means we can keep energy costs lower for some Canadians for just a little longer. I welcome the wonderful questions from the member for Winnipeg North, as I know he always has a zinger.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to disappoint the member, but I am sure that he could imagine how this might seem, to people following the debate, as though the Conservatives are acting like fish out of water, flipping and flopping all over the place.

The member said that they want to hold up the bill and that they do not want the bill to pass. He seems prepared to admit that the Conservative Party just does not want the bill to pass, which is why they are holding it up, yet the person who moved the motion that he was actually debating said that the government cannot pass this legislation.

Does he not see the inconsistency in the discussions that Conservatives, or the reformers across the way, are having with their collective Conservative mind?

● (2015)

Mr. Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what happens in the Liberal caucus, but we have a lot of individual members here who have individual aspirations, individual reasons for how they vote and individual reasons for why they feel compelled to speak.

Speaker's Ruling

The reason I am speaking tonight is that the energy bills of the people of Nova Scotia are going to go up as soon as this bill passes. I think it is irresponsible to do anything but try to prevent that from happening just a little longer.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am fortunate to work with my hon. colleague on the Standing Committee on Finance. He always has a thorough knowledge of the issues and makes constructive suggestions.

I want to ask him about the amendment to the Competition Act. He referred to it in his speech. For years, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry has been announcing a comprehensive reform. However, the reforms have come in bits and pieces, in Bill C-56 and Bill C-59.

The commissioner of competition told us it was not enough, that it would take this and that. Public officials replied that if we did such and such, it would affect something else that was not in the bill. In fact, we were supposed to have a bill to reform the entire Competition Act.

Does my colleague think that doing things this way amounts to incompetence on the part of the government?

[*English*]

Mr. Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, I very much enjoyed working with my friend at the finance committee. I think he asked a very relevant question. The short answer is that, yes, it definitely shows the incompetence of the government because, every few months, the Liberals see a shiny new bauble and decide they are going to change the Competition Act.

One would think that the Liberals have had enough time, after being in power for nine years, nearly a decade some might say, to do things properly, yet they chose piecemeal amendments, which they say are monumental every single time, but the amendments do not actually hang together. One wonders what is really going on over there.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am rather shocked to be here tonight debating a Conservative amendment to change a short title. As this is costing Canadian taxpayers \$70,000 an hour, the Conservatives will be wasting \$420,000 tonight to change a title.

I ask my colleague if this is how he is going to manage public finances if, by some misfortune, his party ever comes to power.

[*English*]

Mr. Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member likes to talk about wasting money, but the NDP members are supporting the government for incredible amounts of corporate welfare. The NDP has chosen to support this bill with tons of corporate welfare in it and has chosen to support a budget that has tons of corporate welfare in it, but it has only a pittance for those with disabilities. They are turning their backs on a primary constituency for themselves and then trying to lecture us about spending money properly. Members of the NDP are supporting an incredible amount of corporate

welfare and are turning their backs on one of their primary, normal constituencies.

The Speaker: I see the hon. member for Northumberland—Peterborough South is on his feet, but unfortunately he is not in his seat to ask a question. I am terribly sorry.

To be honest, colleagues, we are now about 15 seconds over the time for questions and comments. It was going to be a particularly short question.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

NOTIFICATION OF MEMBERS FOLLOWING FOREIGN INTERFERENCE—
SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am ready to rule on the question of privilege raised on April 29, 2024, by the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan concerning cyber-attacks targeting members of Parliament by a foreign state-backed group known as Advanced Persistent Threat 31.

In his intervention, the member alleged that he, along with several other parliamentarians, were the targets of progressive cyber-attacks on their emails in 2021 by a group with ties to the Chinese government. He argued that members were targeted because of their association with the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, or IPAC. He and other affected members of the House learned of the attacks through a recent news story.

The member noted that, contrary to a ministerial directive issued last year, members were not notified of this by the government. He stated that this situation was akin to the prima facie question of privilege raised by the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, where a foreign state had also sought to interfere with the duties of a member. He also indicated that he could not assess the extent to which, as parliamentarians, they were impacted, through the disruption of communications or through the monitoring of their activities, but that their parliamentary work was under attack.

• (2020)

[*Translation*]

The member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan further intervened on the matter on May 1, 2024. He added that the cyber attack in question was aimed at his personal email account rather than his parliamentary account. He further posited, following media reports which stated that House of Commons IT thwarted the attack, that the House Administration is not a security agency and therefore not responsible for informing members of threats made against them.

The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader mentioned that the Communications Security Establishment, or CSE, was advised by the FBI on June 29, 2022, of cyber threats targeting Canadian parliamentarians who are members of the IPAC. Citing the separation between the executive and legislative branches of government, he noted that the CSE believed it appropriate to share all relevant technical information with security officials of the House of Commons and Senate administrations for their action. This was done on June 30, 2022. The parliamentary secretary also pointed out that, given the evolution of security procedures and in consideration of the concerns of members, a ministerial directive was issued in May of 2023 requiring the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, or CSIS, to inform parliamentarians of threats to their security where possible. He concluded by stating that, had the threat occurred following the imposition of the ministerial directive, security agencies would have proactively informed the affected members of the situation.

[English]

Finally, the member for Scarborough—Guildwood and the member for Humber River—Black Creek, also presumed targets of the attack, rose in support of the question of privilege from the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan and expressed their concerns on the matter.

In raising his question of privilege, the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan brought forward two specific concerns. First is the attempt by the People's Republic of China to interfere in the work of parliamentarians, and second is the lack of notification provided to members of this attempt. The Chair will deal with these two issues separately, starting with the latter.

In accordance with the processes in place at the time, the House administration was advised by relevant Canadian security agencies of the risk associated with potential attacks and appropriate measures were taken to ensure that they would not impact our systems, more specifically our parliamentary network.

Members will appreciate that the processes and the protocols to manage the cybersecurity of the House, by its administration and by the government, have evolved considerably since then. The Chair has no reason to doubt the commitment of the government, through its ministerial directive of May 2023, that members will be advised of threats by CSIS as much as is reasonably possible to do so, bearing in mind various security considerations. It should be noted that the attempt in question and the sharing of the relevant technical information occurred well before the directive was in place, and that the matter was dealt with in accordance with the processes and protocols in effect at that time.

[Translation]

It is important to reiterate that the House of Commons cybersecurity systems in place were successful in preventing a breach and negatively impacting the members' ability to conduct their day-to-day business with their parliamentary email accounts.

However, the member noted in his submission that his personal email was the target of the attempted cyberattack, and the Chair appreciates the concerns of members with regard to being made aware about matters concerning their cybersecurity.

Speaker's Ruling

In its 63rd report, presented to the House on April 10, 2024, the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs echoed the ministerial directive in recommending that CSIS directly inform members about specific foreign interference threats, including providing a briefing on the mitigation measures taken to ensure members' safety. It also recommended the Speaker oversee the creation of a protocol within the House administration establishing a threshold for informing the whips of the recognized parties of foreign interference threats. The report has yet to be concurred in.

● (2025)

[English]

The Chair will now turn to the matter of the attempted interference by the PRC. As the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan noted in his submission, the matter bears similarities with the question of privilege raised by the member for Wellington—Halton Hills on May 2, 2023. That case involved various alleged acts of intimidation, linked to the PRC, towards the member and his family. Those acts came in retaliation for political positions taken by the member in the course of parliamentary proceedings. The matter was found to be *prima facie*. Indeed, as my predecessor stated in his ruling on May 8, 2023, at page 14105 of the Debates:

The Chair agrees that the matter raised by the member, that is that a foreign entity tried to intervene in the conduct of our proceedings through a retaliatory scheme targeting him and his family, squarely touches upon the privileges and immunities that underpin our collective ability to carry out our parliamentary duties unimpeded.

At the time, the matter was referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. Had the question of privilege by the member of Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan been raised while the study was under way, the Chair would have been inclined to suggest the committee consider it as part of that study. This is exactly what occurred when the former member for Durham raised a question of privilege alleging intimidation. At the time, my predecessor stated, on May 31, 2023, at page 15066 of the Debates:

Given that the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs has already been instructed to investigate the matter of foreign interference, the Chair believes that it is the appropriate forum for further discussion of this issue.

In the case currently before us, it is clear to the Chair that an attempt to hack parliamentary emails of several members by a group with ties to the PRC occurred. This is of great concern to the Chair and, indeed, should be to all members. While the attempt was thwarted, it is understandable that a lingering effect on impacted members remains.

[Translation]

Indeed, as my predecessor noted in his ruling on May 8, 2023, a threat, whether successful or not, may still be seen as interfering with a member in the discharge of their duties.

As stated in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, at page 109, I quote:

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In order to find a prima facie breach of privilege, the Speaker must be satisfied that there is evidence to support the Member's claim that he or she has been impeded in the performance of his or her parliamentary functions and that the matter is directly related to a proceeding in Parliament....Speaker Jerome observed in a 1978 ruling that society demands much of Members but not all demands strictly impose a parliamentary duty. While every Member has duties as a representative of the electorate, a Member may claim the protection of privilege relating only to his or her parliamentary functions, though the line distinguishing these duties might blur.

[English]

While the work of IPAC is not, strictly speaking, part of our parliamentary proceedings, it does seem clear to the Chair that the members were targeted due to their parliamentary work. Even if the attack was directed against the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan's personal email account, it seems that this was an attempt to interfere in his and in other members' parliamentary duties and that such interference could have the effect of impeding members.

As the procedural boundaries of parliamentary functions can evolve over time, the Chair, and all members, might appreciate guidance respecting these matters.

While the Chair is bound to consider this question of privilege based on its own merits, it must also bear in mind broader considerations.

Protecting the security of members, whether physical or cyber, is of course essential to the functioning of the House. Cybersecurity attacks to our systems have multiplied over the recent past and there are no indications they will stop or even diminish. Not every attempt to interfere with or hack into our systems will necessarily be the subject of a question of privilege, as this is unfortunately a recurring problem. However, there might be a benefit for the House to decide how to tackle this issue more generally in order to clear the air and establish a way forward.

On this basis, the Chair finds there to be a prima facie question of privilege.

Accordingly, I invite the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan to move his motion.

• (2030)

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC) moved:

That the prima facie contempt concerning the People's Republic of China's cyber attack against Members of Parliament be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am always grateful for the opportunity to address the House. This is indeed a very grave matter. It is grave for me personally, for the members affected and, obviously, in terms of its substance.

We are living through a time when there is a proliferation of foreign threats in a context that can only be described as a new cold war. There is intensifying competition between the free, democratic world, of which we are a part, and the authoritarian, revisionist world, which threatens our democratic values and seeks to overturn the established international rules-based order. The core tactic used by our strategic adversaries in this new cold war is foreign interfer-

ence. It is an old tactic, but one that has particular relevance and can be done with much greater ease in the modern world.

Speaking of foreign interference, I wanted to start with perhaps one of the oldest texts on the subject. This is from *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu, which states:

In the practical art of war, the best thing of all is to take the enemy's country whole and intact; to shatter and destroy it is not good. So, too, it is better to recapture any army entire than to destroy it, to capture a regiment, a detachment, or a company entire than to destroy them.

Hence to fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.

It later states:

Therefore the skillful leader subdues the enemy's troops without any fighting; he captures their city without laying siege to them; he overthrows their kingdom without lengthy operations in the field.

With his forces intact, he will dispute the mastery of the Empire and thus, without losing a man, his triumph will be complete.

This is the method of attack by stratagem.

It is a very old text, but it underlines what foreign interference is all about. It is the attempt to take control of other societies and other countries without fighting, but nonetheless to take away their sovereignty, their independence, their freedom and to be able to direct their affairs.

Sun Tzu points out, of course, that for a country that wishes to take over or occupy another place, it is preferable to be able to do that without fighting. I think we have seen, throughout the history of warfare or conflict among nations, the attempt to swallow nations whole without having to fight. Of course, this avoids the carnage of war, but it is nonetheless destructive to the freedoms of the people who lose their sovereignty as a result.

Threats to our country manifest themselves not only in terms of violence and carnage but also in the attempts of foreign powers to take away our freedom and our sovereignty without fighting, and to paraphrase Sun Tzu, to swallow us whole. This is what foreign interference is all about, to gradually take control and shape the directions of decisions in our businesses, our academic institutions, our schools, and at the municipal, provincial, territorial and national levels. We see this time and again. This has been the subject of much discussion, in this place and beyond, with interference in elections, as well as attacks and intimidations against diaspora communities. They have come here seeking freedom but continue to face threats from authoritarian governments beyond our shores that are trying to take over our country through the indirect, subtle means of gradually taking control of the direction of our institutions.

This is why we have to take foreign interference fundamentally seriously to preserve our sovereignty and security for ourselves, our children and our grandchildren. Sadly, for some politicians, the temptation has been to see this through a partisan lens instead of as a vital threat to our national interest. I think we have seen this over the years from the government. The perception has been, and rightly so, that particular foreign governments prefer Liberals to Conservatives. As a result, the Liberals have been reluctant to take action, particularly on interference by the PRC. That interference manifested itself in the last election in particular as trying to prevent Conservative candidates from getting elected.

• (2035)

We know that Liberals chose not to share vital information with members of Parliament. They chose to fail to act on critical issues around foreign interference because they saw this issue through a partisan lens.

Former Liberal minister John McCallum effectively invited foreign interference. He admitted that he told leaders associated with the Communist regime in Beijing that they should modify their approach in a certain way. If the approach they were taking hurt Liberals in the election, it would lead to Conservatives getting elected, which would not be in their interest as much. He effectively invited the government of a foreign state to prefer a certain outcome in our elections and therefore act in a way that was more likely to produce that outcome.

We know that foreign interference is a grave threat to our national security in the context of this cold war we are living in. Foreign interference is a primary weapon in this new cold war. We have seen, time and again, how Liberals have been reluctant to take this issue seriously. A big part of it has been the reality that the Liberals have benefited politically from foreign interference. However, I think we are now seeing an awakening in our country around this issue. This issue is not new for some, but it is for others.

When I was first elected, in some of the first conversations I had with members of different multicultural communities from various parts of the world, at the top of their list was concerns about foreign interference. When members of our Canadian family have family members who are overseas, or when they travel overseas for various reasons, they can feel these threats to their families, to them and to other aspects of their lives much more acutely than do people who do not have the same kind of connections in other places.

We were warned. I know that, if I was hearing those things, then members of other parties were hearing those concerns as well. Diaspora communities warned us about the grave, ongoing threat of foreign interference, yet the government has failed to act on it after nine years. This is the context that brings us to this important question of privilege.

The material facts are on the record. I will review them and comment on some further aspects of this particular case, because this is what brings us to this question of privilege that the Speaker has ruled on. I hope it will now go to the procedure and House affairs committee for further study.

I was targeted, along with 17 other Canadian parliamentarians, in 2021. I was targeted because of my involvement in an organization

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called the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China. This is a global network of legislators. It includes people from the left, from the right, from other places that are not on the spectrum and from everywhere in between. It includes legislators in most, if not all, of the world's continents.

We work collaboratively in the context of this new, global cold war to protect democratic values and the things that, despite our political and geographic differences, we share in common. It is a commitment to freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It has been a great honour of my career to be a co-chair of IPAC. It is, in a way, an honour to the work being done by the IPAC that it has been marked out as a target by the PRC.

I can share a particular anecdote. I remember the first meeting I participated in at IPAC. We received a presentation with demographic data relating to what was happening in East Turkestan. This is a place where, we have now recognized, people face genocide; however, this was at a time when that recognition had not yet taken place. When I saw the data, it was clear to me that this had all the hallmarks of genocide.

Using the information I received from IPAC, I was able to work with colleagues to facilitate hearings that took place at the Subcommittee on International Human Rights, which led to the determination by that subcommittee that Uyghurs were subject to genocide. Subsequently, in response to a motion from the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, without the cabinet, parliamentarians voted unanimously to recognize that Uyghurs were and continue to be subject to a genocide.

• (2040)

Subsequent to that, again driven by these relationships among legislators that exist around the world through IPAC, different other countries and other legislators took up this call that had been started by the current Parliament and also recognized that Uyghurs have been subject to genocide. I believe that Uyghur genocide recognition played a crucial role in the international movement towards seeing the real threats associated with the PRC. We can see this in the response from the regime in Beijing.

The Beijing regime targeted IPAC legislators and those involved in pushing for the recognition of the Uyghur genocide, especially the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. While Uyghurs face horrific, systematic violence that is genocide, this reality truly exposes the evil of the CCP regime. Now that we have seen this, as Wilberforce said, we may choose to look away, but we may never again say we did not know. However, exposing that reality to the world, exposing the horror of CCP crimes, was something that the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China played a crucial role in.

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As we would expect, and this is what happened, the CCP sought to interfere in other countries, to intimidate and threaten legislators who played a role in that process and to try to steer countries away from taking clear, principled stands in favour of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The CCP has no respect for national sovereignty at all. In the very early days of IPAC, a cyber-attack was launched against members of the network, which included 18 Canadian parliamentarians. That attack, in most cases, targeted parliamentary accounts. In my case, and I believe in the case of a number of other members, my personal email was attacked, and the Government of Canada knew about this. It knew that members of Parliament were being targeted. It was told by the FBI. The government has admitted that it knew. At first, government members said nothing, and then they admitted that they knew, but they said, "Well, we told House of Commons administration." Why did they not pass on the information?

Anybody who knew should have told. If I am being targeted by a foreign state, especially when there are tools I could use to protect myself to a greater extent, I definitely should be told; the other 17 members of our Parliament should have been told. However, the responsibility primarily falls on the government. The government had a responsibility to inform us, and it did not.

Last year, as the Speaker's ruling mentioned, there was a ministerial directive about more information being shared with parliamentarians. However, members of the government continued to sit on this information about parliamentarians who were targeted. It would have been logical, at least once that ministerial directive was issued, for them to then choose to share information that went back a number of years but still had relevance to me as a continuing member of Parliament and a continuing co-chair for IPAC. However, they chose not to share that information.

Imagine the surprise I experienced, along with the member for Scarborough—Guildwood and others, upon finding out that we had been targeted, but not from our own government, not from Canadian security agencies. We found out through the IPAC Secretariat, which had been informed by the FBI. This is clearly not how the process should work. It is a grave problem that the government did not have our backs.

I can only see in this that the government has looked at these issues of foreign interference through a narrowly partisan lens, not wanting to share information with either members of the opposition or members of the government backbench, who may challenge the government on precisely these issues from time to time. The government did not want to share information that might lead to more political questions. It wanted to keep that information secret, and I think it also wanted to downplay concerns about foreign interference. Those questions about foreign interference inevitably come back to uncomfortable questions about the government, about things the government has done or tolerated, about relationships the government has allowed to persist and used in pursuit of its own political advantage.

• (2045)

We need to step back from this narrow partisan lens the government has brought to this issue and talk about the critical global fight we are in and the national interest. The national interest would be

that we all work together to fight against foreign interference, that we take attempts to subvert our democracy very seriously and that we work together to combat them regardless of who that target is. If the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, a member of the government or a member of another party were to be targeted by foreign interference, we would nonetheless all stand together and use all of the tools available to protect our country, so whatever the outcome of a Canadian election, it would be Canadian people who are deciding.

Foreign governments and foreign ambassadors should not be stakeholders in Canadian domestic elections. Canadian domestic elections should be decided by Canadians. We know this is a problem. We know there is abiding concern in many cultural communities that the perspectives of ambassadors, consul generals and foreign governments have an effect on the outcome of elections here in Canada. We need to work together to firmly slam the door on that.

This is a question of privilege about members of Parliament, and as the term suggests, we do have privileges as members of Parliament. This is where I want to conclude. When my email is attacked, we have an opportunity, as we should, for a debate in the House. Part of that is because I have privileges as a member of Parliament.

However, I think about other cases. I think about the case of Chemi Lhamo, a Tibetan activist. She is a student leader who faced a barrage of horrific threats after she was elected to student government because she was a Tibetan leader who had spoken out about justice for Tibet. I think about other leaders. I think about a student group at McMaster, Muslims for Peace and Justice, which faced foreign interference threats because it wanted to have an event highlighting the violence the Uyghurs were facing.

I think about the many people whose names we will never know, our fellow Canadians, who are not able to speak out, whose voices are not heard, whose pain is not understood because of foreign interference threats that prevent them from speaking about political issues and participating in the political process. They worry about what will happen to their family members.

I am far more concerned about the impact on members of diaspora communities. I think about Mr. Nijjar and his family. I think about people from a variety of different communities who have faced violence and threats as a result of intimidation, violence and foreign interference.

We need, in this debate, to stand up for the privileges of Parliament, for the integrity of our democratic system and for the rights of every citizen in this country, regardless of where they were born and regardless of where their family lives. It has been nine years. I have been hearing concerns the entire time I have been a member of Parliament, and they are escalating concerns. Indeed, this problem has been escalating, and it has been getting worse.

We have seen brazen foreign interference in this country from foreign actors who increasingly know that we know and do not care because they do not think we will take it seriously. I hope we will finally take this seriously. I hope we will be able to come together and, if not, that we will have a new government that will take these threats seriously.

In the context of this new global cold war, the national interest, the building of a strong multicultural democracy, requires us to ensure that democratic decisions in Canada are made by Canadians and that legislators and everyday citizens are free from foreign interference.

I thank the Speaker for his ruling. I look forward to this debate, the issues it will raise and the work that will be done at the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

● (2050)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think it is important for us to note that we have some incredible civil servants that perform amazing work in protecting our interests. I am thinking of the Communications Security Establishment, which, from what I understand, shared the information with House of Commons officials shortly after receiving the information back in June 2022.

I think it is important that we do not try to give the impression that no one knew about this, that the issue was, in fact, being addressed, at least in good part, with true and good intentions.

The member was on the committee, the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China. I do not know how often the committee meets or anything of this nature. Did the committee ever discuss the issue that the member raised as a privilege?

Maybe one can just give us some background on the feedback he has had from other committee members because I believe it is a certain number of countries. I am not too sure about the association. Maybe one can tell us a little bit more about the association and what discussions they have had on this issue.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, there are two parts to what the member said. On the government's assertion that House of Commons officials were informed, what I can say is that there were 18 members of Parliament who were targeted by a foreign hacking attempt, which the Government of Canada knew about, and at no point, until the last few weeks, did the members of Parliament who were targeted find out about it.

The government's defence is to say that it told some other people. That is great, but it did not tell the people who were affected. We had a right to know that we were being targeted by a foreign state, and it is not the responsibility of the House of Commons' IT department to be informing us about these security threats. It is the responsibility, I believe, of the government. What I can say for certain is that the government did not inform us, did not insist that we were informed and provided no assurance that we would get the information. That is fundamentally unacceptable.

If I become aware of something that is very significant to the life of the member for Winnipeg North, and I do not tell him about it,

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but I go tell the member for Northumberland—Peterborough South about it, and then later it comes out that I did not provide this vital information, so I say, okay, I did not tell the person affected, but I told somebody else about it, I think we would all understand that this would be ridiculous.

What was crucial here is that the 18 members of Parliament who were targeted by a foreign state did not receive information that the government had about threats to us. We could have used that information to protect ourselves and to challenge our system on further steps that needed to be taken to protect our—

● (2055)

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

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to make a comment. I thank the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan for the question of privilege that he raised. I commend the Speaker on his ruling and I welcome the motion that is being debated here.

As the hon. member said, 18 elected members of Parliament, himself included, were targeted by foreign powers because they are elected members of the House. Foreign powers are interfering through questionable practices, and that is unacceptable. Second, I understand that the hon. member and the other members who were affected were not immediately informed when official authorities and the government obtained the information, and that is unacceptable. We need to ensure that we have a mechanism so that this vital information gets to the members involved, whether it be through the government, the official authorities or the whips' offices.

I would like to remind my colleagues of something that CSIS is always reminding us of, and that is that Canada and the provinces have one of the worst records in the world when it comes to foreign interference. That has to change. Obviously, we will support the motion. We want this matter to be examined as soon as possible and to be given priority by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. In closing, I would like to remind members that democracy is fragile. We need to protect it, take care of it and allow it to thrive.

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I will pick up where my colleague ended, which was recognizing the fragility of democracy and freedom.

Many of us have lived in this country our whole lives. I have as well. We have never known anything other than the kinds of freedoms we have in this country. That struck me especially when I visited Ukraine in 2016 for its 25th anniversary. Of course, it is more acute now, the sense of the fragility of freedom, but even then, many people over a certain age remembered a time when they did not have their freedom.

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We have to always keep in focus that the liberty and sovereignty we have as a country is not automatic and not inevitable. The biggest threat to our freedom, sovereignty and security is not the possibility of direct invasion, but what Sun Tzu describes as the attempt to swallow us whole and the loss of meaningful freedom through escalating foreign interference. We have seen in other countries how the gradual process of foreign interference has eroded the ability of free people to make decisions about their own futures.

The member is right. Our freedoms are fragile and are under direct threat by foreign interference. We see those threats as members of Parliament, but we also hear about and know about those threats targeting everyday citizens and other institutions. We are already seeing certain institutions that have modified their behaviour in response to the preferences of foreign stakeholders. This is a demonstration of a loss of sovereignty.

I hope we all hear this clarion call, especially coming from the diaspora communities, to stand up for Canada, to stand up for our institutions, to stand up for our freedom and to stop this foreign interference.

• (2100)

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate both the motion and the interventions my colleague made when he initially brought up this question of privilege and in the speech he just made.

I think this has an impact on law-making and legislative authority, but what signal does it send? There has been a lack of response. Appropriate awareness was not brought to parliamentarians. What message does that send to the diaspora communities, especially when it comes to the actions of the PRC, the communist dictatorship in Beijing and how that affects some incredibly sensitive issues that certainly transcend political parties in this place?

This is not simply a Conservative issue, but something that has affected members from multiple political parties, from the diaspora communities and their ability to be free and active players in Canadian democracy.

I wonder if my colleague from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan could expand on that impact.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, what message does it send? These events suggest, yet again, that when people are victims of foreign interference, the government does not have their backs. Sadly, this is something that I have heard time and again from talking to Canadians who are impacted by foreign interference outside of this place.

We had a vote today on listing the IRGC as a terrorist organization. I can recall a press conference we hosted on Parliament Hill with a young man whose wife was murdered when flight PS752 was shot down. He faced threats from the IRGC when he started to speak out about these events. I have spoken to many others who have been affected by foreign interference who have been frustrated by trying to report what they have experienced and being passed back and forth between different agencies, given the runaround and not given the information they need. This is a case where people who have the privilege of being members of Parliament were not

told about threats to themselves, so I think they should be informed about threats.

I also think we should be, whenever possible, unless there is some compelling security reason not to, seeking to inform anybody about foreign interference threats against them or the institutions they are involved in so they can take appropriate steps to protect themselves. We need to have their backs, whether they are members of Parliament, student leaders or everyday citizens who are afraid of going to a protest. We need to have the backs of our citizens who are worried about foreign interference so that they know they can speak and advocate based on their own convictions, regardless of what a foreign state thinks about it.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first, to be very clear, the Prime Minister and the government, from day one, have taken the issue of foreign interference very seriously. The responsibility of governing and doing whatever we can in a co-operative way is something we have been doing now for years. Let me give some very clear facts in terms of the incident that is being referenced today.

With regard to the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security, allow me to provide some really clear lines. The Canadian Centre for Cyber Security, part of the Communications Security Establishment in Canada, generally does not comment on specific cyber-incidents or affected organizations. However, CSE can confirm that it shared actionable technical information on a cyber-threat with the House of Commons and Senate IT officials in 2022. This included sharing information that included the names of targeted parliamentarians.

The House of Commons and the Senate are independent and its officials are responsible for determining when and how to directly engage with MPs and senators in situations like this. CSE takes its mandate and its legal obligations very seriously. Pursuant to the Communications Security Establishment Act, intelligence and information are shared with government clients, including appropriate authorities in Parliament and any appropriate partners.

To support parliamentarians, the Centre for Cyber Security, part of CSE, provides a 24-7 hotline service offering direct support in the event of a cyber-incident. The cyber centre has provided cyber-threat briefings to political parties, as well as a dedicated point of contact at the centre for assistance with cybersecurity matters.

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The Communications Security Establishment's 2023-24 national cyber-threat assessment highlights "how online foreign influence activities have become a new normal, with adversaries seeking to influence elections and impact international discourse related to current events." CSE has published four unclassified reports on cyber-threats to Canada's democratic process, highlighting that cyber-threat activity targeting elections is on the rise worldwide, and cyber-threat activity is more likely to happen during Canada's next federal election than it was in the past; Canada remains a lower-priority target for cyber-threat activity than some of its allies, like the United States or the United Kingdom; cyber-threat actors are increasingly using AI to create, spread and amplify disinformation, and it is very likely that foreign adversaries or activists will use and generate AI to influence voters ahead of Canada's next federal election.

There is a lot more I could say with respect to that, but the primary concern I have after listening to the presentation by the member from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan on the issue is that I question the member's and the Conservative Party's motivation on the issue. All one needs to do is reflect on his comments and how he tried to blame.

Mr. Corey Tochor: You're a traitor.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: The person who is the traitor is looking at me, as opposed to accusing me of being a traitor.

• (2105)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): There is a point of order on both sides. The traitor accusation started on one side and there was an answer by the person who had the floor.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I am not sure what remarks were made that were not recorded or on the microphone, but the member for Winnipeg North accused other members of this House of being traitors while he was standing—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I will stop the hon. member right away because I actually have very good hearing. I do hear very well. I did hear the attacks coming from one side to the other. They should not be allowed on either side.

I would ask both members to withdraw the statements made, the hon. member for Saskatoon—University and the hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I will withdraw the comment. It was a response to a member calling me a traitor to Canada. That automatically upset me, so I called him a traitor.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member withdrew his comment. I would like to invite the hon. member for Saskatoon—University to do the same.

Mr. Corey Tochor: Madam Speaker, I withdraw my comment.

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

The hon. parliamentary secretary can proceed.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I listened to what the member across the way actually said as he addressed this issue. That is why I started off by saying that as a government we take this issue very seriously, and our actions over the years clearly demonstrate that.

On the other hand, it appears that we have a Conservative member trying to use this issue to make it look as if the government did not fulfill its responsibility. From his seat, he says that we did not. The Conservatives are trying to make it more political. That just reinforces what we just listened to in the member's presentation. He said, for example, that foreign governments around the world do not want the Conservatives in government here but want the Liberals in government, implying that this is the reason why we get foreign interference.

At the end of the day, foreign interference is not new. This has been happening for a number of years already. Truth be known, Stephen Harper was the prime minister when it was first raised in an official fashion in the form of a report. The current leader of the Conservative Party was a part of that government. What did they do to deal with international foreign interference? I will tell the House: absolutely nothing. They chose to ignore the issue of foreign interference. Even though they were aware of it, they made a decision not to take any action to protect Canada's democracy from the things that were taking place.

This is not just about China. The Conservative Party consistently brings up China. China is not alone. There are other countries out there that are players, in regard to foreign interference. That is one of the reasons why we have taken many actions, such as having a special individual brought to the House to investigate and report back, to ultimately having a public investigation into the matter with a report back. We have had numerous debates on this issue. We have had standing committees deal with the issue in many different ways, even with regard to the issue the member brought forward. I did not know about the existence of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China until that issue was brought up in the form of a matter of privilege. I took the member at his word when he raised that issue. I know members of the Liberal caucus also did, because we even had two of our members, from what I can recall, who also stood up to express their concerns.

I would think that all members would be concerned about any form of foreign interference into Canada. I would think that it would cross all political lines that have been drawn here in the House of Commons. However, I can tell colleagues that I have not witnessed that, based on the questioning on the issue and the manner in which the Conservatives are more determined to try to portray a government that is not taking action than to try to depoliticize the issue and recognize it for what it is, and ultimately come up with ideas and thoughts about how we can actually prevent it.

• (2110)

I listened to the Speaker's ruling. I had provided a comment before, when the member first brought forward the issue, and the Speaker came back and made reference to it. Here is what the Speaker said, in terms of what I reported representing the government:

Privilege

The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader mentioned that the Communications Security Establishment, CSE, was advised by the FBI on June 29, 2022, of cyber-threats targeting Canadian parliamentarians who are members of the IPAC. Citing the separation between the executive and legislative branches of government, he noted that the CSE believed it appropriate to share all relevant technical information with security officials of the House of Commons and Senate administrations for their action. This was done on June 30, 2022.

That is what I had said in addressing the issue. The Speaker went on to say:

The parliamentary secretary also pointed out that, given the evolution of security procedures and in consideration of the concerns of members, a ministerial directive was issued in May 2023 requiring the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, CSIS, to inform parliamentarians of threats to their security where possible. He concluded by stating that, had the threat occurred following the imposition of the ministerial directive, security agencies would have proactively informed the affected members of the situation.

That is very clear. The House of Commons was in fact provided notification back in June 2022. When the issue of foreign interference came to the floor, and after a great deal of discussions and thoughts, there was a very clear directive given to security agencies in terms of informing members of Parliament. We changed, in part, the process. The members know that.

There is no doubt, if we continue with some of the reports in regard to the People's Republic of China interfering in the work of parliamentarians and the impact not only of China but of other countries in the world, that we have to work collectively.

When we had the heated discussions and debates over the foreign interference allegations that were taking place in the last election, we had many independent agencies say that it did not affect the outcome of the election. It is important to make reference to that.

At the end of the day, the Conservatives, who chose to do nothing years prior, now believe that we, as a government, should have taken more action, when in fact we had already started that shortly after being elected in 2015 in changes to the Canada Elections Act. We recognize how important it is to protect our democratic system. We have seen legislative measures and policy directives to ensure there is a higher sense of security.

● (2115)

When I was first elected, in the eighties, the Internet, at least in the way we see it today or have witnessed it in the last 20 years, did not exist. It did not exist to the degree to which does today, and not to the degree to which we have the types of computer hacks and the malicious software that are out there. Today, sadly, with things such as AI, we do have to be on guard and look at ways we can protect the integrity of our system.

Let us remember that as things change, there is a need for change in policy. I saw that in the Speaker's ruling, where, again, he stated, "In accordance with the processes in place at the time, the House Administration was advised by relevant Canadian security agencies of the risks associated with potential attacks and appropriate measures were taken to ensure they would not impact our systems, more specifically our parliamentary network."

We had a system in place. The Speaker said, "It is important to reiterate that the House of Commons cybersecurity system in place were successful in preventing a breach and negatively impacting

the members' ability to conduct their day-to-day business with their parliamentary email accounts."

If the Conservative Party really wants to be able to deal with the issue at hand, I would suggest its members need to dial down the politicization of the issue and stop trying to blame the government for not taking actions that the Conservatives believe in, when in fact we have taken tangible actions to protect the interests of our democracy and the rights of individual members. That is what we have consistently seen.

I do not get the opportunity to attend very many standing committee meetings, but I often hear feedback, and that feedback is not very positive, even on issues of questions of privilege. Often in committees, filibustering takes place. I suspect that what we are going to see is as it should be. Let us give the benefit of the doubt and say the Conservatives are going to change their ways and recognize this is important, this institution is important and it is important we work collectively at making a positive difference in supporting individual members and our rights to protect the institution.

I suspect it will be going to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, and I support its going to PROC. At the end of the day, I hope the Conservative membership on the committee will dial down on the partisanship and the rhetoric they constantly use on the issue in the name of trying to do the right thing, and look at ways in which we can improve the system. Things change.

● (2120)

Conservatives talk about our P9 accounts. Parliamentarians also have other types of accounts. There are many different ways in which foreign interference can take place, as was pointed out. This is happening around the world, not just in Canada. It has happened in some countries a whole lot more than in Canada, as has been cited, whether in the United States or the United Kingdom. We are one of the Five Eyes countries, and I think we should be looking at ways in which democracies around the world can protect the integrity of the principles of democracy.

In order for Canada to be able to step up to the plate, it would be nice if we had all political parties of the House of Commons on-side, as opposed to trying to make it look as if there were some sort of institutional problem that we cannot overcome, or that our government has been negligent on—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to go to questions and comments.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member opposite does seem to be inherently uncomfortable with the idea of members of the opposition's criticizing the government. If we are going to talk about preserving our democracy and our democratic values, maybe a good place to start is to say that it is legitimate, normal and right for the opposition to challenge the government over its failures. I do not really care what the member thinks of my motives, but I am going to continue to do my job in the House, the job of standing up for our country, for our freedoms and for our sovereignty.

Privilege

The fundamental point here is that the hon. member is not willing to admit that something wrong happened. That is a big problem. The government had information that was crucial to our national security and to the personal security of individual members of Parliament. The government chose to sit on that information. It would show a lot more humility and maturity for the member to simply acknowledge that this was a mistake. The information should have been shared, and it was not.

Will the hon. member acknowledge that the government erred in not sharing information with members of Parliament that was extremely important to our national security, to their personal security and to their ability to do the job as members of Parliament? Would he not expect to be informed if the shoe were—

• (2125)

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

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, let me be very clear: No, the government did not err. The member should read the statement from the Speaker.

One has to take a look at the process in time. It is interesting. Here is the difference. I asked the member a question, and what did he do? He avoided the important part of the question when I told him to tell me something about the association. Did the member know anything about it? Were there any other parliamentarians who talked about it? He avoided that aspect of the question. He asked me a question; I gave him a direct answer.

The challenge for the Conservative Party is that, at the end of the day, Conservatives see this as a political shot at the government, even if it is justified, or not. In this case, it is a “not”.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am rather surprised at what my colleague is saying. I just want to give a little reminder. Two years ago, his Prime Minister and the entire cabinet were saying that there was no problem with interference. In the end, because of pressure from all sides, the government appointed a special rapporteur, David Johnston, who tabled a report that nobody was happy with. Now, we have Marie-Josée Hogue, who seems to be doing a great job.

Could I remind him that what is being said right now is that interference is one of the biggest strategic threats to national security?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I very much can recall the debate regarding the special rapporteur who was appointed, an incredible Canadian. There are members who decided to throw that particular individual under the bus.

At the end of the day, I can say that, as a government, it was great to see political parties come together to agree to a new name, someone who would ultimately provide a report. I would hope that members of all political parties will support that particular report.

At the end of the day, I believe that the government, virtually from day one, has been taking proactive steps, legislative measures in particular, to ensure that our democracy is healthy. I only wish it

had started when Stephen Harper was the prime minister, but he chose to do nothing.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I always listen attentively to my colleague. I think, in this case, it is very clear, as we have seen with Justice Hogue's preliminary report, which points very clearly to some things. There is a real shortcoming in terms of how the government and past governments have dealt with the information around foreign interference. We have seen repeatedly, from the 2019 election and the 2021 election, that information was not communicated to candidates. In this case, addressed in the question of privilege, information was not communicated to members of Parliament.

There is a lack of protocols and a lack of organization, not necessarily around the obtaining of the information but in actually communicating that information to people who might be impacted. This may be members of Parliament or, as we saw in election campaigns, candidates. We need to ensure that action is taken to prevent further interference of this type. Whether the foreign government is Chinese, Indian, Russian or Iranian, we have certainly seen enough examples to know that we need to put protocols in place and we need to put in place an action plan.

My question to my colleague is very simple: Why has the government not moved to put into place that action plan and those protocols so that the information is communicated and members of Parliament do not find out from a *Globe and Mail* article information that should have been given to them years ago?

• (2130)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, as you would be aware, the government has put in some new protocols and ministerial directives to ensure that members will find out when something of this nature occurs.

I am going to refer all members to what you said, as the Speaker, in regard to the issue at hand: “In accordance with the processes in place at the time, the House administration was advised by relevant Canadian security agencies of the risk associated with potential attacks and appropriate measures were taken to ensure that they would not impact our system, more specifically our parliamentary network.” You went on to say, “It is important to reiterate that the House of Commons cybersecurity systems in place were successful in preventing a breach and negatively impacting the members’ ability to conduct their day-to-day business with their parliamentary email accounts.”

I see that as a positive thing. We have to put it in the perspective of time, in 2022. The directives that we are talking about, where we made the changes, were after that. At the time, the process was in place and it was administered.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just want to follow up on my colleague's question to the member. I want to be absolutely clear that the member does not believe that the government should have informed members who had their emails, their personal correspondence, hacked by a foreign power. Is that the member's testimony?

Privilege

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, this is not a court of law, and the member might want to be a criminal lawyer at some point in time. I can tell the member that at the end of the day, there was a process in place. It was followed. The integrity of the system was maintained. From my personal perspective, I believe that, as parliamentarians, we all have a role to dial down the politicization and the politics that the Conservatives want to dial up. Let us work together on how we can ensure that. Foreign interference is not going away, and there are ways it could expand.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am rising for the first time in the course of the debate around the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan's question of privilege. I know it is going to PROC. I have been listening to the debate tonight.

I hope I can do this without sounding too schoolmarmish, which is one of my worst failings. I think that if we could all just think about us as Canadians dealing with foreign interference, as the Speaker and as the parliamentary secretary said, this is fairly novel.

I put my brain back to when I first started thinking about foreign interference in politics. It was during the election when Hillary Clinton, in the United States, was running against Donald Trump. Her operative said, "That was a story planted by the Russians." I am a big fan of Hillary Clinton, and my first thought was, "That was overreaching. She is sounding a bit nuts. Who would think that could be true?" We now all know it was exactly true, and we now all know that Canada is not immune. There are many countries that may want to do this.

I would just ask members, when we debate, not to impugn each others' motives across party lines, but to assume we are all in this together, we want to get to the bottom of it and we want better protocols to protect our democracy.

• (2135)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I like what the leader of the Green Party has said, and that is why I say that we need to dial it down.

Canada is not alone. Foreign interference happens all around the world, and I think that we can demonstrate leadership in the world by taking a positive, united front in dealing with this particular issue.

RESPONSE TO ORDER PAPER QUESTION NO. 2221

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I regret to interrupt this debate, but I believe I have a matter that is pressing and important, which I need to bring to your attention at the earliest opportunity.

It relates to an answer I received through an inquiry of ministry, Question No. 2221, in which I partially ask for information from the Canada Revenue Agency. The question I asked reads:

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency and the Canada Child Benefit (CCB), broken down by year for each of the last five years: (a) what was the total number of overpayments that were (i) assessed, (ii) collected from taxpayers who received overpayments following or due to death of a child; and (b) what is the amount of money represented by the overpayments [thereto]?

The answer I received, and I will just skip right to the important part, is from the minister herself. It reads:

For these reasons, the CRA is unable to respond in the manner requested to Part (a)(ii) and Part (b) (i.e., the amount of money represented by the overpayments...following or due to death of a child).

Quite clearly, the minister has said that the government and her department do not have that information.

In the budget, the government decided to provide a grace period for parents who have lost a child in terms of collecting child care benefit clawbacks, which is a very compassionate move that I support. It is the reason I asked the Order Paper question in the first place. However, yesterday, at committee, we learned from an official at finance, Mr. Pierre Leblanc, a very accomplished individual, a man who I believe is always forthright when he appears in front of committee, that the government had suggested in the budget that this measure would cost \$15 million. It was a very specific number.

I wondered how the government arrived at the costing for that \$15 million, because the CRA had said that it was not sure how many parents had their child care benefits clawed back, according to the Order Paper answer I received. This is a brief snippet of the interaction I had with Mr. Leblanc.

I said, "I think there are officials from CRA here today. I'm very interested in the measure with respect to the grace period for child care benefits for six months, after the unfortunate death of a child. There's a very specific number for the costing of \$15 million. I'm curious as to how the number was arrived at. Is the Department of Finance relying on CRA data in order to provide a costing for this measure? Specifically, I want to know whether the Department of Finance received from CRA data in order to come up with the \$15 million estimate."

Mr. Leblanc said, "Mr. Chair, I thank the member for his question. The answer is yes. We receive, as part of our ongoing responsibility for advising policy on the Canada child benefit, detailed administrative data on who receives the Canada child benefit. One of the pieces of information we receive as part of that is eligible children who have passed away during the year."

The last part of Mr. Leblanc's answer was, "I mean, that's where you get the number of about 1,500 children per year. Basically, using the average Canada child benefit amount, that's how we arrive at the \$15 million over the five-year period."

As I say, I believe this civil servant to be a very accomplished individual and to be very truthful in his answer, and I appreciate his openness and transparency. However, it exposes, yet again, perhaps on purpose or maybe by omission, a minister who has potentially misled the chamber and myself.

In terms of some supporting arguments to support my claim, I would refer to the Hansard of December 16, 1980, at page 5797, where the Speaker says:

Privilege

While it is correct to say that the government is not required by our rules to answer written or oral questions, it would be bold to suggest that no circumstances could ever exist for a prima facie question of privilege to be made where there was a deliberate attempt to deny answers to an hon. member...

My last recommendation for you, Mr. Speaker, to consider, which I think is quite an analogous situation to the one we have here today, is from December 6, 1978. The Speaker ruled in favour of a prima facie question of privilege after the member for Northumberland—Durham raised a question of privilege on a charge that he had been deliberately misled by the former Solicitor General.

● (2140)

Bosc and Gagnon begins, “Acting on behalf of a constituent who suspected that his mail had been tampered with,” and I will skip along to the relevant points. It reads:

[The Solicitor General said] the RCMP did not intercept the private mail of anyone. However, on November 1, 1978, in testimony before the McDonald Commission, the former commissioner of the RCMP stated that they did indeed intercept mail on a very restricted basis...

Here we have, once again, as has been mentioned in a question of privilege by my hon. colleague from Calgary Nose Hill, a deliberate or potentially deliberate attempt by the government to frustrate the ability of members of this place to get factual information with which we are trying to make policy to improve the lives of Canadians. I think this is very concerning.

This is not the first Order Paper question through which I believe I have received a misleading and inadequate response. However, it is a question that I am now bringing to you in order for you to do some additional research. I am happy to provide these documents. The transcript is not yet posted from committee yesterday, but it will be soon.

I certainly appreciate your willingness to allow me to make this point on a question of privilege at the earliest opportunity. However, it yet again underscores that there seems to be an attempt to not provide information to members of this chamber with fairly factual questions for which we know there is answers. The wonderful civil servant has admitted that they had the data I was actually trying to get, because I wanted to propose a similar policy position.

I hope you take this matter very seriously. I appreciate your indulgence here this evening. If I am successful, I hope that you will consider sending this matter to the procedure and House affairs committee.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Simcoe North for raising this question of privilege. I would appreciate it if he could share all documents and, of course, the Chair will endeavour to secure all the information to make a proper assessment and come back to the member on this question of privilege. I will take it under advisement.

[*Translation*]

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by saying that we see this matter, this

question of privilege and the motion before the House of Commons as important. We will therefore support this motion so that it can be adopted as quickly as possible and this whole matter, this question of privilege, can be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs as quickly as possible.

It is a well-known fact that foreign interference matters to us. The member for Burnaby South, the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie and the entire NDP caucus moved a motion a year ago. The House of Commons voted on a motion of non-confidence in the special rapporteur who had been appointed by the Prime Minister to look into the issue of foreign interference. The NDP moved the motion, which was adopted by four out of five parties. While we had great confidence in Mr. Johnston as an individual, we did not have confidence in his role as special rapporteur. One week after the adoption of that NDP motion of non-confidence in the position of special rapporteur, Mr. Johnston resigned.

The parties then began the negotiations that led to the Hogue commission. Justice Hogue has done a lot of work. She has already produced her interim report, which was released last week. We know a few important things about it that I think are related to this question of privilege. One thing that she mentioned is that we know who some of the foreign government agencies are.

Even more importantly, the interim report indicates that there were two problems. The intelligence disclosed to the government was not communicated properly to the affected candidates or MPs in either the 2019 or 2021 elections. What does that mean? The NDP thinks that we need to quickly implement protocols setting out how to communicate this type of information. We also need to make decisions to prevent this sort of thing from happening again.

As Justice Hogue mentioned, there is no doubt that this did not change the outcome of the 2019 and 2021 elections. The reality, however, is that the possibility of foreign interference is becoming more and more critical. If we want to ensure that future elections are not affected and that our work in the House is not influenced by foreign interference, then we need to implement protocols. The secret intelligence that is shared with the government needs to be communicated to affected individuals. We must also make absolutely certain that measures are taken to prevent these attempts at foreign interference from succeeding.

For all these reasons, we support this motion. This motion speaks to the fact that there was an attempt to influence or affect 18 members through cyber-attacks. This information was never communicated to the affected members. That is worrisome. As we can see, the motion is coming from both sides of the House. There is the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, of course, but there is also the member for Scarborough—Guildwood and the member for Humber River—Black Creek, who intervened on this matter.

● (2145)

Members on both sides of the House have pointed out the problem, which is that we do not know what intelligence has been shared with the government but not communicated to members.

Privilege

For all these reasons, we have to act quickly. If I am saying today that we need a protocol, and if the Hogue commission's preliminary report already shows that something needs to be done, then we have to take action. We have to ensure that incidents like these do not happen again. The matter has to be referred to the procedure and House affairs committee quickly.

I know that we will be discussing and debating the topic this evening. All of the parties already seem to support the motion. I do not think that we need to delay the adoption of this motion unnecessarily. I think we need to adopt it, unanimously if possible, and refer it right away to the procedure and House affairs committee, which is already equipped to deal with the matter.

Before the Hogue commission was created, the NDP moved motions at the procedure and House affairs committee. These motions were subsequently adopted by the House of Commons. That shows that the committee is already well equipped to take control of what happens next, make recommendations and inform the House of Commons of the actions that should be taken.

Yes, this work will be done in parallel. We already have the Hogue commission, which will also present recommendations and actions to be taken by the government, election officials and anyone else who cares about national security and the importance of maintaining or preserving our democracy. Of course, it is important that we take these actions. That is why I strongly suggest that tonight, between now and midnight, we adopt the motion unanimously and immediately refer it to the procedure and House affairs committee.

• (2150)

[*English*]

We have a situation where 18 parliamentarians suffered a cyber-attack. As was mentioned, they were not successful. Actions were taken by the House administration, which is important, but the Hogue commission's interim report has come out. Members will recall how the NDP presented the motion that led to the special rapporteur receiving from the House of Commons a polite refusal of the position of special rapporteur. New Democrats expressed non-confidence in the creation of the position of special rapporteur. We believed a public inquiry was absolutely needed and presented that motion on the floor of the House of Commons about a year ago. I think it was 50 weeks ago today that we moved that motion in the House. Four of the five parties, three of the four recognized parties and the non-recognized party, in the House of Commons voted for that motion.

David Johnston, to his credit, as we know he is respectful of democracy, saw that expression of non-confidence in the position of special rapporteur. It was not an expression of non-confidence in him. He is a man who has always served the country and worked hard to do everything he can for this country, but New Democrats expressed non-confidence in the position of special rapporteur. A week later, Mr. Johnston stepped down from that position, and the negotiations began to put in place the Hogue commission. Justice Hogue has been working very hard and very diligently to put forward the recommendations, which we should be getting at the end of the year.

However, what is clear from her report, and what is also clear from this question of privilege today, is that the government is privy to information that is not being effectively communicated. It was not effectively communicated in the 2019 or 2021 elections. It was not communicated to either members of Parliament or candidates who were involved. That is very clear.

It is clear from the Hogue commission that that occurred when we see this question of privilege where 18 members of Parliament were targeted by a cyber-attack, yet the government did not choose to inform them. In fact, it was a newspaper article that informed them. The FBI informed the government, and the government did not pass that information on.

We can say that we were lucky that the cyber-attack against those members of Parliament failed because of measures that were taken, but that still begs the question of why the government did not communicate that information. That has been a consistent theme from the 2019 election and the 2021 election, and now in the case of this question of privilege. We need to have protocols in place. We have called, as well, for the government to put in place a foreign agent registry. There seem to be some moves in that regard. That is important.

The government must put in place protocols about how to communicate information, including sensitive intelligence information, so that the process is clear prior to the next election. In that way, we can make sure we will not have the kind of foreign interference that may have failed in 2019 and 2021, but could be successful the next time if we do not take measures to prevent it. The government needs to do work on its side. The Hogue commission will be offering that full range of recommendations. That is very important as well, but PROC has been well equipped to handle this kind of work. The PROC report, which the NDP moved motions on and brought forward to the House, was endorsed by the House of Commons a little over a year ago. It was the first in-depth reaction to the potential for foreign interference in this country, as a result of which, this motion was rapidly moved.

This evening, as we have done a round of speeches, I do not think we need to spend a lot of time talking about this. We need action. That means referring this rapidly to PROC. We can do that this evening. We can choose, by unanimous consent, to adopt it on division, so that this matter will be referred promptly to procedure and House affairs. Certainly, my recommendation to the House is that we proceed rapidly on this, that we move quickly to actually have the procedure and House affairs committee respond to the seriousness of this question of privilege and then move to get the recommendations that will lead to action.

We have limited time. The official date of the next election, as members will recall, is the fall of 2025. This is a minority Parliament. It could happen before then. It is incredibly important. All of the actions need to be taken. That is why we suggested that the deadline for the Hogue commission report should be by the end of this year, so that we would have the time to implement all of the recommendations, and have the time as well to implement recommendations that may come out of procedure and House affairs following this question of privilege and the motion that refers the question of privilege to procedure and House affairs. We cannot delay. We cannot dilly-dally. We cannot spend a lot of time talking about it. We need action.

I will close, even though there is more time to speak, because I believe it is important to get to a resolution on this. I will close by suggesting to all members of the House that tonight we refer this to the procedure and House affairs committee, either on division or by unanimous consent. We can refer it to PROC and, tomorrow morning, let the committee get to work on the important work of responding to this question of privilege and looking at why the government did not inform those members of Parliament and what the procedure and protocol should be next time, if there is a next time, which is likely, so those members of Parliament can be fully informed. We could then take the appropriate actions to stop any future attempts at foreign subversion or foreign interference in our electoral process.

• (2155)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier in this debate, I posed a question to the parliamentary secretary, and I was quite disturbed by the response. We all know governments make mistakes. Every government makes mistakes. I asked if he acknowledged that it was a mistake for the government to not inform members of Parliament that they had faced a cyber-attack from a foreign state. He said no, he did not think it was a mistake. He said that protocols and processes can change, but when I asked if it had been a mistake to not tell me and 17 other parliamentarians that we had been targeted by a foreign government, he said no, it was not. I find that very disturbing.

I hope we can work toward a consensus on how to move forward, but it should be acknowledged at a basic level that failure to inform parliamentarians about these threats to themselves, their cyber-presence and their offices is wrong and unacceptable. The government should be willing, at this point, now that it has been caught not sharing that information, to acknowledge that.

I would like to ask the NDP for its perspective. Does it think the government erred in not sharing this information?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I do not always agree with my colleague from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, but I do in this case. It was an error, and it is not just an error I recognize personally. It is also very clearly coming from the Hogue commission's preliminary report that it was an error. The government has not been good at communicating information, whether it is to candidates in an electoral forum or to members of Parliament who are doing their jobs.

There is no doubt. I understand parliamentary secretaries perhaps get their fingers rapped if they admit to the government making an

Privilege

error. There is no question here that there was an error made and the members of Parliament were not informed. It is fair to say there is a consensus on this. The members of Parliament who are involved in this particular question of privilege include members of both the Conservative and Liberal parties.

The member for Scarborough—Guildwood and the member for Humber River—Black Creek have both indicated that they were very concerned about not being informed about this information. I do not even think that is a question of debate. I do not think it is a question of opinion.

There is a systematic pattern of the government erring in how it potentially gets information to candidates during an election or to members of Parliament. That needs to change. That is why we need to refer this to Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs to come up with protocols and suggestions for action.

• (2200)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we in the Bloc Québécois believe that any form of intimidation of elected officials, especially when it comes from outside the country, is absolutely unacceptable. We are concerned about practices like the ones we just learned about this evening from my Conservative colleague, and of course we denounce them.

In such circumstances, we also believe that when elected officials are the target of these kinds of attacks by foreign entities, they should be informed. That goes without saying. We find it hard to understand why it was decided not to inform these elected officials. We see this as a basic step that should be taken automatically. That is why we believe that the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs should look into this issue.

That being said, I would like to respond to my NDP colleague's speech. I would like to point out that it has been over a year since we started talking about the issue of foreign interference in this Parliament with increasing frequency. We used to talk about it less. Every time we raised the issue, the Liberal government would tell us to move along, that there was nothing to see. That is pretty much what we were told every time. However, we always seemed to find something in the end.

Does my colleague find that this type of situation inspires him to trust in a government that often tells us that there is nothing to see when there is indeed something to see? It is worrisome to me.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. It is precisely for that reason that the NDP moved the motion that led to the public inquiry into foreign interference. The Hogue commission is the result of the NDP's initiative in Parliament.

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We believe that we should act in the national interest and think first about how to do everything we can to prevent foreign interference in our politics, in our democracy and in our elections. We have taken all these steps. We have documented all the work that we have done because we truly believe that we have to do everything we can.

Now, there are people who make comments and say that there is nothing to see. Maybe there is nothing to see except if we take action. If we put in place every possible measure to prevent foreign interference, we will secure Canadian democracy for years to come. I am not one of those who believe that there is nothing we can do about it. There are many things we can do and it starts tonight with referring the motion to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognize that foreign interference is nothing new. It has been happening now since 2010-11, when the first report came out. It is not just in Canada. It is happening around the world, and it is not just China that is involved in this foreign interference. We should all, collectively, look at ways to protect the interests of our democracy and the Five Eyes countries, and take a dialed-down approach.

Let it go to the PROC committee and see if it can come up with something that will reinforce Canada's leadership role in the world in dealing with foreign interference. Canada can play a stronger role on that front, but it is more powerful if we work together.

I am wondering if the member could provide his thoughts on that issue.

• (2205)

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I completely agree that we need to work together on this. The member mentioned that this is a worldwide phenomenon, and he is absolutely right. The Trump election in 2016 was a result of substantial foreign interference from the Putin dictatorship in Russia. We saw with the Brexit referendum that Russia, again, interfered.

We have seen a wide variety of financial support through the Conservative Party in the United Kingdom. We want to make sure, whether it is Russian, Chinese, Indian, Iranian or any other country, that foreign interference is blocked. That is why it is important for all of us to work together to ensure that the foreign interference that is happening in other parts of the world, as well as in Canada, is stopped at source.

That is why I suggest to all members tonight that we need to refer this to the PROC committee promptly and not take a day or two to talk about it. The time for talk is over. It needs to be referred to PROC for action. That, coupled with the Hogue commission, will hopefully give us all the things we need to put in place to fully protect our democracy and any future election.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby for his wisdom and his desire to see action taken on

this issue. I would like him to tell us more about foreign interference, which is extremely worrisome. It does not just happen during the 36 days of an election campaign. It happens all the time. It happens at conventions with party members, but it also happens at nomination meetings, which are the dark corners, so to speak, that no one pays too much attention to, but where a lot of foreign interference can happen.

What could be done about that?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate that question from my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, who brings a great deal of wisdom to the House. The NDP has a very rigid nomination process that ensures that foreign interference does not play a part. I think these practices should be adopted by other parties to ensure that their nomination processes are secure.

[English]

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I begin my remarks, I would like to state that I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman. I certainly look forward to his remarks as well.

Two weeks ago, I was sitting in my constituency office when I got a message from my colleague from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan. He informed me that there was going to be a special meeting of a small group of us, where he would inform us of a very grave and serious situation. I do not know if one has ever received news where one was told they are the target of a cyber-attack, but I will say that it is terrifying. It is a moment in someone's life when the blood drains from one's face.

When someone is told the date of those attacks, January 2021, one wonders what they were doing that month. What was going on in their life that month? How serious is this attack? It is something I do not want anyone to ever experience again, in this chamber or anywhere else in the world, but unfortunately, it happened.

One starts to wonder if this happened to me, and this also happened to other colleagues in the House of Commons, then clearly, this is also happening within our nation. Who is attempting to obtain what information? How successful are they? How many attacks like this are going on at this time? Worse than that, the Liberal government knew about this attack, yet it did not inform me, and it did not inform my colleagues. It is reprehensible. It is absolutely horrible.

I would like to thank again the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China for informing myself and my colleagues that we were the targets of such an attack. I would also like to thank the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the United States of America for once again doing the heavy lifting that the Liberal government should be doing. It is shameful that we were informed, through foreign governments, that we were under attack.

Unfortunately, it is not a surprise to me. It is not a surprise at all because we found out, just this past week, in the foreign interference report that the former member for Steveston—Richmond East was not successful in his election campaign as a result of foreign interference.

Last year, we saw the effects of a foreign government, the same PRC government, on the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, who sits in this very aisle. He was also the victim of the interference of a foreign government in an attempt to try to gain information on his family to try to intimidate him.

Unfortunately, I had the honour of being the shadow minister for democratic institutions back in 2018-19. At that time, I begged the member for Burlington to do something about it at that time, and it fell upon deaf ears.

We set up things like the Leaders' Debates Commission, which housed a member of the WE Charity scandal. The commission was overseen by the former special rapporteur, who clearly failed in his mission to try to keep this chamber and to keep Canadians safe. We saw the implementation of the toothless digital charter, which achieved nothing to protect Canadians and to protect members of the House.

We spent hours going over Bill C-76, where we talked about things like vouching. We talked about things like returning officers. We talked about things like the closing of polls across our nation, yet this did very little to solve the problem that is in front of us now, which is foreign interference.

Once again, it is the absence of responsibility of the Liberal government not only to do something about foreign interference, but also to even have the courtesy, the decency and the moral placement to let members of the House know that they were under attack and under threat. We did not get that courtesy, and it is an absolute shame.

• (2210)

Once again, we have seen that the government has done too little, too late. We see this time and time again. We saw this in 2019, when I would try and raise questions with the member for Burlington, with the Prime Minister of Canada, and the only response I would receive was that the Prime Minister had an indication that there had been some interference by Russia in the 2015 election, which is very cold comfort at this time, given what we know now.

The 2018-19 election was, my goodness, five years ago now. The Liberals have had five years to do something. Clearly, they have not spent their time doing anything. They are, once again, doing what they do best and that is creating the illusion of doing something when, in fact, they are happy to do nothing because, as we saw with the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, as we saw with the member for Steveston—Richmond East, it benefits them to do nothing, so they have done nothing, and they will keep doing nothing.

Even if I blame the member for Burlington, I know that this direction was from the top. There is no doubt in my mind that this direction was from the top, and the same thing here. I am sure that the Liberals wanted to ignore the cyber-attack and that they wanted to ignore the potential harm it could have caused me, my family and 17 other members of the House. They wanted to turn a blind eye to that because that is what they do. They do not want to take responsibility for the types of atrocities that take place against myself, against other members of the House and against the Canadian people.

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The good news about this is that this will not deter myself, and this will not deter the leader of the official opposition from continuing to stand up for democracy, human rights and the rule of law, not only in this nation, but also across the world as well. Members will continue to see us standing side by side with our allies in Taiwan, in Israel and in Ukraine. Once again, this is something that we do not see the Liberal government doing.

We see the government picking and choosing winners and losers, speaking out of both sides of its mouth, again, not only to the harm of people in the House, not only to the harm of Canadians, but also to the harm of people across the world. As I said, that is because this government will always turn a blind eye. Do members know what happens when we turn a blind eye? Evil prevails. Evil prevails in the House when the current government turns a blind eye. Evil prevails across this country when the government is not willing to take responsibility, as I begged the member for Burlington to do all those years ago; and evil prevails across the globe.

It is not a surprise that I was informed, after the fact, that this government had neglected its responsibility to keep our citizens safe and to keep members of this chamber safe, who were informed by a foreign entity, by someone else doing the work that the Liberals should be doing. Shame on them for trying to hide it from us and for keeping it from us. Once again, they would know, Canadians would know, that they had shirked their responsibility and that they had not done what they were supposed to do in overseeing the safety of the House and the safety of the members of the House.

As I said, I have, unfortunately, seen this time and time again, so it is not a surprise to me at all that we were left in this position and that we were left as targets of this foreign government and other foreign governments that are looking into us. I am not naive. I was in the Canadian foreign service, now elected to the House, and I understand that, I am sure, I will always be a target for those foreign governments. However, this government was informed by another government and was informed by another organization that is attempting to do the work that the Liberals should be doing, which is keeping Canadians safe and keeping members of the House safe.

We can refer this matter to PROC. I certainly hope that we do, but I hope it is with greater results than the previous times, when we saw Bill C-76 come out of PROC with no shield for the members of the House and no shield for Canadians. I hope, this time, that the Liberal government takes foreign interference seriously, does not pretend and actually does something about it.

• (2215)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her very moving speech. Obviously, we welcome the Speaker's ruling, we support the motion and we hope that the committee will be able to address this important issue as soon as possible.

Privilege

Foreign powers are attacking elected members of the House. In so doing, they are attacking democracy. This is very serious. We must protect democracy, take care of it and allow it to thrive.

I heard the parliamentary secretary downplaying the crisis, saying that this happens in every country. Let us listen to what CSIS has to say, which is that it does happen elsewhere in the world, but that Canada and the provinces are in a class of their own. It really is worse than elsewhere, and we do not seem to recognize the danger this poses and the extent of the crisis.

What does the hon. member think about that?

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Mr. Speaker, the government can indeed give the excuse that the same thing happens in other countries. During question period in the House, it keeps telling us that this is happening in other countries, but the fact is that I was targeted here in this country. The Canadian government needs to do something about our nation, our sovereignty and our democracy.

● (2220)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just to respond to the previous question, let us be very clear: The Communications Security Establishment published four unclassified reports of cyber-threats to Canada's democracy process. It highlighted this: "Cyber threat activity targeting elections has increased worldwide." It is not just Canada, and I think it is important to recognize that. It also says that Canada remains a "lower priority target for cyber threat activity than some of its allies, such as the US and UK."

I think it is important. The government, from the get-go, has been very proactive in dealing with the issue of international foreign interference. That is the reality, and our actions show that.

I am surprised the member would bring up human rights, given their position on the notwithstanding clause.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Mr. Speaker, this is so disappointing, but it is what we have come to expect from the government, which is to try not to take responsibility. This is how we got into this situation. This is how I got into the situation of being a target of a foreign government; it was as a result of the government's inability to accept responsibility.

As I said, this is what it does all the time. It says that these things are happening in other countries. First of all, we should be concerned about what is happening in Canada to Canadians. Clearly, once again, the government has shirked its responsibility in overseeing Canadians.

This is also how the government treats its allies, as we have seen with Taiwan and Israel. If one's neighbour is getting robbed, raped, pillaged or murdered, does one sit there and stand by? No, one does not. One takes action as well. We not only have to take care of ourselves, but we also have to act as leaders in the world.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government sat on the information without even bothering to inform the very people who were affected by such an atrocity and such a danger and threat.

What does that tell Canadians, parliamentarians and people who want to be involved in politics? Could the hon. member comment on the message the government is sending?

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Mr. Speaker, if they are not going to take care of me, an elected member of the House, then they are not going to take care of others.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member agree with me that this needs to be referred promptly, this evening, to procedure and House affairs to come up with recommendations?

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Mr. Speaker, this should have been handled years ago; the sooner it is handled, the better. I hope that, this time, something effective is done, something with teeth, that will actually protect not only the members of the House but also the citizens of Canada.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the ruling that we need to look into this, and it needs to go to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs for a fulsome investigation. The privileges of members of Parliament here are really sacrosanct, and we need to make sure that we are protecting them. I am concerned that privilege has been violated.

I am one of the 18 Canadian parliamentarians targeted by APT31, a hacking group from the People's Republic of China working under the Ministry of State Security. The role of APT31 includes transnational repression, economic espionage and foreign interference operations on behalf of the People's Republic of China. That Communist regime, of course, has been interfering in our operations and elections here in Canada. It has been trying to quash members of Parliament who are speaking out against the Communist regime, the way that it has been violating human rights and interfering in geopolitics around the world.

The reason we know that Canadian parliamentarians were targeted is because the U.S. Department of Justice unsealed an indictment from the FBI on seven individuals from APT31 on March 25. It charged seven PRC nationals with espionage and foreign interference. The U.S. Department of Justice put sanctions on these individuals. The U.S. State Department is also offering rewards for more information about them. When reading through the indictment and some of the activities of APT31, we realize that they had conducted over 10,000 different cyber-hacks around the world, predominantly targeting legislators.

It specifies that the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, IPAC, was targeted in 2021. I am a member of IPAC, and all 18 members in Canada who were targeted are also members of IPAC. IPAC was quite shocked to see that this had happened when it realized this in April; it quickly notified all its members in Europe, Canada, the United States and Australia. Of course, the Americans already knew about it. The FBI had alerted their congressmen and senators. They were very concerned.

Privilege

Let us go through the timeline. APT31 targeted me and my colleagues, the 18 of us, in a phishing cyber-hack into our emails. The FBI discovered this in 2021-22. It let U.S. legislators know and then followed the proper Five Eyes protocol and let CSE in Canada know. CSE then contacted House of Commons services through its IT branch, but nothing happened. There were crickets. None of the Canadian parliamentarians were notified by CSE, by the government of Canada or by the House of Commons protective services. It was all mute.

IPAC found out in 2024 that its membership around the world, including 18 members in Canada, were targeted; this was two years after the hacking event happened, two years after CSE and the House of Commons were notified that it happened. Nobody thought it important enough to contact the parliamentarians to tell us that our emails and online services were potentially compromised. At that time, in 2019 and 2021, we were already witnessing foreign interference taking place in our federal elections. The PRC was using operatives to intimidate members of Parliament and their families, as we saw with the member for Wellington—Halton Hills with his family back in Hong Kong. They were trying to intimidate him and all the people here in Canada.

● (2225)

We know that PRC police stations were set up across this country to interfere with and intimidate the Chinese nationals who call Canada home. We know the PRC was using foreign students to flood nomination meetings. Throughout all that time, the Liberal government turned a blind eye.

The Liberals have no problem with the PRC interfering in our election processes when it undermines people like the Conservative member for Wellington—Halton Hills or Kenny Chiu, our former Conservative member of Parliament from Vancouver who lost his riding. As long as the Liberals think they are benefiting, they are prepared not to do anything about it.

We know, through Justice Hogue and her commission on foreign interference, that there is sound evidence to show that foreign interference is undermining our democratic institutions. I have been very active, of course, on standing up for Ukraine and holding Russian oligarchs and corrupt foreign officials around the world to account. I am trolled all the time on social media by Russian trolls. I was even asked to appear as a witness at the Hogue commission because of the ongoing attacks that happened on my social media platforms.

I am also a patron of Hong Kong Watch Canada, again standing up for democracy and civil liberties in Hong Kong because of the Communist regime's activities there, quashing any individual rights and liberties, especially free and fair elections in Hong Kong.

Also, I am the shadow minister for national defence for the official opposition. Therefore, if one thinks about my email potentially getting hacked by operatives for the People's Liberation Army in China, one would think somebody would have called to let me know that I was being targeted. In 2021-22, somebody should have made that call.

I am also the vice-chair of the Standing Committee on National Defence. We often deal with information on national security, our

Canadian Armed Forces and our operations in Europe under NATO. I am always advocating for supplying more weapons to Ukraine. Members would think that would be enough of a red flag to see the Liberal Government of Canada contact us and say that we need to take precautionary measures to protect the information that I have and I am sharing with my colleagues, including other members on the Standing Committee on National Defence.

However, I was never notified by the CSE. I was never notified by the Parliamentary Protective Service. I was not notified by CSIS or the RCMP. Nobody from the Government of Canada has ever reached out to me to inform me that I was at risk or my colleagues were at risk and that we were potentially being undermined.

Surprisingly, I am going to get a briefing this week, tomorrow actually, from the FBI. The FBI is going to inform us, as parliamentarians, those of us who were targeted by APT31, to get the information out. One would think that the RCMP, CSIS or the CSE would be stepping up, or at the very least somebody from the Liberal government, but, no, it is mute.

That comes down to the fact that we have a Liberal government that has not taken foreign interference seriously. We have a Prime Minister who has never made national security a priority. National security should always be a priority for the Prime Minister, but it is something that is an afterthought for him. He has always downplayed the seriousness of the threats from Beijing, Moscow and Tehran. He has never stood up for us as parliamentarians to protect our democratic institutions. He has never stood up to say that we are going to protect the diaspora communities here, whether Chinese, Ukrainian or Persian, who have run away from oppression, dictatorships and totalitarian regimes.

I can tell members this. Our leader of the official opposition, the leader of Canada's Conservatives, will always defend our freedom, our democracy and our national security. We will always put Canada first. We will always stand up for the democratic rights and privileges of those of us who serve in this elected chamber, this hallowed chamber. I know that things will be better under a prime minister who represents the Conservative Party of Canada.

Privilege

• (2230)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to express that the government, over the last number of years, has taken foreign interference very seriously, and that is why we have taken a number of measures to deal with it. At some point this will be going to the procedure and House affairs committee. We hope it will be a productive process and that we will come up with some tangible thoughts and ideas. After all, it is happening not just in Canada; it is happening around the world, and I think Canada can play a leading position in dealing with this very important issue.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, we know that the member for Winnipeg North has always been an apologist for the Prime Minister and for the failures of the Liberal government. The Liberals have never taken our national security seriously. They tried to cover up the foreign interference that happened in the 2019 and 2021 elections. We know that the special rapporteur was appointed and that he was just going to wax over all of the foreign interference.

There is the Hogue commission. After much pressure from the Conservatives, we were able to finally get the answers that we deserve in the first report that came out last week. We expect that there are going to be better recommendations down the road. That is because of our pressure. It has nothing to do with the Liberal government.

• (2235)

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his speech. I am truly sorry to learn that he, along with 17 other colleagues, was the target of attacks carried out by foreign powers. To me, that is unacceptable. As for the democratic system, we must fight to preserve it. Obviously we are in favour of the motion, and things need to change.

My question for my colleague is the following. The parliamentary secretary just downplayed the situation, saying that this is happening in other countries. However, the intelligence services tell us all the time that Canada has the worst record on this. This has nothing to do with other countries.

What do we need to do to change this?

[English]

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from the Bloc is right. The government has always been late to the race and usually does not even show up at the starting blocks.

In this particular case with APT31, guess what the Americans are doing? They are charging seven individuals. They have sanctioned them. They have offered a \$10-million reward for more information that could lead to the arrest of these individuals and have them face the courts in the United States.

Of course, here we are sitting today. I bet, when it comes down to the names, nobody on the other side, on the Liberal benches, even knows who the people in APT31 are who are acting on behalf of the People's Republic of China.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, given the severity of issues like this, would the member agree to sending the matter to PROC? It is obviously the body that is best equipped to deal with it. Would the member agree that it should be sent to PROC as soon as possible?

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague from Manitoba that we do need to get the issue to PROC. We need a full-scale investigation on who dropped the ball, why the government has not taken it seriously and why parliamentarians are being threatened by the People's Republic of China.

We need to make sure the Communist regime in Beijing does not try to continue to get secrets from parliamentarians. I think it comes down to the fact that we are dealing with issues surrounding national security. It is not just about political operations or partisan issues. For those of us who were targeted, it is because we belong to the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China. We are always there trying to counter the threats, as well as the human rights abuses and gross violations, that are happening through the corrupt officials who are part of the Communist regime in Beijing.

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are three reasons that come to my mind for the government's response to the serious situation: ambivalence, and my hon. colleague referenced that; incompetence; and the worst, intentional inaction.

Would he opine on what he thinks is the driving force for the government's response here?

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, I think the proper term to describe what has happened here is that the Liberal government is willfully neglecting its responsibilities and duties to make sure that we, as parliamentarians, and all Canadians are protected from foreign interference.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wish I were pleased to join the debate, but I am not. I am one of those 18 parliamentarians who had their email targeted by APT31. To be perfectly honest, I did not know what APT31 was. I think many of my colleagues know that I spend a lot of time in diaspora communities, so I do know quite a bit about random, obscure groups that many of us do not pay attention to, but this is a new one even to me. I had to have staff actually look up what exactly this particular group was involved in.

The attack was back in January 2021. By "attack", I do not mean a physical attack. This was a digital hacking attempt, pixel reconnaissance. Again, that is another term I did not know, so I had to look it up. It was, I think, a sophisticated attempt. I would not have thought about it.

Privilege

My colleagues and members of other political parties know that I am quite paranoid. I think a little bit of paranoia is healthy in this line of work. I used to work for the department of defence as an exempt staffer for the Minister of National Defence during the Afghan war. I worked at the Alberta finance department as a policy adviser, where the security of budget documents was important, so just as a regular practice, I would do things like stopping my emails from automatically opening images. Little did I know that, in this situation, that would have helped me out, because those images are the ones that contain one pixel that would upload code onto whatever device would open it. In the case of my email account, I did ask my staff on their computers to verify whether those emails were opened and were still there in my email account, and they were.

This is one of the problems I have with what the government's position has been, along with the Communications Security Establishment and the House of Commons cybersecurity. As soon as I found out about this, just a few weeks ago, I contacted them immediately to find out whether they knew or whether there was something that I should do. At first, I got kind of mixed messages from them, saying they kind of knew about the investigation but they did not know. It was not really clear. There were two different emails saying almost identical things, using synonyms to avoid actually committing to anything, which I guess is typical. I do not fault them for it. However, when it came to the fact that my email had been targeted, I would like to have been told of that fact back in January 2021. I would like to have known, because I could have deleted those emails. I may have gone back to those emails several times and opened them all over again.

I will even read the headlines for colleagues, because I have them. The first one was on January 28, 2021, and it reads, "More than 50 passengers killed". It looks like a random story about a traffic accident in western Cameroon. We get lots of different emails. There is not necessarily a reason for us to open those. It is signed by a David Aaro, and "nropnews" is a domain name. The next email is from Brooke Singman, on China's GDP. I might have opened that email out of sheer curiosity about what an analyst might be saying. The third email has the headline of "Canada parliament labels US far-right Proud Boys group 'a terrorist entity'", by David Aaro again.

These emails were over several days. They were not all on the same day. They are just three emails that I still have in my email inbox that I could have reopened for whatever reason while searching for another email, because nobody told me anything. Nobody did.

I think it is both immoral and unethical, what happened through the House of Commons, CSE, and especially the Liberal government. For all the talk of wanting to protect Canadians, doing right by them and ensuring there is no foreign interference, it is only when the government is called out that it starts pretending it is going to do something.

I deal with political prisoners. I deal with people who have fled their country of origin, who were political activists. They were in jail. They were on death row, some of them. They were democracy activists. They were journalists, perhaps, in their country. I have one working for me who was a journalist in a country that has an authoritarian regime that shut down her newspaper. I have met jour-

nalists who used to work in Turkey who are on the Turkish "grey list", which is their terrorist list. This particular individual has not done any crime of terrorism. I call her the Robert Fife of Turkey. She reported on the fact that the Turkish government, during the Syrian civil war, had given weapons and arms and other means to ISIS and ISIS-affiliated jihadi groups.

These are the people I meet with. They all saw the news that I had been targeted. They all worry. It directly affects the type of work that I can do, the type of work I am interested in doing, the type of work I have been asked to do by the leader of my political party as the shadow minister for immigration, refugees and citizenship. Refugees are quite core to that. Many of these people have applied for and obtained protected person status in Canada.

● (2240)

I read your ruling, Mr. Speaker, and this is, like you said, material to the type of work that I do. When the government claims it is doing enough, no, it is not doing enough. The fact is that nobody on the Liberal benches in the front cabinet, especially those responsible for administering CSIS and CSE, thought they should warn the 18 parliamentarians, including me, my colleague from Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan and the member for Calgary Midnapore.

There are several of us, and there are members of the Liberal Party. The member for Scarborough—Guildwood is one of the co-chairs of the IPAC group that was specifically targeted for that work. It is immoral. It is unethical.

When I then turn around to the diaspora groups, the chatter I am hearing is, "If the government will not protect you, if it will not protect a member of Parliament or a senator, what chance do we have?" No wonder they are self-censoring and so scared to speak out about things that are going on in their country of origin, but also about foreign agents in Canada who are interfering with their rights to free speech as free Canadian citizens in our own country.

Now they are afraid, because they look at us. Many of us are human rights advocates. We do pro-democracy work. We help groups organize and we give them ideas on how to lobby and advocate for things on important issues that they care about. However, they then ask, "Well, if I send you the email, is it actually protected? Will you protect my identity?"

I have had meetings where members of the public have asked me to turn off my phones and put them away. I mean shut them down and put them away. I know why they are doing this; it is because they are concerned that people can easily tap into these devices, which are generally unsecured, and then they can turn on the microphones on devices.

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There is a reason why, in our caucus rooms, we do not bring our devices into the room. They are left in little metal cabinets, and we roll them in and roll them out all the time. I remember, as caucus chair, trying to convince my colleagues to leave their devices behind, which is very difficult. I see some members nodding and admitting how difficult it is for them to be kept away from the devices.

Especially in the case of APT31, I started to look, and the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman before me kind of started to go into who this group was, because I was interested in this. There is a \$10-million reward for seven of them on the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security's rewards for justice program. It has seven persons listed.

It says that the hackers have helped China's Ministry of State Security conduct malicious cyber operations against U.S. critical infrastructure through their front company, Wuhan Xiaoruizhi Science & Technology Company. It is part of a group of China state-sponsored intelligence officers and contract hackers known in the cybersecurity community as APT31. Again, this was news to me. I would like to have known about APT31.

However, they are not just contract hackers; they are China state-sponsored intelligence officers. The rewards for justice website says that if anyone has information on these China hackers, Wuhan APT31, also known as Zirconium, Violet, Typhoon, Judgement Panda and Altaire, or associated individuals or entities, they should contact the rewards for justice program via the Tor-based tip line, and they may be eligible for a reward or relocation.

Again, this organization is not just a random group of hackers in mom's basement. Therefore CSE, House of Commons security, the cybersecurity people, CSIS, the government, the public safety minister, the Prime Minister and everybody else seems to claim, "Well, we told somebody; that should be good enough", but they have a moral and ethical responsibility to inform parliamentarians directly, beyond what the law says, both for our personal protection and for the protection of people that we deal with. What they are essentially saying is that we are on our own but that if someone finds out later, they will tell us. Then they will say, "Oh yeah, whoopsie doodle. True, there was an attempted hack." It is not enough to say that the hack was not successful. We are being targeted; that is the problem.

I am sure that our digital infrastructure, the cybersecurity infrastructure for the House of Commons, is strong and that it is good enough. I remember trying to get Zoom right after the pandemic shutdowns had begun, and our caucus was the first one to go on Zoom. I remember the cybersecurity people telling us, "No, you must send your signals through a House of Commons server based in Canada."

We waited patiently for the three days that they asked us to so we could actually host a meeting of the Conservative caucus right when the shutdowns began across the country. Therefore I trust them in that security infrastructure, but what I have a problem with is the fact that we were targeted and not told, in 2021. I had to be told by a foreign government, the Americans. Oftentimes, because they are our cousins, they are almost part of the North American security infrastructure.

• (2245)

I studied in America. I know that few of my colleagues look up my bio because, why would one do that? I have a concentration in counterterrorism and the Department of Homeland Security. It is just a personal interest area, but it is not focused on digital cybersecurity, to be honest. This is why I did not know.

These particular individuals, again, are not just a random group of hackers doing it for fun or doing it for money. These are intelligence officers. That is what the U.S. Department of State says.

I had to find out from a foreign government, the FBI telling a parliamentary group that I belong to. I had to sign off on letters, listen to what the analysts had to say, get information from them and share information with them. I had to find out from a foreign government that I was being targeted, openly targeted.

I have been criticized by foreign governments before. Famously, about two years ago, I was criticized in Pakistan's national assembly for raising very simple questions in the House here about a \$50,000 taxpayer-paid trip by a certain chief of defence staff in the Pakistani military.

I was highly unpopular. I was very popular in my riding, though, because I have a lot of constituents who are Mohajirs and Sindhis, who are highly persecuted. I did it on their behalf and they deserve to know. However, they are going to come to me and ask me if what they tell me is protected. Am I protected? Can I guarantee to them that what they pass on to me, my email, digital files and the personal security in my offices, is protected? I worry because I worry for them.

There is a great Yiddish proverb. I never miss an opportunity to share them. I know members wait for them. If we take the Prime Minister's words and the public safety minister's words and CSE's and CSIS's words, and if their words were a stick, I could not even lean on it. It is a great Yiddish proverb. It is so true in this situation.

The claim has been in the newspapers that, because it was not successful, we did not need to know. I have it in the complete reverse. Because we were targeted, we did not just deserve to know; they were morally obliged to tell us and ethically obliged to tell us.

Whoever found out should have told us because, for three years, we could have adjusted our behaviour. We could have changed the way we did things. We could have turned around and told the diaspora community leaders, the groups we were working with on petitions, on letters and on starting campaigns to rescue political prisoners in other countries, that maybe we should do it a different way.

Some of us travel to regions of the world that are dangerous, like Ukraine. Some of us travelled to Iraq just a few years ago, which is not exactly the safest region to travel to generally. I found, on the ground, that it was very safe. I would have liked to know if I was targeted by, say, an Iranian-based hacker group that works for the Islamic regime, if I had been in the region.

I now have to work under the assumption that, even if I were targeted, if the target was not successful in hacking into my emails or hacking into my personal digital files or any of my social media accounts, because it was not successful, I could be the target of one of these espionage or hacker attempts.

There are many of us who work with these types of individuals. Because we know that it was APT31, thanks to the FBI, thanks to IPAC, thanks to the U.S. Department of State, not thanks to our government, we have to now wonder if we are individually, because of the work that we do, targeted by another foreign regime.

The member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman talked about the work he does on behalf of the Canadian Ukrainian community. He has spoken out repeatedly against the Kremlin. If there was a Russian hacker group, of which they have many, and they are renowned in the Kremlin for both operating state-sponsored groups and also paying contract hackers, and if he were to be targeted, nobody would tell him unless it was successful. If it was successful, then he would likely know about it. One can see where this is going now. This does not make any sense. The government's position makes no sense.

In the Speaker's ruling, he said that this matter was in fact a prima facie violation of our privilege. I knew that from the moment it happened that this would be the case. I am very glad that he ruled that way. I am glad that the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan brought it to the Speaker's attention and made a very cogent case on why we should be protected.

I want to bring up another fact, which is that this actually happened in Belgium as well. This is not APT31's first attempt. APT31 is renowned. APT40 is another group that has also done it repeatedly against others. It is not just IPAC members.

I am going to draw one's attention to one particular group that was targeted in Belgium. It was a series of politicians, including the former prime minister of that country, who were targeted. One foreign affairs minister and several parliamentarians were also targeted by APT31, around the same timeline that we were.

• (2250)

In that particular country, those targeted were also not told. In Belgium, they all had to go public and shame their government in that situation. As far as I know, in this particular attack, I think only Finland and one other, I believe, Baltic state informed their legislators that they were victims of such an attack. Then again, they are

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also much more used to it. They are right next door to the Kremlin and the Russian Federation, which makes it their business to be in all of our business. They want to know what emails we are exchanging. They want to know the people we are meeting with. They want to know what devices we are using as well.

This is the problem I have with how this has been handled by the government, with its claim that it is doing enough and that it has introduced this new process. Those five members, like I said, were a former prime minister, the chair of the foreign affairs committee, the vice-chair of the foreign affairs committee, the Belgium-Taiwan Friendship Group and a member of the EU foreign affairs committee.

I have the declaration in French and am going to read it into the record.

• (2255)

[*Translation*]

Statement of Belgian elected officials targeted by APT31

It has now been confirmed that all five of us were the target of a Chinese state-sponsored cyber-attack in early 2021.

This was not an attack on any single political party or any particular country. It was an attack on any elected official who dares to challenge Beijing. We stand united in condemning these actions, which strike at the heart of the democratic values that unite us and that transcend party lines.

Over the past decade, China has shown a growing desire to interfere in the political systems of other countries, including our own. All too often, its malicious actions have gone unanswered.

We cannot allow this campaign of cyber-attacks against elected representatives of the Belgian people to remain without a robust and proportionate response.

We are calling on the government to do the following:

Then they list five items. The statements ends with these two sentences:

Chinese intelligence services tried to intimidate us, but they will never silence us. We will continue to actively defend democratic values and human rights in Belgium and around the world.

[*English*]

This goes on. There was a case in New Zealand where APT40 as well hacked into legislators' and Parliament's devices. There was a cybersecurity attack committed in Australia, again by another state-sponsored affiliated group also out of Beijing. It is not like this is unique. This is another problem with the line the government has taken, which is to behave as if this is brand new and as if this has never happened before. That is the claim. That is the top-line talking point being printed out of the Prime Minister's Office and sent to all of us. That is simply not true.

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Since 2012, since Xi Jinping took over the Communist Party in Beijing, there has been a steady increase of attacks, both in rhetoric and in actual actions, by various hacking groups and by various military organizations. Like I said, intelligence officers of Beijing are now targeting 18 Canadian parliamentarians. For three years, we were told absolutely nothing. I only found out a few weeks ago. The moment I found out, on a Tuesday, I immediately began contacting the House of Commons' cybersecurity. I want to get to the bottom of this.

Every single member who was targeted should have a chance to speak in the House and to explain exactly how this impacts their work, so it can become a permanent, official part of Hansard, and the next time this happens, the Liberals cannot claim that they did not see anything, that they did not hear anything or cannot say that it did not work, so we should not be bothered by it. We were targeted by a foreign government because of our parliamentary work. That should be enough. It was immoral not to tell us. It was unethical not to tell us.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all members of the House would be very much aware that foreign interference is something that happens around the world and that there are a number of stakeholders. It is not just China.

As a government, we have taken a number of proactive legislative actions to be able to address the issue and to protect the integrity of our system. All sorts of committees have met. I would suggest to the member opposite and to other members of the Conservative Party that there is a role for Canada to play. Even though we have seen more severe threats in other countries, we do need to be cognizant. The government has consistently been not only cognizant of the issues but also taking actions where we can.

Does my colleague not agree that we can play a strong leadership role on this, if we can dial down some of the politics and allow the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs to do some of the important work to demonstrate and to reinforce confidence in the system?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, there is a line I hear from the government whenever it has made a mistake. "Do not be so partisan" is the response Conservatives get from the government benches. I have made the case that the government followed its own process, but the process is immoral. It is unethical. The Liberals' line is that, because the interference was not successful, we did not need to know about it. That is not good enough.

Just being targeted places a moral responsibility, an ethical responsibility, on the persons who knew. In this case, the government and the ministers of the day, which are the Liberals, and the front-benchers especially, had a responsibility to inform the 18 parliamentarians who were targeted by a foreign government. If they had informed us, we could have changed our behaviour, asked some questions and done the follow-up that we needed to do. We were not given the opportunity to protect ourselves.

• (2300)

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for a wonderful speech about a very important issue. When the government gave all these excuses, I do not know

how Canadians felt, but we definitely know how we felt as parliamentarians sitting in the House. We got those threats from around the world, and the government did not move on it or take the issue seriously.

What message is the government sending to parliamentarians, to politicians and to Canadians?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, the member for Edmonton Manning is absolutely correct. The message the government basically sends to the diaspora communities, to former political prisoners whom we meet with and to people in civic organizations in Canada is that they do not matter. They will not be protected by the government. It is a free-for-all, with foreign agents and foreign hacking. It is not just their physical health they have to worry about; it is also their digital health. The government will not protect parliamentarians, and the message it is sending is that people are on their own; this has been heard loud and clear. There is a lot of fear out there in the community.

Conservatives do not have to raise anyone's anxiety. We are just raising voices and pointing out what has been done. The government had a moral and ethical responsibility to act and inform the 18 parliamentarians, and it failed to do so.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one issue I did not have a chance to talk about during my speech, and I am glad the member spoke about it, is the nature of APT31 itself. Part of this discussion needs to be the appropriate response to a foreign state attacking members of Parliament. Of course, we need to talk about what the government should have done, what we can do differently and processes within Canada.

However, we also need to talk about accountability for the people who perpetrated the attack. One call to action that the IPAC suggested is sanctions against those who target legislators in our country. This seems to me like a no-brainer. When a group controlled by a foreign state is targeting and attacking members of Parliament in our country based on their parliamentary activities, we should be sanctioning the individuals involved in the attack.

This is something that is within the jurisdiction of government, not within the jurisdiction of Parliament. Could the member comment on that call to action for the government, calling on the government to sanction those involved in this cyber-attack?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, the member is right. As with many things with the Liberals, they are not leaders on anything. They are followers on where other governments have gone. The U.S. State Department has already listed seven of these intelligence officers connected with APT31.

Let me just read some of the targets mentioned. It goes to why we should list them, why we should penalize them and why we should sanction this group. It reads:

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APT31 has targeted a wide range of victims linked to U.S. national security including staff at the White House; the U.S. Departments of Justice, Commerce, Treasury, and State; members of the U.S. Congress, including both Democrat and Republican Senators; the United States Naval Academy; and the United States Naval War College's China Maritime Studies Institute.

It goes on to include the industrial base, telecommunications, energy and financial sectors. It is very specific in what has been targeted.

The fact that it would now broaden its interests to 18 Canadian parliamentarians is just the beginning. What I did not mention before in my opening speech and some of the responses is that I am also the vice-chair of the Canada-China select committee. There is a reason we would be targeted for the work we do, both at the IPAC and in Parliament.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for that response. It is notable, as it relates to sanctions in general involving the PRC, that there have been various calls for sanctions from parliamentary committees.

For instance, the member mentioned that he is involved in the special committee on Canada-China relations. In the last Parliament, we had a very detailed report on Hong Kong in which we called for sanctions against those involved in the human rights violations that are taking place in Hong Kong.

The government has not taken up that call, despite the fact that it came from a unanimous report of members of Parliament on that committee, including a parliamentary secretary. There has been a reluctance to apply these sanctions. I do wonder, also, if the issue of our not being informed and the issue of sanctions are related in this sense, that if members of Parliament had been informed they were being targeted by a foreign state, they would have expected the government to respond to hold those who were attacking them accountable.

However, if the government had decided, for whatever political reasons, that it did not want to impose consequences on those involved in hacking, that it did not want to impose sanctions on foreign actors involved in both human rights violations and foreign interference, it would then be easier for them to avoid taking those actions that it, for whatever reason, did not want to take if as few people knew about it as possible. I wonder if members—

• (2305)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Shepard.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, the member raises a very good point. It is possible that one of the reasons the government chose not to inform us, those 18 of us who were targeted, is not just because the attacks did not succeed but also because there would have been an expectation from us, and calls by us, for sanctions on the people, organizations and governments that were doing this.

This is, again, not something new. The government of Beijing has targeted Hong Kong democracy activists in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan and Canada as well. There are many Hong Kong diaspora community members who are fearful even of taking pictures with us. I have been to community groups. I have been to community meetings where people jump out of the photo.

It is not for partisan purposes because they are not voters in this country. It is not that they have friends who are Conservative or New Democrat or Liberal. That is not the case. They plainly tell me that they are worried about a picture being posted online, with me specifically, it being distributed out there, and people seeing that they are both in Canada and hanging out with this particular Conservative politician.

I am sure the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan gets the same treatment. That is a worrying trend. The government does not seem to be taking the protection of these people seriously.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that this issue merits proper examination. At this hour, we have heard from many speakers that this must be taken seriously.

Will the member agree that this should be referred to PROC as soon as possible? Obviously, we gathered here to debate Bill C-59, which has issues of great importance to the citizens we represent. Will the member agree to speeding up the process and moving this to PROC as soon as possible?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, first, I would never tell members not to rise in the House when it is their opportunity to speak on a particular issue. Second, I think every single member who was targeted should get an opportunity to rise in the House and explain exactly how this impacted their work. Third, I note that it is after 11 o'clock. I doubt PROC will be meeting tonight.

The debate should continue until every single member who wants to speak to the issue and how it has impacted their work is given the opportunity to do so.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to participate in the debate arising from your ruling earlier this evening of a prima facie breach of privilege involving 18 members in the House who were targeted by the Beijing-based Communist regime as part of a hacking operation, a progressive reconnaissance attack, due to their affiliation with the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, or IPAC.

This attack occurred in early 2021, and for three years, these members were kept in the dark, which is completely unacceptable, so I welcome your ruling, Mr. Speaker, because here we go again one year later.

One year ago, we were having a very similar debate in the House based upon the ruling of your predecessor, Mr. Speaker, of a prima facie breach of privilege concerning the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. That was referred to the procedure and House affairs committee through which a report was recently tabled in the House finding that indeed the privileges of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills were violated, and for the very same reason that those of the 18 members of Parliament who were subject to the matter of your ruling were, which is that the member for Wellington—Halton Hills was kept in the dark that he was being targeted by Beijing and that his family in Hong Kong was being targeted by the Beijing-based regime.

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This hacking attack did occur in 2021. It was reported by the U.S., by the FBI, to the Communications Security Establishment, to this government, in 2022. However, like the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, many of the 18 members first learned that they were being targeted by Beijing not through a briefing but through a report in *The Globe and Mail*. It raises serious questions as to why it is that this came to light because of *The Globe and Mail* reporting on it, and not based upon information from this government but from the U.S. government.

Indeed it was an unsealed indictment of the justice department earlier this year that resulted in the IPAC secretariat becoming aware that members of IPAC were targeted, and not only Canadian members of Parliament but parliamentarians from around the world who were part of IPAC. That, in turn, led IPAC to ask questions of the Department of Justice in the U.S. as well as the FBI as to why members were not informed.

The FBI, in effect, said that due to jurisdictional issues, it could not communicate directly to them and could not directly brief them, but it did, as soon as possible, provide that information to the Government of Canada, more specifically to the Communications Security Establishment. From there, that information went into a black hole, just as it did with respect to the targeting of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

What is also disturbing is that, once again, the excuse being offered by the government is that it is not its fault; it is someone else's fault.

● (2310)

When *The Globe and Mail* reported that the member for Wellington—Halton Hills was being targeted by the Beijing-based regime, the Prime Minister first claimed that he learned about it in *The Globe and Mail*. Then, he said that it was the fault of CSIS. He said to the media at the time, “CSIS made the determination that it wasn't...needed [to] be raised to a higher level because it wasn't a significant enough concern”.

Then, it was revealed that what the Prime Minister said was not true, that the information had in fact been passed on to the Prime Minister's department, the PCO, to the Prime Minister's national security and intelligence adviser and that the information was not acted upon and was not shared with the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. Nothing was done.

Again, the Prime Minister was very quick to blame someone else, to blame CSIS. The same is true of the Minister of Public Safety. It was learned at the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, during the study we undertook on the question of privilege, that in fact CSIS had sent an IMU to the Minister of Public Safety, to the deputy minister of public safety and to the Minister of Public Safety's chief of staff, alerting them about the fact that the member for Wellington—Halton Hills and his family were being targeted by Beijing.

When the Minister of Public Safety came to committee, he, just like the Prime Minister, said that it was not his fault, that it was the fault of CSIS and that somehow CSIS had made an operational decision not to inform him. He said that repeatedly and unequivocally. It was not a misstatement. Those were carefully selected words by

the Minister of Public Safety that were patently not true. How could CSIS have made an operational decision not to inform the Minister of Public Safety when it sent to him an IMU, addressed to him, his deputy minister and his chief of staff? It is patently absurd.

When the director of CSIS came before the procedure and House affairs committee, I asked him what the significance of an IMU was. He said that it was a matter of high importance. It was not just any memo that was sent, it was sent specifically to get the Minister of Public Safety's attention. Not only did the minister not act upon the intelligence concerning the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, not only does he bear responsibility, along with the Prime Minister and the government, for keeping that member in the dark, which led to a breach of that member's privilege, but also the minister may not have been entirely forthcoming with all the facts, in a desperate and pathetic effort to blame someone else.

The Liberals and the Prime Minister are not responsible, and that is true. They are not a responsible government. However, when it comes to taking responsibility, it is always someone else's fault. Here we go again with another instance. This time, 18 members of Parliament were kept in the dark for two years. It was three years from the time of the attack, but two years from the time that the government was informed by the FBI. What is the excuse offered by the Liberals? It was a decision of House of Commons administration. Somehow it was the House of Commons administration's fault, not the government's fault.

● (2315)

I say that is completely unacceptable in terms of an excuse for keeping members of Parliament in the dark about something as serious as a progressive attack against them. It was an attack that, yes, began at a low level, but it was an attack aimed at gathering information about them, information that could have impeded their ability to do their work as members of Parliament and that could have threatened their safety and security and that of those with whom they meet, including members of the diaspora communities that are targeted by the Beijing-based Communist regime.

For the Liberals to simply pass the buck to the House of Commons administration on something like this is a complete abdication of responsibility. At the end of the day, the ultimate responsibility lies with the government and, in that regard, the government completely failed. I would submit that it was more than just a failure; for the Liberals, the information that had been passed on to them by the FBI was inconvenient.

The Liberals did not want to pass the information on to members because it could have resulted in members' putting pressure on the Liberals to actually do something, to take action in response to the Beijing-based regime, which, I will remind members, the Prime Minister said was a dictatorship he admired. He admired its basic dictatorship. The Prime Minister extended his hand, time and again, to the Beijing-based regime and who turned a blind eye to Beijing's interference in our democracy because, as he saw it, it was benefitting the Liberal Party.

Therefore we need to get to the bottom of what happened, who learned what, where the information went and why members were left in the dark. Why was it information from the U.S. Department of Justice, in an unsealed indictment, that led to IPAC's raising questions that in turn resulted in members of Parliament being informed in some cases by IPAC and in other instances through the report in *The Globe and Mail*?

Let me observe it more broadly. When it comes to foreign interference, and specifically interference by the Beijing-based regime, which is the largest threat when it comes to interfering in Canada, targeting diaspora communities and interfering in our democracy and our sovereignty and impacting the safety of Canadians, the current government's record is an abysmal one. It simply cannot be trusted to stand up to the Beijing-based regime.

The current government is a government that turned a blind eye to Beijing's interference in the 2019 and 2021 elections, notwithstanding the fact that the Prime Minister had been repeatedly briefed about that interference. He covered it up when *Global News* and *The Globe and Mail* first reported on it in the fall of 2022 and early 2023. He tried to downplay it. He is not able to downplay it now that the first report of Madam Justice Hogue was issued last week, which is a damning indictment on the Prime Minister in many respects.

● (2320)

Under the government's watch, police stations have been operating in communities across Canada, targeting Chinese Canadians. At least two of those stations remain open. The government was actually funding some of the organizations that were operating the police stations.

There was a major national security breach at the Winnipeg lab, Canada's highest-security lab, in which agents of the Beijing regime transferred sensitive materials to PRC institutions, including the transfer of two of the most deadly pathogens, Ebola and Henipah, at the direction of one of those scientists. That happened even after PHAC's fact-finding report indicated that the scientist had breached multiple security and intellectual property policies of PHAC and that the individual had collaborated with Beijing on an unauthorized basis. Nonetheless, under the government's watch, Henipah and Ebola were sent to the Wuhan Institute of Virology.

At the Winnipeg lab, a military scientist had access to the lab, someone who was working with Beijing's foremost expert in bioterrorism and biodefence. The list goes on and on.

It is pretty incredible. It is what happens after nine years under a Prime Minister who is not serious, does not take foreign interference seriously and does not take these threats seriously. The Prime Minister's chief of staff said at committee that the Prime Minister reads everything put on his desk and that he is frequently briefed. Then we learn, when the Prime Minister appears at the foreign interference inquiry, that he actually does not really read anything at all. We have a Prime Minister who, at best, is asleep at the switch and, at worst, has turned a blind eye, at times, and even been willing to go along with Beijing's interference if it benefits the electoral interests of the Liberal Party.

Privilege

In closing, the facts underlying this prima facie question of privilege that the Speaker has ruled on are a matter that should never have happened. The government can point blame at everyone else all it wants, but a directive was finally issued in 2023 to inform members of Parliament. It should not have taken until 2023, but it was issued then. Still no action was taken and the members were kept in the dark. Why were they not informed, at the very least, after that directive was issued? These are among the questions that need to be answered.

There needs to be accountability for this very serious breach. I believe that it was not just a prima facie breach but that the privileges of those 18 members were violated.

● (2325)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would really encourage those who might be following the debate to read what the Speaker's ruling stated. It is very clear that, over the last number of years, we have seen the Prime Minister deal with the serious issue of international foreign interference, whether it is in legislation surrounding elections in Manitoba years ago, the directive the member just referred to, the legislation with regard to the registry or something more.

Let us contrast that with the previous prime minister. Foreign interference not only happens around the world and by more countries than just China, but it has been happening since 2011-12, when Stephen Harper did absolutely nothing, nada. However, the member has the tenacity to say that the Prime Minister has not done anything. That is a joke.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, the record of the government has been an abysmal one. The member spoke of the May directive in 2023 to inform MPs. Why was that directive issued? It was after the Prime Minister and the government got caught not informing the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. It was only then that all of a sudden they said they were going to issue this directive. They did not take any responsibility, of course. It is about lessons learned, they always say.

The member spoke about the foreign influence registry. This is the Prime Minister who opposed a foreign influence registry when the former member for Steveston—Richmond East introduced a private member's bill. Not only did the Prime Minister oppose the foreign influence registry, but, based upon evidence that came at the ethics committee, the Prime Minister and the Liberal Party actually amplified Beijing's disinformation targeting the member for Steveston—Richmond East at the time, Kenny Chiu, which contributed to his defeat. In other words, the Prime Minister and the Liberals did not just turn a blind eye or stand by as Beijing launched a disinformation campaign against Kenny Chiu; they actually amplified it and were, therefore, participants in it.

Privilege

• (2330)

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we heard earlier from the government member that there was no mistake made by the government, implying that the government was right not to tell this member and other members that they had their personal, private emails potentially hacked by a foreign power. Does the member agree with that?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said that it was CSIS's fault, that CSIS had not prioritized it. That was the line that was used by the Minister of Public Safety, as well, with respect to the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. Of course, we know that the government was briefed, that the minister was briefed and that the Prime Minister's department was briefed. Ultimately, responsibility fell on the Prime Minister and the government for why the member for Wellington—Halton Hills had been kept in the dark.

Similarly, in this instance, the government had the information. Just because it was passed on to the House of Commons administration, that does not mean that, at the end of the day, it is not up to the government to inform members. Further, I should note that the other excuse that is offered is that it was unsuccessful and, therefore, it is no big deal and members should not know. I think every member would like to know if they are being the target of a hostile foreign state like the PRC.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are now at 11:30 p.m., eastern time zone. We have all acknowledged that this is a serious matter and PROC is the best-placed body to deal with this matter. I am hearing a lot of Conservative talking points that we have heard before with respect to their position on China, and tonight we heard references to Israel and Iran. This seems to be a real show of political talking points from the Conservative Party.

Would it not be in all of our best interests to have this dealt with by PROC as soon as possible? Will the member agree to send this matter to PROC as soon as possible, so that we can actually move on this?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I am the vice-chair of the procedure and House affairs committee, and we will deal with the matter when it is referred to us, but, in the meantime, there is a debate in this House. It is important that we have this debate, and it is certainly important that every member who was targeted, every member who was impacted, have an opportunity to put on the record how this impacted them and to make submissions in this House.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Winnipeg North talked about your ruling, so I did want to read a bit from it. I did quickly read it over one more time, and you actually did not praise anything the Liberal government has done over the past nine years to try to offset the amount of foreign interference in our country or said that the government has succeeded in somehow protecting parliamentarians, because it has not.

In your ruling, Mr. Speaker, you said:

Protecting the security of members, whether physical or cyber, is of course essential to the functioning of the House. Cybersecurity attacks to our systems have multiplied over the recent past and there are no indications they will stop or even diminish.

In the comments made by the member for Winnipeg North, he implied that other foreign governments do this all the time, that it is like a common occurrence that could be happening. The implication is that there are other parliamentarians who could have been attacked by different foreign governments, but those attacks were unsuccessful so they were not told before the new regulations came into force in 2023.

Can the member comment on that?

• (2335)

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, it is a good question, and it really does raise questions as to whether other members have been targeted. Have other members been targeted in other cyber-attacks by the Beijing-based Communist regime or by other hostile foreign states, of which this government is aware and has not informed members?

If that is the case, then it is incumbent on this government to do what it has failed to do up until now, and that is to follow the directive, which seems to be a hollow directive, a meaningless directive, a directive that is not acted upon, and inform all members affected.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I did not want to interrupt my colleague, but in the middle of it, the member opposite shouted across “Where is the tin hat?” Aside from the fact that I think he meant “tin foil hat”, the point is that I think that is unparliamentary. We are trying to have a serious conversation about foreign interference, and he is dismissing real facts, real experience and history about this.

Frankly, it is typical of the Liberals that they try to claim it is a conspiracy when we are pointing out real—

The Speaker: I appreciate that the hon. member raised an issue on something that the Chair did not hear. However, I would ask all hon. members to please conduct themselves in a way that encourages more comity, especially on an important issue. I will ask hon. members that if there is an issue for them to take the discussion behind the curtains to try to work that out.

I am reluctant to continue on this point of order. In reference to the same point of order which was raised by the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, the Speaker has heard enough on this issue, and I will encourage members, please, to take the conversation beyond the curtains.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington.

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are four possible reasons for this government's response: ambivalence, unseriousness, just incompetence or willful inaction. I am wondering if my hon. colleague can opine as to what the driving force is for this government's response, or lack of response, to this example of foreign interference.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I would submit that it is an instance that is a part of the pattern of a government that has not taken these threats seriously. The Liberals have turned a blind eye, they have downplayed it and they have been reluctant to take measures to counter foreign interference.

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It was only after Madam Justice Hogue's first report was issued, for example, that they finally introduced legislation to introduce, among other things, a foreign influence registry. To be charitable to them, it is ambivalence and it is a lack of seriousness, but it could be much worse than that. It could be that this is, frankly, a government that has, at times, sort of welcomed Beijing's interference and at the very least, for political and other reasons, has been unwilling to stand up to Beijing.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and add my voice to what is an incredibly important discussion. There are, of course, a host of issues that this place is seized with on a regular basis. However, for those who might be watching, “privilege” is a word that has quite a few definitions, especially in the world in which we live. It speaks to something very specific when it comes to the parliamentary context. It is the ability for a member of Parliament to do their job well.

Mr. Speaker, in your ruling earlier today, you outlined how the actions of a foreign state actor impeded the ability of 18 parliamentarians to be able to do the job that they were elected to do, or in the event that included senators, to do the job they were sent to the respective Houses to do. I think it is key to outline that because it is not simply a matter that can be taken lightly; it is something that needs to be treated with the utmost seriousness. I will try to outline a few reasons as to why that is such an important aspect to the debate we are having on the ruling made earlier this evening.

As parliamentarians, there are a host of things that happen beyond simply the debates in this place. The Speaker's ruling noted how the actions of the cyber-attack were directly related to the larger duties that members of Parliament have, although this did not necessarily have the direct implications for debate. For many people, this is what they see on television. It is the clips from this place. It is the press conference outside the doors not far from us. However, it speaks to the bigger issue about what our democratic infrastructure is, and I think that is absolutely key.

I will use myself as an example. I know that many others in this place, in our support for our ally Ukraine, were sanctioned by the Putin regime in Russia. It was for our strong stance in support of our democratic ally, and that is a consequence of the actions we undertake in this place. Although it is not a universally held opinion, I am proud to be a strong supporter of the state of Israel and its right to exist. I know, especially since the happenings of October 7, 2023, there have been a host of developments around that. I am talking not just about the conflict itself but also about the international conversations and some of the geopolitical dynamics associated with that.

We have heard about the issue that we are speaking about today, more specifically how the organization known as APT31, affiliated with the Communist dictatorship in Beijing, targeted certain members of Parliament. However, it is part of the larger conversation around the geopolitical influence of the Communist dictatorship in Beijing. Many of us in this place have made strong statements. I know that my colleague who just finished speaking has brought a number of bills forward throughout his career in Parliament about support for Taiwan and how Taiwan can be treated on the international stage.

It is important context because it is some of the work we do as parliamentarians. We have to be free to be able to do that work well. We have seen over the last number of years how there have been significant attempts by hostile foreign regimes, and not simply to engage in the political discourse. Even when it comes to Russia's sanctioning me and many of my colleagues in this place, it has gone beyond that to trying to use fear and intimidation tactics, or some of the tactics that would be more familiar from spy movies, like espionage or spyware on computers.

I am a member of the ethics committee, and I know, Mr. Speaker, that you spent a long time on that committee, where there have been a host of conversations around on-device surveillance tools, whether during the pandemic or the use of tracking information from cellphones.

● (2340)

There is a host of information available in the digital age. Not to get into a conversation about AI, although some of those developments are essential parts of what needs to be included in this conversation, but we have a hostile foreign regime that has a very specific political agenda attempting to use tools nefariously to possibly influence and manipulate what Canadian parliamentarians are doing within the scope of their duties in this place. I appreciate this finding of a prima facie breach of privilege. I am hopeful, and from what I have heard throughout the debate tonight, I am optimistic that, when this important debate comes to a vote, we will be able to send this to PROC. The committee will be able to propose solutions, some of which, I would suggest, will complement this.

You noted in your ruling how this is different than one of the previous instances where the member for Wellington—Halton Hills had brought forward a question of privilege. There was another member, the former member for Durham, Erin O'Toole, the leader of the Conservative Party in the 2021 election, who had brought forward a similar motion. However, because of the timing, in part, and some of the developments at that point, his case was not found to be, but I believe the Speaker had encouraged PROC, which was seized with the issue, to include that in its study.

Certainly, there have been a host of developments that have taken place since that point in time revealing truly the extent to which specifically Beijing, but other foreign state actors as well, has attempted, and has been seen to have the ability, to influence what we do here in this place. Specifically, with Justice Hogue's report, we have seen how there was a potentiality of impact in the last election. This is one thing where we have to be seasoned.

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I was quite frustrated with how the government responded initially to some of the accusations about foreign influence in the elections. Part of my frustration was around the fact that it simply declared that it was not an issue and therefore would not have changed the result of that election. There was certainly much debate in the media and among parliamentarians, even in this place, as to what that exactly meant. Justice Hogue made what I think is an important contribution to highlight how Canadian elections are not simply one election, like with the U.S. presidential election, but rather, in the case of the current Parliament, 338 individual elections, and there is evidence that suggests that there could have been a substantial impact.

For the former member for Steveston—Richmond East, it had a significant impact, and hearing before the ethics committee some of the ways in which, even though he is a Canadian of Chinese descent, his integrity was impugned by an absolutely horrific thing that was said about his personal character and his Chinese background. That was spread often in a language that is not one of Canada's official languages, which led to it having a significant impact.

We heard specifically how the candidate who ran for the Liberal Party and ultimately defeated Kenny Chiu in the 2021 election did not separate himself or fight back against what was clearly disinformation. There was a clear attempt to take what Mr. Chiu had brought forward, specifically a foreign agent registry in the form of a private member's bill, which would have really taken this whole conversation a giant leap forward, and see that stalled or stopped. The impact was what very well could have been the change of an election result.

● (2345)

That has had the impact of causing Canadians, ultimately, to see an erosion of trust in their institutions. When we see some of those issues surrounding it, that is one example that has brought a whole host of opportunities for us to debate within this place, and of course, different committees are doing good work on that. I know the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs has also had that chance.

I would suggest there is an important dynamic here that cannot be lost in the midst of it. While there is the impact that it has upon the privileges we have in this place, and the Speaker highlighted that within his ruling, but beyond that, it has a specific and very significant impact on diaspora communities who might be impacted.

Take the three examples I listed earlier, when it comes to my personal connection. Whether it is supporting Ukraine, being a supporter of the state of Israel or taking a strong stance in support of Taiwan, those are things I can do as a parliamentarian, and I willingly take those positions and present that to the Canadian people. Certainly, it is justified to make sure that I can do that freely and fairly within this place.

However, I would encourage the Speaker and all those participating in this debate to consider the impact that has on regular Canadians, those who are not protected by the same rights and privileges we have in this place, those of Chinese origin, those of Ukrainian origin, and those who are connected with Israel and who might be

Jewish. I would suggest that part of the reason we need to take this so seriously and to make sure all Canadians, whether they take a seat in this place, which I am proud to be doing, or whether it be a new Canadian who deserves to be protected and to have their government take it seriously, is that there is the potentiality and a real significant threat that they would try to be influenced, manipulated or coerced by a hostile foreign state actor.

My colleague who spoke earlier talked about this, and we have heard this a number of times this evening. There has been a host of examples of that, and one example would be those police stations, some of which may still be operating. At first, when I started receiving correspondence based on some initial media reports, I thought that this cannot be real. I thought that this cannot be happening in our country, yet we have learned not only that it is happening, but also that there was an unserious response to it.

When it comes to some of the foreign election interference, again, one thinks that we guard our democracies. That is key to who we are as Canadians. We are proud of that democratic legacy, and I talk often about this, that dates back to the foundation of the Westminster system. We see that over the last two elections, there was a concerted effort by hostile foreign states to impact the results of the election. Again, we see a government that did not take that seriously.

There is the potentiality of threat to Canadians' personal information, and that impacts every segment of our society, our economy and the ability for Canadians to go about their daily lives. In fact, I would encourage members in this place to consider some very developing news from Premier Eby of British Columbia. He made an announcement earlier this evening that there was a sophisticated cyber-attack levelled against the B.C. government. While there are not extensive details yet, I am sure we will learn those in the coming days. The fact is that we have one of 10 Canadian provinces facing a cyber-attack and that it was called "sophisticated" by the Premier of British Columbia. It sounds like, and I hope, certainly, that British Columbians' data was protected.

● (2350)

We see that these are very real and present threats to how Canadians live their daily lives. In light of the privilege debate, which is very important because it is key to our ability to operate as a democracy, I would encourage us to take seriously how this impacts regular Canadians who are not given the same rights and protections that we are as MPs, who do not have the infrastructure or the ability to appeal to a Speaker, to see the issue studied in a report and brought back. It is a regular Canadian who may now be questioning the email they sent criticizing the regime where a family member may still live and what that impact might have on them or whether somebody could be listening. There are so many unanswered questions.

What I have been frustrated with since being elected to Parliament is how the current government does not seem to take that seriously. In the few minutes that I have remaining, I would suggest that the trend of the government only responding to serious issues when pushed to the point where it has become public is simply not good enough.

We see this time and time again. We see this with the example of my former Conservative colleague, Kenny Chiu. He brought forward a private member's bill on a foreign agent registry. It was criticized significantly by other parties. They said it was unnecessary. It was a significant and maybe the contributing factor to his electoral defeat, yet now we have a bill brought forward by the government, after there has been so much scrutiny, that is functionally very similar to what Mr. Chiu proposed more than two years ago.

I think that this is a clear example of how not treating seriously the demands of government is leading Canadians to not only lose trust in their institutions but to lose trust in the government's ability to keep them safe.

As was highlighted in some of the conversations surrounding the fact of how we learned about this, there is no question that the American intelligence infrastructure is probably the most sophisticated and well funded in the history of the planet, but that does not excuse our need, whether it is as a Five Eyes partner, a member of NATO or a G7 country, to be at the front of ensuring that not only are we protecting Canadians but that we also are doing everything we can with the tools available to us to make sure that MPs, senators, in the case of the prima facie breach of privilege, and, further, all Canadians can trust that they will be protected by their government.

What I would suggest is that we need a very serious response to this. What Conservatives have advocated for all along, and this goes back long before I was elected, is to make sure that we take these threats and concerns very seriously and to treat them with the gravity that they deserve, so that parliamentarians are freely able to do their work.

• (2355)

I know I heard my colleague from Calgary Midnapore talking about the questions she was asking as soon as she learned about

Privilege

when this attack might have taken place. There was a host of questions: What was she talking about back in January 2021 and all of these things?

To find out almost two years later about these things speaks to a trend that is very concerning and one that shows, certainly, a lack of trust in the current government, the Prime Minister and the security process. It was highlighted earlier how there is conflicting testimony from the Prime Minister himself, who says that he does not read reports and just gets high-level briefings, and his chief of staff, who says that he reads everything.

These are the sorts of things that Canadians may not be seized with on a daily basis, but it speaks to a trend of how concerning the lack of response is.

As I close my speech, I would simply say this: I would encourage all members of this place to vote in favour to ensure that this goes to the procedure and House affairs committee and gets the attention that it deserves, not simply for MPs and senators and parliamentarians, but to show all Canadians that the pinnacle of Canada's democratic institutions takes our security and their security seriously, because we have not seen that thus far under the Liberal government.

• (2400)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: It being midnight, pursuant to order made Wednesday, February 28, the House stands adjourned until later this day at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12 a.m.)

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