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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 3, 2021

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)
[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 12 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

NATIONAL PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY ACT

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-306, An Act respecting the development of a national perinatal mental health strategy.

He said: Mr. Speaker, today I am honoured to introduce the national perinatal mental health strategy act. I would like to thank the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona for seconding this legislation and her tireless advocacy in support of perinatal mental health. This bill is a result of the vision of a bright, young woman from my riding, Mila Micovic, from Gladstone Secondary. Mila was one of two winners of my 2020 "Create your Canada" contest held in high schools across Vancouver Kingsway.

In Canada, 20% of women and 10% of men suffer from perinatal mental illness and rates during COVID have doubled. Addressing the psychosocial needs of families to enhance mental and parental health disparities is a major public health issue. This legislation would require the Minister of Health to develop a national strategy to support perinatal mental health across Canada. The strategy must include measures to provide universal access to perinatal mental health screening and effective treatment services, combat stigma, promote awareness, improve training, support research and address the social determinants of perinatal mental health.

I call on all parliamentarians to help all parents and their families by supporting this vital initiative.

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

* * *

CANADA LABOUR CODE

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-307, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (bereavement leave).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am tabling this piece of legislation, thanks to my colleague from Manitoba for seconding it. It is very simple. It would provide eight weeks of unpaid leave under the Canada Labour Code for parents who lose a child under 18, as well as for parents who lose a child over 18, where they qualified for the caregiver tax credit as a dependent person with a disability. It would also apply to those who experience a stillbirth after 20 weeks or a child up to the age of 18. It would use the definition that the provinces have standardized across all provinces in Canada.

In Canada, the current bereavement system does not apply to dads and moms. Quite a few of my colleagues have suffered the loss of a child. I have suffered the loss of a child. The member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley also did not too long ago, as well as the member for Edmonton Centre, the member for Flamborough—Glanbrook and the member for Calgary Signal Hill. I am sure if we canvass the chamber, we will find many members who have experienced this loss in their lives.

The system that currently exists is deeply unfair to fathers and mothers who have suffered the loss of a child. The bereavement system in Canada needs to be fair, simple and compassionate.

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

* * *

• (1010)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and if you seek it, I think you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion. I move:

Routine Proceedings

That a take-note debate, on the subject of members not seeking re-election to the 44th Parliament be held, pursuant to Standing Order 53.1, on Tuesday, June 15, 2021, and that, notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House:

(a) no member may speak for longer than 10 minutes and the speeches not be subject to a question and comment period, provided that members rising to speak may indicate to the Chair that they will be dividing his or her time with another member, and

(b) no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair.

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

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

I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

VICTIMS BILL OF RIGHTS

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased today to rise in this virtual House to present petition e-3319, with well over 4,000 signatures in a very short time.

The petition calls on the government to amend the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights and establish a committee to review the bill further.

I want to recognize the hard work and advocacy of Jennifer Neville-Lake, who initiated this particular petition, as well as Louise Russo, who has worked for years and years on the issue of victims of crime and changes.

The Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, in her 2020 progress report, indicated that the objectives set out in the act have not been met and that the act falls far short of delivering the real rights it promised. As well, the Department of Justice, in its 2019 report, found that victims often feel revictimized, and acknowledged in the report that major changes are needed to support the rights of victims, survivors and their families.

I want to recognize all of those who signed this petition. My thoughts and prayers are with all of the families who have clearly suffered immensely, and hope we can see positive change in the future in regard to the lives of the victims of crime.

TRAVEL ADVISERS

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have three very important petitions to present, all of which have been signed by independent travel advisers in Regina and the surrounding area.

The pandemic has hit few sectors harder than the air travel sector, and that includes the important role played by independent travel advisers. These petitions call on the government to address their concerns in several different ways.

The first petition calls on the House of Commons to ensure that any financial assistance to airlines and their subsidiary travel com-

panies will be conditional on the protection of travel adviser commissions and to ensure any commissions that have already been clawed back will be repaid in a timely manner.

The second petition calls for sector-specific funding for independent travel advisers and the extension of the qualifications of the regional relief and recovery fund in urban areas to include sole proprietors.

Finally, the third petition calls for the extension of the Canada recovery benefit for independent travel advisers to six months past the lifting of all travel advisories and to maintain the CRB at the current amount for this sector.

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to present these three petitions this morning.

UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to present petition e-2555, signed by over 1,000 Canadians from coast to coast.

These Canadians call on the federal government to put in place a basic income for all Canadians. These Canadians also note that we already have in place a universal basic income that goes to seniors, the old age security. They note as well with COVID we have seen the kind of economic devastation that comes from not having in place a basic income threshold.

These citizens of Canada call on the House of Commons to extend on a permanent basis a new all-age security that is fixed annually at the dollar amount that exceeds the poverty income level. It would make a big difference in Canada.

MILITARY SERVICE MEDAL

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of thousands of Canadians, it is my honour to present this petition initiated by David Palmer.

The Canadian Volunteer Service Medal recognized veterans serving 547 consecutive days between September 3, 1939 to March 31, 1947. Now there is no such medal.

The petition calls upon the Government of Canada to create a new medal to honour and include Canadian veterans who honourably served our nation, completing 547 days of uninterrupted honourable duty between September 2, 1945 to the present, by issuing a new and inclusive Canadian military service medal to recognize their service.

The creation of a military service medal would bring recognition, inclusiveness and remembrance for all veterans.

● (1015)

OKAVANGO DELTA

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to present petition e-3256. It is signed by nearly 900 Canadians who are calling for the House of Commons to act and ensure action in the case of an unprecedented threat to the Okavango Delta region in Africa. This region is on the border of Namibia and Botswana.

A Canadian company based in Vancouver called ReconAfrica has permits to explore over six million acres for oil and gas. The petitioners note it is of particular importance to the San people, the indigenous people of the region. It is a UNESCO world heritage site because of the extraordinary biodiversity found within the region, particularly on the Botswana side of the border.

The petitioners call for the House of Commons to ensure adequate funding to the new office of the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise, to ensure a full investigation. There are many allegations of abuse for the people of the delta. The concern extends to the disruptive oil and gas activity, which includes potential fracking. The petition is urgent.

I would note for members as a side note, not in the petition, but the Canadian business pages of *The Globe and Mail* this weekend had a big exposé on this issue. This petition obviously predates that media coverage but this being an e-petition, it will be the one time that I am able to present it on behalf of the petitioners.

I hope the Speaker will accept that I have tried to summarize a much longer petition on a very urgent matter, so that we ensure that Canadian companies overseas do not violate the human rights of the San people, nor the extraordinary biodiversity of this region.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise and present petition 432-01021. It is concerning all of our responsibility to address the climate crisis and to think about the generations to come.

Considering the last protected intact old-growth valley on Southern Vancouver Island, Fairy Creek, is slated for logging, along with the upper Walbran Valley and other remaining pockets of old growth, the undersigned citizens and residents of Canada call upon the government to work with the provinces and first nations to immediately halt logging of endangered old-growth ecosystems; fund the long-term protection of old-growth ecosystems as a priority for Canada's climate action plan and reconciliation with indigenous peoples; support value-added forestry initiatives in partnership with first nations to ensure Canada's forestry industry is sustainable, and based on the harvesting of second- and third-growth forests; ban the export of raw logs and maximize resource use for local jobs; and ban the use of whole trees for wood pellet biofuel production.

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as we know, volunteer firefighters account for 83% of Canada's total firefighting essential first responders. I am honoured to table this petition on behalf of petitioners from Parksville, Qualicum and Coombs in my riding.

Petitioners cite that 8,000 essential search and rescue volunteers respond to thousands of incidents every year. The tax code of Canada currently allows volunteer firefighters and search and rescue volunteers to claim a \$3,000 tax credit if 200 volunteer hours are completed in a calendar year. This works out to a mere \$450 per year, which we allow these essential volunteers to keep of their own income from their regular jobs and small businesses. That is about \$2.25 an hour. If they volunteer more than 200 hours, which many do, this tax credit becomes even less. Obviously, these volun-

Routine Proceedings

teers not only put their lives on the line and give their time, training and efforts to Canadians, but they also allow cities and municipalities to keep property taxes lower than if paid services were required.

They are calling on the Government of Canada to support private members' bill, Bill C-264, and increase the tax exemption from \$3,000 to \$10,000 for line 31220 in the tax code to help our essential volunteer firefighters and volunteer search and rescue people across Canada.

● (1020)

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES VETERANS

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased and proud to present petition e-3217. On this, the 30th anniversary of the Persian Gulf War, the liberation of Kuwait, we recognize the contributions of Canadian Armed Forces veterans by sponsoring petition e-3217 to reclassify the mission from “special duty service” to “wartime service”. In doing so, the Government of Canada can care for our proud, injured equally and commemorate the active service of our proud Canadian veterans.

On a personal note, I want to thank all those who serve and who have served our country. On behalf of a grateful nation, I thank them.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 623 and 626 to 628.

[Text]

Question No. 623—**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:**

With regard to contracts entered into between the Leaders' Debates Commission and the GreenPAC Future Fund since January 1, 2019: (a) what are the details of all contracts including (i) the date signed, (ii) the original contract value, (iii) the final contract value, if different than the original value, (iv) the start and end date, (v) the specific goods or services provided, (vi) whether the contract was sole-sourced or competitively bid; and (b) in the interest of neutrality, does the Leader's Debates Commission have a policy against entering into contracts with registered third parties, and, if so, why was such a policy not applied when awarding the contracts in (a)?

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to contracts entered into between the Leaders' Debates Commission, or LDC, and the GreenPAC Future Fund since January 1, 2019, the response from LDC is as follows. The response to (a) is as follows: (i) October 3, 2019; (ii) \$26,500; (iii) \$26,500; (iv) October 3, 2019 – March 31, 2020; (v) The contractor provided services to contribute to the LDC's evaluation of the leaders' debates organized by the commission, and to the commission's report to Parliament. In particular, the contractor was mandated to design, implement and distribute surveys for local debate organizers and for local debate attendees. These surveys included questions relating to respondents' views on the local debates, as well as the national leaders' debates; (vi) sole-sourced.

In response to (b), the commission does not have a policy against entering into contracts with registered third parties. The fact that an organization has a contractual arrangement with the commission for specific deliverables does not impede its ability to register under the Canada Elections Act. The contractor was required to adhere to the Government of Canada's definition of non-partisan communications in the carrying out of the contract deliverables.

The commission's decision-making is guided by the pursuit of public interest and by the principles of independence, impartiality, transparency, credibility, democratic citizenship, civic education, inclusion and cost-effectiveness.

Question No. 626—Mr. Mark Strahl:

With regard to the implementation of amendments to the Canada Labour Code adopted by the adoption of Bill C-65, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (harassment and violence), the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act and the Budget Implementation Act, 2017, No. 1, and broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity: (a) has an harassment policy compliant with the Canada Labour Code, as it applied on January 1, 2021, and the Work Place Harassment and Violence Prevention Regulations been developed and, if so, on what date; and (b) if the response in (a) is negative, or if the date in (a) is after January 1, 2021, why was the deadline not met?

Mr. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and to the Minister of Digital Government, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, TBS released the new "Directive on the Prevention and Resolution of Workplace Harassment and Violence", available at <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=32671>, in December 2020 in line with recent changes to the Canada Labour Code that apply to all federally regulated workplaces. The comprehensive directive requires organizations to better prevent and respond to harassment, and to provide support to those affected by harassment and violence in the federal public service. It also requires organizations to investigate, record and report all complaints of harassment and violence within their organizations.

As heads of their organizations, deputy ministers are responsible for the safety and well-being of their employees, including developing targeted policies on workplace harassment and violence that meet the standards set out in the Treasury Board directive, and that respond to Canada Labour Code regulations. Deputy ministers also implement these policies within their organizations, in line with their operational contexts.

TBS has been working with organizations to support the updating of each organization's policies on workplace harassment and violence to meet those requirements outlined in the new Treasury Board directive and to respond to recent changes to the Canada Labour Code. Many organizations are reporting that they have implemented key elements of this new directive in their organizations, including updating their departmental policies and processes to receive new complaints and identifying new training for employees.

Question No. 627—Ms. Rachael Harder:

With regard to consultations by the Department of Canadian Heritage and reports that the government refused to give media outlets copies of consultation reports related to Bill C-10, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts: (a) why did the government refuse to give media outlets copies of the consultation reports; (b) who made the decision in (a), and how is that in keeping with the Prime Minister's promise of an "open and transparent" government; and (c) what are the details of all consultations the government made with stakeholders or the public related to the proposals in Bill C-10, including the (i) date, (ii) type of consultation (phone, request for written feedback, etc.), (iii) individual or organization consulted, (iv) summary of comments or feedback?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), as of April 16, 2021, Canadian Heritage has not received any media requests for consultation reports.

With regard to part (b), as of April 16, 2021, Canadian Heritage has not received any media requests for consultation reports.

With regard to part (c), Canadian Heritage consults with a wide range of stakeholders when developing policies and legislation. With respect to Bill C-10, the government completed broad consultations to inform the development of the proposed bill.

In the autumn of 2016, Canadian Heritage consulted with stakeholders across the country on supporting Canadian content in the digital era. The results from those consultations can be found at www.canada.ca/en/services/culture/consultations.html

In October of 2017, the Governor in Council requested that the CRTC create a report on the future of distribution models for broadcasting. The CRTC's notice of consultation can be found at <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2017/2017-359.htm> and the final report titled "Harnessing Change" can be found at <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/publications/s15/>

In 2018, the government appointed the broadcasting and telecommunications legislative review panel to study Canada's communications legislation. The panel extensively consulted Canadians and over 2,000 parties submitted their views. Further information on the panel and its final report can be found at www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/110.nsf/eng/home

Routine Proceedings

Following the publication of the panel's report in January 2020, the minister and the department engaged with many stakeholders on the panel's recommendations through various mechanisms, such as individual stakeholder meetings and roundtables.

Stakeholder engagement included creative industry associations, such as the Canadian Media Producers Association, CMPA, Association québécoise de la production médiatique, AQPM, Writers Guild of Canada, Coalition pour la diversité des expressions culturelles and the Motion Picture Association of Canada. It included large Canadian broadcasters and media groups, such as Quebecor, Bell Media, Rogers Media, Corus, Shaw and CBC/Radio-Canada. It included independent Canadian radio and television broadcasters, such as OutTV, Knowledge Network, Zoomer Media and CHEK TV. It included indigenous media organizations, such as APTN and Indigenous Screen Office. It included global media and technology companies, such as Netflix, Google/YouTube, Facebook and Amazon. It included funding organizations, such as Canada Media Fund and Creative BC. It included provinces and territories, and the Government of the United States of America.

Question No. 628—Mr. David Sweet:

With regard to the official position of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada that 37 percent of rural households in Canada have access to 50/10 megabits per second (Mbps) internet speeds: what is the actual proportion of rural households that do not have access to the 50/10 Mbps speeds that are claimed to be provided?

Ms. Gudie Hutchings (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is making significant investments to ensure that all Canadians have access to the Internet speeds they need, no matter where they live in Canada.

In the past, broadband funding programs have targeted Internet speeds of 5/1 Mbps, which are the speeds necessary for single users and basic Internet usage. In 2019, 91.7% of rural residents had access to these speeds. However, demand for data and speeds has changed over time, especially as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission's, CRTC, current definition of broadband Internet is 50 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload as this is the speed that allows multiple users to undertake more data-intensive applications, such as streaming, at the same time. In 2019, only 37% of rural households had access to 50/10 Mbps unlimited. However by 2020, 50/10 Mbps was available to 45.6% of the population in rural areas. This was an improvement of nearly 10% in one year. This was achieved through a commitment to improve broadband from the federal government as well as the provinces, territories, Internet service providers and other partners.

The government recognizes that there is more work to be done to bridge the digital divide between urban and rural areas. Budget 2021 provides an additional \$1 billion over six years, starting in 2021-22, to the universal broadband fund, UBF, bringing the fund to \$2.75 billion to support a more rapid rollout of broadband projects. This is the largest investment in broadband in Canada's history. The government's investments will connect 98% of Canadians across the country to high-speed Internet by 2026, with the goal of connecting all Canadians by 2030. Recognizing the need for accelerated connectivity as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the

UBF also accepted applications under a rapid response stream, RRS. RRS allocates \$150 million to shovel-ready projects that will connect many rural and remote Canadians by the end of 2021. Announcements of successful recipients for the rapid response stream of the UBF are already under way. As of May 20, 2021, nearly \$47 million in funding has been announced to connect over 30,000 households through RRS. The government has also announced an agreement with the province of Quebec to connect up to 150,000 households by the end of 2022. This agreement, known as Operation High Speed, is made possible through a shared investment of \$826 million.

Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, ISED, and CRTC work collaboratively to actively maintain coverage maps and databases that provide a comprehensive understanding of the availability of telecommunications networks across Canada. In recent years, ISED and the CRTC have made significant improvements in the granularity of the broadband coverage information that is made available to the public. For example, household coverage data is now displayed along 250-metre road segments. These searchable maps and the underlying data for download can be found online at the National Broadband Internet Service Availability Map. Should discrepancies be noted, users should first contact the Internet service provider in question for initial verification. Once done, and if the information does appear to be inadequate, users can contact ISED for more information on next steps.

In addition, there are various tools available to Canadians that provide the ability to test their home Internet connections to ensure that they are getting what they are paying for. However, certain factors such as distance to the test server and strength of the in-home Wi-Fi signal, if connecting wirelessly, can impact these test results. The CRTC is currently undertaking a study on the performance of broadband sold to Canadians. More information is available at <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/publications/reports/rp200601/rp200601.htm>.

Canadians who are concerned that they are not getting the Internet speeds that they pay for can bring their concerns to the attention of the Commissioner for Complaints for Telecom-Television Services, CCTS. This independent organization has been established to provide consumers and small businesses with recourse when they are unable to resolve disagreements with their telecommunications service providers. For more information concerning the CCTS, including how to file a complaint, Canadians can visit the CCTS website at www.ccts-cprst.ca or call toll-free at 1-888-221-1687.

Business of Supply

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the government's response to Questions Nos. 622, 624 and 625 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

[Translation]

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 622—**Mr. Marty Morantz:**

With regard to expenditures on consulting by the government since January 1, 2016, broken down by year and by department, agency or other government entity: (a) what was the total amount spent on (i) training consultants (code 0446), (ii) information technology and telecommunications consultants (code 0473), (iii) management consulting (code 0491), (iv) other types of consultants or consulting, broken down by type and object code; and (b) for each response in (a), what is the total value of the expenditures that were awarded (i) competitively, (ii) sole-sourced?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 624—**Mr. Mark Strahl:**

With regard to government statistics on telecommunications, including Statistics Canada: (a) what is the total and mean GDP impact arising from rural communities and remote indigenous communities' broadband connectivity, broken down by per capita and per community; and (b) what percentage of the spectrum from the (i) AWS-1, (ii) AWS-3, (iii) 600 MHz bands, that have been auctioned off to telecommunications providers remains unused (A) overall, (B) in urban and suburban areas, (C) in rural areas?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 625—**Mr. Mark Strahl:**

With regard to amendments to the Canada Labour Code that expand the application of the Code to cover ministerial staff and their employer, adopted in Bill C-65, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (harassment and violence), the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act and the Budget Implementation Act, 2017, No. 1, and broken down by minister's office, including the Office of the Prime Minister: (a) has each minister's office developed a harassment policy compliant with the Canada Labour Code, as it applied on January 1, 2021, and the Work Place Harassment and Violence Prevention Regulations; (b) on what date was each policy listed in (a) adopted; (c) if the response in (a) is negative, or if the response in (b) is a date after January 1, 2021, why was the deadline not met; (d) does each minister's office have (i) a health and safety representative, (ii) a work place health and safety committee, and, if so, who are they, identified by title; (e) has a work place assessment, required by section 5 of the Work Place Harassment and Violence Prevention Regulations, been conducted in each minister's office and, if so, on what date; (f) have work place risk factors been identified in each minister's office and, if so, (i) on what date, (ii) what risk factors were identified; (g) if the answer in (f) is negative, why have they not been identified; (h) has each minister, including the Prime Minister, taken the employer training required by subsection 12(6) of the Work Place Harassment and Violence Prevention Regulations and, if so, on what date; (i) if the response in (h) is negative, is the minister or Prime Minister currently scheduled to take the training and, if so, on what date; (j) who is the "designated recipient", appointed under section 14 of the Work Place Harassment and Violence Prevention Regulations, for each minister's office, including the Prime Minister's office; and (k) has a list of persons who may act as investigators been developed or identified under paragraph 27(1)(a) of the Work Place Harassment and Violence Prevention Regulations for each minister's office, including the Prime Minister's office, and, if so, who is on the list?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1025)

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**OPPOSITION MOTION—ACTION TOWARD RECONCILIATION WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP) moved:

That, given that,

- (i) the discovery of the grave of 215 children at Kamloops Indian Residential School has led to an outpouring of grief and anger across Canada,
- (ii) the vast majority of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action remain uncompleted, despite the clear path to justice and reconciliation that the Commission provides,
- (iii) survivors, families and nations are demanding concrete action to advance real reconciliation, as opposed to just more words and symbolic gestures,

the House call on the government to:

- (a) cease its belligerent and litigious approach to justice for Indigenous children by immediately dropping its appeal before the Federal Court in file numbers T-1621-19 (compensation) and T-1559-20 (Jordan's Principle for non-status First Nations kids recognized by their nations) and to recognize the government's legal obligation to fully comply with Canadian Human Rights Tribunal orders in this regard;
- (b) agree to sit down with the St. Anne's residential school survivors organization Peetabeck Keway Keykaywin Association to find a just solution to the fact that survivors' access to justice has been denied as a consequence of the actions of government lawyers in suppressing evidence at the Independent Assessment Process;
- (c) accelerate the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action, including by providing immediate funding for further investigation into the deaths and disappearances of children at residential schools in compliance with calls to action 71 to 76;
- (d) provide survivors, their families, and their communities with appropriate resources to assist with the emotional, physical, spiritual, mental, and cultural trauma resulting from residential schools; and
- (e) within 10 days, table a progress report on actions taken in compliance with paragraphs (a) through (d) of the present motion, and that this report be deemed to have been referred to the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs for consideration upon tabling.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

I come to the House from the unceded territories of the Algonquin nation. I rise today to present our opposition day motion in this House to call on the Liberal government to do the work that it has delayed for so long.

Business of Supply

The discovery at a former residential school in Kamloops was shocking and horrifying. It was a moment when Canadians, people across this country, came together and looked in horror at what Canada has done, and is continuing to do, to indigenous people. When 215 little kids, indigenous children, were found buried at that school, Canadians were shocked. They were shocked because this was clearly not a school. This was clearly not a place of education. This was an institution designed, clearly, to eliminate indigenous people.

In this moment, Canadians across the country have participated in memorials, placing children's shoes at various places, to reflect on what this means. What does it mean that 215 children were buried without letting their families know, that these children were stripped from their parents, stripped of their language, their identity, their sense of self, taken to an institution and then killed there? What does this leave in terms of a legacy? What does this mean about Canada? What does this mean about our country?

People are asking these questions. People are wondering how it is possible that this could happen to little kids, how this could happen to children. People are now demanding more than just condolences. The broad consensus among people is that it is not good enough for the Liberal government to just express sadness and grieving. This is an opportunity, a moment that demands action and justice. The only response to this horrific discovery is a commitment to justice today.

What I find incredibly hypocritical and, more important than me, what indigenous people and people across Canada find hypocritical is that on the one hand we have a Prime Minister who could stand in this House and at a press conference and say that he is sorry or express condolences about this horrific discovery, but in the very same breath be ordering lawyers to fight indigenous kids in court.

It is not just fighting these kids in court. These kids were the subject matter of a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal hearing, and that tribunal made very clear orders on the government, stating that they were clearly unjustly denied equal funding, and that there needs to be a remedy. The government is not just fighting indigenous kids in court; it is fighting a human rights tribunal decision that states that these kids deserve equal funding.

How hypocritical is it? How flagrant is this denial of justice, when on the one hand the Prime Minister and the Liberal government claim to care about indigenous kids who lost their lives in a residential school and in the same breath are fighting them in court? On top of that, this very same Prime Minister and the Liberal government are fighting residential school survivors in court.

People ask the questions, "What can we do? What can we do to move forward on reconciliation? What can we do to move forward to achieve justice for indigenous people?" One very concrete, clear step would be for the government to stop fighting indigenous people in court. That is a concrete step that it could take right now.

What has become very clear is that symbolic gestures are not good enough. We need concrete action.

• (1030)

[*Translation*]

I rise in the House to ask the Liberal government to do the work it has put off for far too long.

The discovery of 215 children buried at the site of the Kamloops residential school shocked the country. Families, indigenous communities and people all over the country are mourning the loss of these children.

This discovery is further proof of genocidal acts in Canada. Residential schools were designed to kill indigenous people, to kill the Indian in the child, and to take away their language, culture, traditions and, ultimately, their lives.

The survivors, families and nations demand that beyond the symbolic gestures, concrete measures be taken to move toward meaningful reconciliation.

[*English*]

What happened and what is happening to indigenous people can be described by no other word than one of the harshest: It is a genocide. It is clear. All of the elements of a genocide are present. The actions taken by the Canadian government have been designed to destroy a people, to eliminate a people.

In light of this discovery, in light of this clear decision by Canada to eliminate a people, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission lays out a path to justice, a real path to justice, a path that the Prime Minister committed to implementing entirely. Six years of Liberal government, six years of the Prime Minister being in power, and only a fraction of those 94 calls to action have been implemented. That is simply wrong.

We know that the government is delaying, because we see the difference in action, in priority, when the Liberals care about something. When they want something to happen, they move quickly. We saw the government move incredibly quickly, incredibly fast to deliver financial backing for banks at the beginning of this pandemic right away. There was no question, no hesitation. Massive sums of money were used to back up banks immediately without any hesitation. Where was that same commitment to indigenous people?

Commitments were made by the Prime Minister in 2015, and six years later, a fraction of those calls to action were implemented. On top of that, what people find very cynical is that while in 2019 a promise was made to ensure that any indigenous community that needed financial support for closure, to search for additional burial sites, would receive funding, two years later, nothing happened until this horrible discovery, and then the government decided to act. While it is important to act, it makes people feel very cynical about a government that makes a promise two years ago and does nothing until it is pressured by this horrific discovery.

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I want to lay out, in my remaining minute and a half, what we are asking for. We are asking for the government to take concrete steps, not symbolic gestures, real steps: end the legal battles against children who are simply entitled to basic human rights and dignity, end the legal battles against survivors of residential schools, put in place an accelerated plan to deliver action on all 94 calls to action. We want to see priority given to those. We want to see supports for people who are survivors of residential schools and their communities. We want to see a progress report tabled within 10 days to see that the government is actually following up.

What we saw in Kamloops, which has shocked this entire country and left people reeling, is something that should be a moment for us to take action. It is not enough to lower the flags at half-mast. It is not enough to express condolences when the government has the power to act. In this case, action means justice for indigenous people. We have laid out the course for immediate action to walk that path.

• (1035)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the leader of the NDP for bringing forward this motion today so we can have a very important discussion about a very important topic.

Admittedly, I do not know the intricacies of the legal dispute that is going on. I am not aware of what those are exactly. I note that the member did not reference them in his speech. I would like to understand what the legal challenge is that the member is essentially asking to be dropped. I am wondering if he could inform the House.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, one of the pre-eminent reputable bodies in this country, lays out a path for what human rights are and how those decisions are made.

The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal made a number of decisions that clearly stated that Canada was not equally funding indigenous children and that the government should comply with the ruling of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. Instead of complying with that order, the Liberal government and this Prime Minister are fighting those kids, those who were denied equal funding, in court.

There is currently a court date set in two weeks. The Prime Minister has given orders to the government lawyers to fight these children in court. We are asking the Prime Minister to call off those lawyers and stop fighting those kids in court.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, clearly this is an important supply day motion, and we will be voting for it, of course. This is completely consistent with what our party has been calling for as well.

The timing today is certainly momentous. We are on the anniversary date of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and only a few days out from the sixth anniversary of the tabling of the report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, so I thank my hon. colleague for bringing this forward.

I would put to my hon. colleague, if he would agree that, as my own MLA, who is the Green MLA for Saanich North and the Is-

lands, Adam Olsen, said in the B.C. legislature, the reason we have not acted is that, in this country, as horrible as it is to recognize it, “some children matter less.”

I ask the hon. member if he agrees.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, sadly, we can go even further and say that some lives matter less. That is the reality. That is what we are up against. That is fundamentally the inherent problem. That is why there is inherently so much injustice against indigenous people. It is because indigenous lives have mattered less in this country, and they continue to matter less.

That is why the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls delivered specific calls for justice. That is why the Truth and Reconciliation Commission made its calls to action. It has been so clear that indigenous lives have not mattered in this country. We are demanding that these lives matter, and we are demanding justice.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the leader of the NDP for his speech and for proposing, on behalf of his party, that a day of debate be held regarding the residential schools tragedy.

Like many members of the House, my riding is home to an indigenous community that I am very proud to represent here in the House, the Wendake community. Beyond that, this is an issue that affects all Canadians. All Canadians were deeply disturbed to learn of this discovery, which reminds us that the history of our country is, unfortunately, not always glorious.

The Vancouver archbishop announced today that he is committed to co-operating in every way and to making public all of the essential documents in order to establish the identity of the children who were found in mass graves.

Does the leader of the NDP agree with that? Does he, like the Vancouver archbishop mentioned, want all Catholic bishops across Canada to work together in good faith toward reconciliation?

• (1040)

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, of course we want the communities and families to have access to all of the necessary documents to identify their loved ones. It is essential that the church work with the families and give them access to the documents. To date, the families have not had access to the documents, which is unfair. One of the calls to action calls upon the church to apologize, and it is important that the church do so.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to be here representing the people of Timmins—James Bay, which is in Treaty 9 territory.

I am also devastated to be here in the wake of the discovery of the hidden graves. Canada as a nation was stunned by the discovery, but indigenous communities were not surprised. The trauma and grief that exist in these communities are the result of systemic policies that destroyed indigenous families and children in Canada. It is a genocidal policy, and it must change.

[English]

Mass graves are something we think about when we hear of Iraq, Yugoslavia or the so-called bloodlands of eastern Europe, but we have our mass graves here in Canada, the result of the war to destroy the indigenous people. It is not a historic grievance. The government will always tell us about historic wrongs. We are talking about the unbroken line that goes on to today.

I think, coming from the Catholic faith that I grew up in, of the fact that these children were buried without dignity or names. They were not statistics; they were children. They were loved, and they deserved better from this country.

I think of John Kioki, age 14, who never came home. His family still asks me where their uncle is. Where is he? Michel Matinas, age 11, never came home, as well as Michael Sutherland, age 13. The Oblates, who ran Kamloops residential school, also ran St. Anne's residential school, and they told the RCMP that the boys went missing. People know better; they know those boys are buried out there.

I think of Charlie Hunter, age 13. The church would not send his body home. The government would not send his body home. For 37 years, his beautiful family struggled to get Charlie home, and the Canadian people, in one week, raised the money necessary to get Charlie home. It was a beautiful thing. That is what we are calling for. We have to bring the children home.

More recently, Kanina Sue Turtle was 15. Amy Owen was 13. Courtney Scott from Fort Albany first nation was 16. Tammy Keeash, age 17, died in the broken, underfunded child welfare system. Jolynn Winter was 12. Chantel Fox was 12. The government was found culpable in their deaths at the human rights tribunal because it refuses to fund Jordan's principle.

We are not talking about technical matters. We are talking about the lives of children. These children have died under the watch of the government, and children have died year after year.

We lose a child every three days across this country to the broken welfare system. They die on a Monday. They die on a Wednesday. They die on a Saturday, and nobody at the provincial or federal level notices or gives a damn, but the families notice. There is the unbroken line in this war that takes us from the bodies at Kamloops residential school to the children who are being taken from their homes today, and who disappear into the gulag of hopelessness.

Members really have to talk to people who have been through this system that exists today. It will show them just how horrific it is. We are talking about systemic discrimination, systemic underfunding and the destruction of indigenous families. There is nothing theoretical here; this is lived in the lifeblood of families.

We are here today to say we have to stop the talk and start walking the walk, so we are asking for a couple of key things. The Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations has led a toxic legal war

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against the survivors of St. Anne's residential school. She has spent over \$3 million fighting survivors, who could not even pay their own bus fare to come down to the hearings. What were these hearings about? They were about the fact that government lawyers suppressed the evidence of the torture, rape and killing of children at St. Anne's residential school, and the government does not want to give these survivors justice.

• (1045)

Here are a few other names.

Father Jules Leguerrier is being defended by this government. When the government was supposed to give over the legal documents about the crimes of Father Jules Leguerrier, it presented a one-page person of interest report, which went to the hearings, and people's cases were thrown out. We know that Department of Justice lawyers were sitting on a person of interest report that was 3,191 pages long, and they suppressed that evidence.

The Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations needs to explain why she is defending the legacy of Father Leguerrier and not standing up for survivors such as Maria Sackanay or Edmund Metatawabin.

Father Arthur Lavoie was a notorious criminal pedophile. The government supplied the court hearings a person of interest report that was two pages long, suppressing all the dirt and evil that man did by sitting on a document of police evidence and witness testimony that was 2,472 pages long. I thank the OPP for the incredible work it did in identifying these perpetrators, but that minister is defending him today. For the Sister Anna Wesley person of interest report, they suppressed 6,804 pages.

I encourage people to read the minister's latest request for direction, or RFD, that she brought to court fighting the St. Anne's survivors. In it, she accuses Murray Sinclair, who led the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, of making her look bad, literally, because Murray Sinclair raised concerns about how the government suppressed evidence and had the St. Anne's cases thrown out.

The minister said, through her lawyers, that because Murray Sinclair told the public what was going on, he had "eroded public trust". She also said that he had harmed survivors. That minister has no business being here. She has to leave that seat. She has lied to the people of Canada, and it cannot go on.

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Let us talk about the court case of Cindy Blackstock. There were 19 non-compliance orders, and this could have been settled a long time ago when the hearings came down. The Human Rights Tribunal finally ordered the maximum compensation because it saw, and put in its findings, that this government was showing a willful and reckless disregard for the lives of the children, but the government would not negotiate and the government would not find a solution. The tribunal said that this was the worst-case scenario it had seen, and it had 19 rulings against this government.

The Minister of Indigenous Services said that it would be “lazy intellectually” for him to end the court case. I am amazed at those words: “lazy intellectually”. Is that the kind of lazy that happened when poor Devon Freeman ran away from his group home outside of Hamilton? He hung from a tree for six months right across the road, and nobody went to find him. Nobody went to find this boy. That is a kind of systemic laziness, yet the minister said that he would be lazy if he ended the systemic discrimination, the willful and reckless, worst-case scenario denial of basic rights.

This is not historic discrimination. This is an ongoing and willful attack. Canada has recognized that it is not the innocent nation it thought it was. Canada has recognized that we have to do right. This is the moment, and it is up to this government to show that it is willing to do right.

It has been three years since the House called on the Catholic Church to join us on the path of reconciliation, but it is still refusing. It is still refusing to turn over the documents and refusing to pay the money it is supposed to. The Pope is still not complying with the call to apologize because of the Catholic bishops in this country who are blocking him. We know that right now the Catholic Church is not playing its part in dealing with these crimes.

However, our role in the House is to say to this federal government that it and Canada are complicit in the crimes. It has to end. We are calling on this Prime Minister to end the legal battle against the children and to respect the ruling of the Human Rights Tribunal, which is not optional. Being found guilty of systemic discrimination is not something to opt in or out of; it is a finding and a ruling to which the government must respond.

● (1050)

We call on the minister of Crown services to stop her toxic war with the survivors of St. Anne's. She has never, ever called the survivors. She has never offered to sit down. They do not want big money; they want justice. They want her to admit that a wrong was done.

We need to end the toxic legal wars. We have to do it for the 215 children and for all the children we lose every third day in our country.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from the NDP for his impassionate yet disturbing reveal of the realities of our history. As he knows, we will be supporting this motion. It is long overdue that we provide an opportunity for indigenous people to be respected and treated like every other person in the country expects to be treated.

Given the actions our leader and our party have asked of the government, what one or two things does the member think are a prior-

ity, so we can start to deal the actions, not just the words, and immediately focus on them? We need to not only give the impression but we need to do something concrete to make a difference in the lives of indigenous peoples.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the support we will be receiving from my hon. colleague's party

The Prime Minister has ordered his lawyers to be in court in 10 days. The simplest thing is that the government could tell the lawyers that enough with the fighting and to sit down and negotiate. That would be step one.

With respect to the masquerades that we know are across the country, we need to see that expertise. Internationally, Canada has shown that expertise. We need to say to first nation communities that we will be there, that if there are masquerades in Saskatchewan, Alberta, Treaty 9 or anywhere, the government is ready to work with the communities to do this right.

We tried to find the bodies at St. Anne's, but when the police came, they only had rakes. They did not have the forensic tools. Once we identify those bodies, then we can bring those children home. The communities want that.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I also thank him for using this opposition day to talk about this important issue.

As a Canadian and as a Quebecker, I feel shame. As a mother, I feel pain. After the report was released in December 2015, the government leader said he would work in partnership with indigenous peoples.

In my colleague's opinion, why is this issue still before us five and a half years later?

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister said that this was the number one relationship, I believed him. I remember him at the truth and reconciliation, talking to the elders, and he wept. I wept with him. I thought he would do the right thing.

The very first conversation with the minister of Crown affairs, when she was made the minister, was about the survivors of St. Anne's. I said, “Let's sit down and fix this.” Since then, the government has gone to the lawyers and the courts.

The days of happy Liberal talk are over. We need action.

● (1055)

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his passion on this issue. Is he aware that the federal government did provide funding to the community in Kamloops so it could do the work? I think we are all saddened and outraged by what was found.

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The member mentioned the federal government should provide funding, so I wonder if he is aware that we did fund the search at Kamloops. We have told communities that we will work with them. I know the Six Nations near me has reached out to the federal government, asking for support. The federal government will be there for communities that want to do these searches.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I would ask my hon. colleague this. Is she aware that her government has spent over \$9 million fighting Cindy Blackstock in court? It spent over \$3 million going after the survivors of St. Anne's. I would think that money would be much better spent on reconciliation and building a better nation rather than being spent on lawyers and destroying the reputation of the Prime Minister. These actions are corrosive.

I ask my hon. colleague if the Liberals are going to support us. Will she ask the Prime Minister to, no matter what, stop the legal battle that will happen in the coming weeks and call the lawyers off? What is the value of a child's life? The government says 40,000 that it is not willing to pay. It destroyed the lives of these children. What is it going to pay?

Hon. Dan Vandal (Minister of Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am speaking from my office in Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, the homeland of the Métis nation, Treaty 1 territory, a city that is now home to many Inuit.

[*Translation*]

I will share my time with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, the member for Oakville North—Burlington.

[*English*]

Two days ago, in the House, we all came together as parliamentarians to express our devastation, heartbreak and outrage at the discovery of the remains of 215 children who were killed while attending the Kamloops Indian Residential School.

Canadians are rightfully outraged by the finding of this burial site, but this was not shocking to indigenous people. We have long known of the lost burial sites of loved ones. It is a reminder of the consequences of colonialism for indigenous people and our communities.

Yesterday, I, along with my colleagues, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and the Minister of Indigenous Services, announced that \$27 million funding would be distributed on an urgent basis. Our department has been engaging directly with indigenous communities across Canada on how best to support them in finding our lost children, including on how to access support from the federal government to do this. We continue to listen to survivors and families. We know these communities want this to be indigenous-led, based on their priorities, based on healing. Reconciliation is all about that.

[*Translation*]

This discovery has reopened the conversation on reconciliation in Canada, but let me be very clear. From day one, our government has continued to work to promote reconciliation in a tangible and respectful way. Correcting the mistakes of the past takes time and

can be extremely difficult, but it is the right thing to do. Our government will keep working on this.

Reconciliation is a complex and important process where every Canadian has a role to play. Reconciliation begins with respect, listening and working in partnership. We must respect cultures, our languages, traditions and the distinct identities of others in order to move forward.

Reconciliation is at the heart of today's debate. In 2015, the Prime Minister committed to fully implementing the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in partnership with the indigenous communities, the provinces and the territories. We remain determined to ensure that they are properly implemented.

● (1100)

[*English*]

Eighty per cent of the calls to action under federal or shared responsibility are either completed or well under way, and not all the calls to action will be easy to implement. We must not treat these calls to action as simply a checklist, but rather a true pathway to reconciliation. We must also recognize some of the calls to actions are outside of the jurisdiction of the federal government. That is why it is so important that we work in partnership with all orders of government, while always taking the lead of indigenous communities and nations in this work. It is absolutely vital to take a survivor-oriented approach to healing. We need to listen to survivors and their families when making decisions about reconciliation.

The abuse and forced assimilation have led to intergenerational trauma, which is the lasting legacy of the residential school system. By removing children from their traditional family structures and subjecting them to violence, abuse and forced assimilation into Euro-Canadian values, a cycle of abuse was created, which still affects indigenous families and communities today. It continues to affect my community, it continues to affect my friends. The abuse the children faced in residential schools is as undeniable; it is shockingly cruel. These young first nation, Inuit and Métis children deserve far more from our government; they deserved far more from Canada.

As a government, we are working to revitalize indigenous culture by empowering communities, by providing the necessary tools to indigenous people to learn about their own culture, language and traditional spiritual beliefs. Canada will provide the needed resources to support indigenous nations on their healing journey. In the coming months, our government will be working with survivors, their families, their communities and other partners to locate, identify and memorialize the missing children and their burial places.

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As previously mentioned, we have provided \$33.8 million to implement the TRC calls to action 72 to 76. We have funded the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to develop and maintain the national residential school student death registry and to establish and maintain an online registry of residential school cemeteries. We are engaging with first nation indigenous communities and will continue to do this work, but it must be led by the communities themselves and they must go at their pace. We as a government will be there to support these communities in their efforts through funding, but also through survivor and family mental health support.

• (1105)

The mistreatment of indigenous children in all residential schools, including those who attended St. Anne's Indian Residential School, was tragic and horrific. In order to restore confidence, rebuild trust and maintain the integrity of the process, the court has, at the request of the government, ordered that an independent, third-party review be conducted. Ninety-six percent of all claimants from the St. Anne's residential school have received compensation and are working collaboratively with the parties to obtain clarity from the courts on this matter. This third-party review will determine the additional compensation owed to survivors.

[*Translation*]

Throughout the process, Canada will provide additional resources for the survivors. We are in talks to determine the best way to provide support and we will be in contact with the St. Anne survivors' organization, including Peetabeck Keway Keykaywin, to talk about the necessary support.

We are definitely committed to reconciliation, justice and healing for the former students of St. Anne and every residential school.

[*English*]

I will just finish by acknowledging that this last week has been extremely difficult for many people: for Canadians, myself included. I have appreciated hearing from other members of the House over the last number of days the need to work together, to work collaboratively and to move forward on the shared path of reconciliation.

It is important that we continue to hear the stories of survivors and families, and remember those who were torn away and never returned home.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for his contribution to the debate today.

When I was first interacting with my constituents about the discovery at the residential school in Kamloops, the overwhelming response I received was a sense of impatience. People, 100%, now desire action over words. They are tired of the lofty rhetoric. They are tired of the commitments to stand in solidarity with indigenous peoples. They want to see action.

My direct question is for the minister. He has read the terms of our motion. Can the minister commit to the House today that he will be voting in favour of this motion? The end of the motion specifically requires that the government table a report in the House detailing how it will comply with the terms of this motion.

Hon. Dan Vandal: Mr. Speaker, at the heart of everything our government has done since 2015 has been a commitment to reconciliation. It is explicitly written in the mandate letters of all of our ministers. We have been working with communities. We have been consulting with communities. We have been ensuring that communities lead the process. We must move at the speed of survivors and their families.

It is important to work with communities to ensure that they are able to access the funding that is there, and not all nations have the same objectives. Some want to memorialize sites collectively, while others want to identify every single individual.

Our government is already committed to reconciliation and to making sure that we identify the burial sites. It is something—

The Deputy Speaker: We have to move on to the next question.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will respectfully note that the minister did not answer the question from my NDP colleague. Maybe he wants to take the opportunity to answer the question asked about how he intends to vote on this motion.

However, I want to ask him something else. Part of what this motion touches on is the government's approach to certain litigation. In recent days, many questions have been raised about the approach of the Minister of Justice. We had the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs tell a committee that he has deep mistrust of the legal advice that comes out of the justice department. He said that in the context of document disclosure.

We have had a number of issues in the House in which the legal advice that has come up is that something is Charter compliant when that advice is highly suspect, or the legal advice is that the government does not have to disclose documents when in fact it does. It raises big questions for me about whether we have a wider problem.

Could the minister speak to whether he agrees with the foreign affairs parliamentary secretary in his own government about the need to be skeptical about justice department advice? Does he have confidence in the justice department's approach in this case?

• (1110)

Hon. Dan Vandal: Mr. Speaker, on the question of reconciliation, we have been clear that the overrepresentation of indigenous kids in care is a sad and dark part of our shared history that we must address.

Let me be very clear. Our government will provide comprehensive, fair and equitable compensation to all those impacted by the historic inequities in first nations and indigenous child welfare.

However, compensation alone—

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[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: We have time for one last question.

The member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his speech. I was rather annoyed to hear the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services say earlier that the federal government had funded the search at Kamloops. In fact, the Toronto Star reported earlier this week that the province funded the search that led to this horrible discovery.

Why does he think that is? Should the federal government contribute more financially to these types of searches?

Hon. Dan Vandal: Mr. Speaker, I assure the member that the federal government contributed \$40,000 to the search at Kamloops. There may have been other partnerships and British Columbia may also have contributed, but that is a commitment we made several years ago.

We have set aside nearly \$30 million to help first nations and Métis communities conduct their own searches. What is most important here is that we are working in partnership with the communities, because they are all different.

[English]

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to begin, I would like to acknowledge that I am speaking today from the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, from my home in the riding of Oakville North—Burlington.

One week ago today, I was shocked and saddened to learn of the discovery of the remains of 215 children at the former Kamloops residential school. I was outraged that these children were stolen and never able to return home to the families and communities that loved them.

The tragedy of Canada's residential school system was born from colonialism and systemic racism. We acknowledge the lasting and damaging impact of residential schools. It is very important to learn about and remember the past. The history of residential schools was not taught when I was a student. Reflecting on this, it is because Canada did not think it was doing anything wrong. One hundred and fifty thousand indigenous children were ripped from their parents' arms and sent to residential schools. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission documented the deaths of more than 6,000 indigenous children as a result of residential schools. The true figure could be much higher, and Canada did not think it was doing anything wrong.

I want to share some of the details of the Kamloops residential school, so that we know and remember the truth of this wicked institution. It opened on May 19, 1890. It was situated on the Kamloops Indian Reserve No. 1 close to town. In the late 1940s and 1950s, the school was thought to be the largest residential school in Canada. The Kamloops school was one of at least 22 residential schools in British Columbia mandated by the federal government and run by various religious orders. Attendance at the school became mandatory for indigenous children in the 1920s, but many

parents resisted the laws and tried to hide their children from Indian agents. Children at the school came from all over British Columbia.

On Tuesday, the Minister of Indigenous Services read out loud in the House the names of some of the children known to have died at the Kamloops residential school so that they would not be forgotten. It is of the utmost importance that we learn more details about what happened to the children at the Kamloops school. It is something we owe to the families, as learning the truth of this tragedy is necessary for closure and to further healing and reconciliation. Families deserve to lay their children to rest. We need truth before reconciliation, and there is still much work on this shared road.

Every single person in Canada has an obligation to work toward reconciliation and decolonizing Canada. We must do this together. Our government is committed to continuing to take action to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance reconciliation across Canada. This government is committed to supporting survivors and their families, as well as communities, to locate and memorialize children who tragically died because of residential schools.

The policy of forcing children into these types of schools was meant to break family and community bonds. Children who attended the schools were not allowed to speak their indigenous languages or express their culture: In fact, the system was designed to erase indigenous culture. The impact has lasted for generations, leading to a breakdown of indigenous communities and families and alienating younger generations from cultural traditions, resulting in deep pain and intergenerational trauma.

We have offered our support in collaboration with the B.C. First Nations Health Authority to respond to needs over the coming weeks and months. We also know that communities across the country will need supports, and we are committed to working with indigenous leaders to be there in partnership with them.

I invite and urge all survivors and family members to call the National Indian Residential School Survivors Crisis Line if they need support. This line has been set up to provide emotional and crisis referral services to former residential school students. It is available 24 hours a day at 1-866-925-4419.

All indigenous peoples can access the Hope for Wellness Help Line. They can chat with a counsellor on its website at www.hopeforwellness.ca, or by phoning 1-855-242-3310.

The Indian residential schools resolution health support program offers access to elders, traditional healers and other community-based cultural supports. It also offers emotional supports, professional mental health counselling and help with the cost of transportation to access services. These services are available to eligible individuals regardless of their indigenous status or where they live.

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We recognize that there will be an ongoing need for access to mental wellness supports and services relating to childhood and intergenerational trauma.

● (1115)

Former students of Indian residential schools and their family members can also count on the support of more than 60 mental wellness community-led teams that provide culturally safe mental health services and clinical supports to 344 first nations and Inuit communities.

We are working in close partnership with the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated to respond to the mental wellness needs of Inuit in the territory. Through this partnership, the government is contributing \$224.5 million over 10 years through the Nunavut wellness agreement for community wellness initiatives.

In 2020-21, \$19.9 million in funding is being allocated to the Government of Nunavut and community organizations for mental wellness teams and other mental wellness services. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Canada is providing additional support so indigenous communities can adapt and expand mental wellness services.

We recently proposed to provide \$597.6 million over three years for a distinctions-based mental health and wellness strategy with first nations, Inuit and the Métis Nation that includes continuing supports for former residential school students and their families. This will build on existing strengths, help address gaps and be responsive to current, emerging and future needs.

Wellness is not just about our mental and physical health, it is also about the vitality of our communities. To this end, we are working with indigenous leadership and communities on the implementation of the act respecting first nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families, which affirms and recognizes indigenous peoples' jurisdiction over child and family services to reduce the number of indigenous children in care.

This will put in place what indigenous peoples across this country have been asking of governments for decades: that their jurisdiction over child and family services be affirmed so that they can decide what is best for their children and their families. It also establishes national principles such as the best interests of the child, cultural continuity and substantive equality.

As of last month, there are 29 indigenous governing bodies that represent 67 indigenous groups and communities that have given notice to Indigenous Services Canada that they will exercise their inherent right to jurisdiction under the act.

Through my role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, I have participated in discussions with some of these indigenous communities that are engaged in coordination agreement tables. Each table is unique and may require a different plan of action, including capacity-building, new programming or whatever the community decides is needed. We are also working with provincial and territorial leadership to ensure smooth transition. These conversations have demonstrated to me the essential nature of this work.

Our government is committed to continuing this process, which is why budget 2021 proposes to provide \$73.6 million over four years to support the implementation of the act. This funding will allow us to recognize our shared goal of increasing the number of communities exercising jurisdiction in relation to child and family services and decreasing the number of children in care.

In addition to our commitment to mental health and child and family services, we are not wavering from our pledge to provide fair and equitable compensation for first nations children who were removed from their homes, families and communities. We will compensate survivors and will work to ensure that no child ever has to go through this treatment again. We are committed to providing indigenous children with access to necessary supports and services at home, in their communities and with their families.

I will close by saying the tragic discovery in Kamloops is a reminder of why the work of truth and reconciliation is vital for our country.

● (1120)

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this motion deals specifically with two court cases in which the Government of Canada is currently in court fighting indigenous kids harmed by Canada's child welfare system and fighting the survivors of St. Anne's Residential School.

Does the member agree that the government should not be spending millions of dollars on lawyers to fight survivors and indigenous children harmed by our systems and should drop those cases immediately, as this motion calls for?

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to providing comprehensive, full, fair, equitable compensation to first nations children. We are committed to addressing the long-standing unmet needs of first nations children. We have implemented Bill C-92 and are working to ensure that children can stay in their communities.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me thank my colleagues in the New Democratic Party for bringing forward this motion during a week when so many of us here in Ottawa have been gutted by what we have seen. I really thank the member for Timmins—James Bay for bringing forward all the information and his personal experiences, especially around mass graves. There were 215 bodies in mass graves in Canada. Who would have thought that would be part of our history now. It is something that we do need to address.

What we are talking about here are the legal cases that the government continues to kick down the road. My experience with legalists in government is they continue to delay justice. When are we going to get to the point where we recognize that there is a settlement at the end and justice delayed is justice denied?

When will the parliamentary secretary's government allow these people to have that justice?

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member talked about, as we all have, the shock of the discovery of these 215 wee souls at Kamloops. I would remind the hon. member that it was the Conservative government that refused to provide \$1.5 million to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to carry out this work. When I speak to my colleagues who are indigenous, they are not surprised by this discovery at all. This is something that they have known about for a very long time.

This government is committed to working with indigenous communities and indigenous peoples, and ensuring that we are able to identify and memorialize the children in a process led by these communities.

• (1125)

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport-Côte-de-Beaupré-Île d'Orléans-Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank our colleague for her presentation.

What concerns Quebeckers is that federal funding is not always directed where it is needed the most. In this case, for example, the search was paid for by British Columbia, not the federal government—

[English]

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, I am not getting translation.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: We will look into that.

The interpretation is working now.

The hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix may resume her intervention.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, I thank our colleague for her presentation.

Quebeckers and Canadians are concerned because the government did not directly fund the search that led to the discovery of these 215 innocent children. It was actually British Columbia that undertook the search.

We are wondering whether the government really plans to fund and support the provinces and Quebec for future searches.

[English]

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, that is actually incorrect. The federal government did provide funding to Kamloops for the search for these bodies, these children. We have \$27 million available to distribute to communities if they wish to carry out a similar process. As I mentioned earlier in the House, near my community of Oakville North—Burlington, Six Nations of the Grand River has already asked the federal government for support.

We are committed to supporting communities in the process that they wish to move forward on. However, what the member said is incorrect, the federal government actually did provide the funding to Kamloops for the search for the graves.

Business of Supply

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, GP): Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned that residential schools were designed, in large part, to erase indigenous cultures and I would argue they were also designed to erase indigenous peoples themselves. I point to Dr. Peter Bryce's infamous book, *The Story of a National Crime*. When I think about justice, I think about the fact that we have survivors who are still alive, and therefore there will be perpetrators who are also still alive.

What is the government doing to bring those people to justice?

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote a survivor of residential schools, the member for Northwest Territories. He said, "There is a lot of work to be done. I have been waiting for a long time to get this going. We have some momentum now, and I want to see it keep going."

I think we all want to see where we move forward. I will leave it to authorities. Any kinds of charges that would be laid would be done by the provincial government, not by the federal government. I think the hon. member probably knows that, but it is up to provincial governments to lay charges in cases like this.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member of Parliament for Chilliwack—Hope.

I will first take a moment to share a few words on behalf of the citizens of Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola. We are collectively shocked, saddened and outraged at the discovery of an unmarked gravesite for 215 children at the former indigenous residential school in Kamloops. This discovery is difficult to put into words and I would ask that we all think of the Tk'emlúps First Nation that made this deeply disturbing discovery.

I would also ask that we think of the many families in indigenous communities throughout our region that had children at the Kamloops residential school, many of whom did not return. I will take a moment to read into the record some of the comments from indigenous chiefs in British Columbia, as I believe their comments must be heard.

I made some brief remarks about Chief Harvey McLeod from the Upper Nicola Band in my region in the take-note debate, but I will read his comments in full. He stated:

We always knew that this was happening there, but it was in our own minds, we had no proof other than our own experience. We hear really horrific stories about what happened and dealing with our people that had passed on, and what they were forced to do, to bury them. And it wasn't the grown-ups, it was the babies.

So much hurt and pain came out in a matter of seconds. Just felt for our families that all went there. We have a large number of people from this community (Upper Nicola) that went to school there. We all have different experiences but a lot of hurt and pain and shame and anger leaving there.

I went back to the two years that I attended. I know that there were incidents happening there because I went through a lot of experiences myself. I know people that just disappeared, and we assumed that they ran away and got away and are at home somewhere, but never did see them again.

We as communities and leadership will find the best way of doing this and taking care of our people. We want to all be on the same page when it comes to having the ceremony to bring our people home.

It's going to take a lot of strength to walk with our people while they remember the hurt and pain from that school. And it will be so much better when we're all united, working together to ensure we're there for our citizens.

Business of Supply

I would like to mention some words from Ellis Ross, now an MLA for Skeena and a former chief councillor for the Haisla Nation. He stated, "Here goes; normally I'd do a live video but I doubt I could hold it together for this topic/the kids found buried at a Kamloops residential school/This is reliving the trauma for survivors and is shocking for their family members and non-aboriginals alike." "I'd like to say that you will come to terms with it or the feeling goes away but it doesn't, not now anyway mainly because this is still fresh in the minds of survivors. It hasn't gone away for me when I came to understand it in 2004." "To be clear, I was sad and angry when I learned the truth because my parents wouldn't talk about it, just in bits and pieces. I learned to live with it and used it for motivation to build a better future and 'break the cycle' (well known term with FN's)." "17 years ago, I understood what happened overall; I decided to help fix issues of today instead of my revenge ideas. This Kamloops school story brought it all back to the day I sat in our archives and broke down. Repatriation will be traumatizing but needed."

Those are powerful words. I was deeply moved to hear them, as I am certain many members in this place are also.

So many local indigenous communities were impacted and traumatized by these institutions because that is what they were. They were not schools like members and I went to. I cannot think of a worse situation for a parent: their children being taken away from them, only to never return home. Did they run away? I cannot imagine how it would feel to not know for so many years, until one day their worst nightmare comes along when they hear about these graves. Learning of these graves only raises more questions, and they are troubling questions. In this place, we must do everything we can to help find answers to those questions and to help bring accountability to indigenous families, including those who attended the schools. I say "attended", but in reality, it was more like they were incarcerated in those schools.

● (1130)

Today's opposition motion from the NDP is but our first steps in helping to provide some answers in what I expect will be a long journey.

It is important we must also consider that reconciliation will mean different things to different people. We must also recognize this because we cannot, we must not, allow the usual Ottawa one-size-fits-all approach to finding true reconciliation. It is not "first nation"; it is "first nations". Each nation is unique and special, and it is time Ottawa started to recognize that. It is not unlike the institution in Kamloops. It and others like it were first created as a one-size-fits-all approach from Ottawa. Let us finally take a new approach that works in partnership with indigenous communities.

On that note, I will now comment on this opposition day motion.

We must be careful in this place to avoid making the mistakes of the past, and I appreciate how this motion is well intentioned. However, at least for many first nations in my community, community members are still in shock. Many are holding meetings and there are a great many discussions under way.

My point is that I have not been directly contacted by one of the first nations in my riding for guidance on this, and I highly doubt

many other members have either, yet here we are with a motion deciding what we think we must do to help indigenous communities after such a traumatic and horrific discovery. Again, I appreciate the motivation of the opposition and I believe the NDP is sincere, but it has to be pointed out that we are moving on a motion without proper direction from those we are trying to help. Some would rightfully call this an Ottawa-knows-best approach. In my view, at some point we must recognize that this approach has not served our country well over the years.

I do not often agree with the Prime Minister, but recently he made a comment that I believe we should all be mindful of. His comment was:

If it were only done by ministers, if it were only done by Ottawa, to solve these challenges, it might have been done long ago, but it would have been done wrong. You cannot move forward on true reconciliation unless it is done in partnership with Indigenous communities, leaders, and individuals.

It would be very easy to play politics with this issue. It would be said that the current government has had five years to take action and that the ministers responsible have failed. The current government could say that the former government failed in 2009. We could go on and on, and eventually we would go back to 1969, when this institution in Kamloops was first taken over by the federal government of the day and ask why it did not close it then. Why was it not closed until 1978? Politicizing this issue will not provide the leadership that we, as parliamentarians, need to provide.

I believe I have made my point that we should all be concerned when we are here passing a motion without direction from indigenous communities, precisely as we are doing here. I would also add that I have heard the Prime Minister explain the reasons why his government believes the court action this opposition day motion proposes to cease is necessary.

The Prime Minister has argued that he believes it will ultimately produce a fairer outcome for the victims and their families. I do not know if the Prime Minister will continue to make that same argument. Often we rely on the courts to provide fair and equitable outcomes for challenging cases, more so when politics may interfere with that process. However, I also note that it is easy to dismiss the court actions as being a "belligerent and litigious approach to justice", as it says in the motion, precisely as the fourth party has done here.

Business of Supply

As I recall, it took the Prime Minister several minutes to explain why his government supported the court action and why it believed, at least at the time, that it would provide a fairer outcome. In politics, it is often said that when one is explaining, one is losing.

As I have stated, I believe the intention of the fourth party is to be sincere here. It means well, and in balance, I am keenly aware that in Canada we have literally created an indigenous law legal industry. It has been going on for decades. The lawyers certainly will profit from it. Many of the indigenous communities, in my riding at least, have not. Ultimately, it is about the people, the victims, the survivors and their families, and that is whom I am focused on.

I am prepared to support this opposition day motion. There are some cautions I have, which I have shared, but in balance, against inaction we must act, and this opposition day motion takes steps in that direction. I will be supporting it as a result.

• (1135)

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when the Truth and Reconciliation Commission requested \$1.5 million for research for mass burial sites, it was a Conservative government that denied the request. This member was given an opportunity to vote in favour of UNDRIP just days ago, but neither he nor his Conservative colleagues voted in favour of the legislation. Just this week, Conservative Premier Kenney made such a despicable statement that Grand Chief Watchmaker reconfirmed the decision to dissolve the protocol that was made between the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations and the Government of Alberta.

How can we believe the member's comments, when provincial and federal Conservatives have so clearly shown us where they stand on reconciliation?

• (1140)

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, let me be clear here, yet again.

It is not just one simple people. They are first nations. There are over 660 first nation bands in this country, and each is unique. We, as parliamentarians, need to listen to them. We need to help provide supports and to partner on ways we can move forward in reconciliation. Reconciliation will mean one thing to some, and it will mean another to someone else. I would simply say that all governments dating back to the birth of this great country have failed in many cases to protect individual rights and to respect our commitments to first nations, dating back to the royal proclamation.

More needs to be done. We need to act, but we also need to listen, and to listen well.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. member is quite sincere and genuine in the comments he made, and I want to start by saying I appreciate what he has said in the House today, but just a few short months ago the leader of the Conservative Party said to a group of Ryerson students that residential schools were “meant to try and provide education”, which denies their true intent, as a tool of colonialism, to break down indigenous culture and language. If I remember, the intent was to “take the Indian out of the child”.

I am wondering if the hon. member can explain those comments from the Leader of the Opposition, which he made just recently.

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, while I appreciate that the member said some very positive things, I think we should not try to make this process here today about that, or the government's relation with first nations or with Canadians. Every Canadian, I think, needs to know more about what has happened, and we need, as a people, to work with first nations on reconciliation. I am not going to taint this conversation by pointing fingers, because, as I said, we would go back to the very history of this country and that would do nothing for the people who are grieving right now in my riding.

Let us focus on the people who are hurting right now. Let us focus on the process that we can move together. I would like to see many things of the government change, but I am also willing to change and to listen, and I hope the member would take these words as genuine and sincere, and take them to heart.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Louise Charbonneau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his sensitivity with respect to this tragedy.

As a mother and grandmother, I can imagine the immeasurable grief of these children's parents, and I want to extend my most sincere condolences to the nation affected and the indigenous people of Quebec and Canada. The Bloc Québécois will support the NDP motion.

Does my colleague believe that the government should abandon the legal action against indigenous children and apply the Jordan principle?

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear that the Bloc member and her party will be supporting the fourth party's motion today, because I do believe the motivations are good.

When it comes to the individual cases, I would say that quasi-judicial bodies like tribunals are made for specific purposes. I was quite surprised to see that it originally ruled that it would hear this case. That being said, it is independent, but, like all independent quasi-judicial tribunals, there is an appeal process. What I have heard from the government is that it is its intention to compensate. If the process is taking too long, and I believe it is, then we must ask those questions. We need to compensate people fairly and equitably, so I hope that the government will take this opportunity of today's motion to make it clear how we will proceed moving forward.

Business of Supply

• (1145)

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will begin today by acknowledging that I am speaking from the traditional Stó:lo territory. On behalf of the people of Chilliwack—Hope, I want to acknowledge the suffering and trauma that the discovery of the remains of 215 children at the residential school in Kamloops has brought to residential school survivors in our community. We stand with them during this difficult time and are committed to doing the hard work necessary to bring about true reconciliation in our community and across the country. I want to thank the Stó:lo communities and their leaders for being so willing to partner with people in Chilliwack—Hope and the surrounding areas to build toward true reconciliation. They truly are leaders in our country in this regard.

I want to speak about the motion today and what I appreciate about it. There are parts of it, as has been referenced by some of my colleagues, that I am less enthusiastic about than others, but overall this is a rather comprehensive call to action. That is exactly what my constituents are demanding in light of the revelation from Kamloops. They want action. They do not want any more words. They do not want any more commitments. They want to see us move forward together. That is what this motion calls for, and that is why we will be supporting it.

I think about some of the language. We do not know what to say, so we say things like “We are shocked.” Quite frankly, as parliamentarians, we should not be. There is an entire volume of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report, volume 4, entitled “Missing Children and Unmarked Burials”. It is 266 pages long. The release of that volume itself should have shocked Canadians when it was tabled in 2015. The exceedingly high number of student deaths relative to the non-indigenous population, the lack of notification to families when a student passed away, the purposeful decision to refuse to send bodies home to their families due to the cost to be borne by the federal government, the desire for Christian burial rights to be performed on deceased children over traditional indigenous burial rights, all of this was documented and reported on. It has been in public, in media reports, for 100 years, but Canadians did not want to hear it and did not want to believe it. Thanks to these revelations from Kamloops, Canadians now believe it and are demanding action.

Residential school survivors told us this had happened. Families who never saw their children again after they were abducted and taken to residential school told us this had happened. We heard, but we did not listen. We believe them now.

I think this is a watershed moment for Canada. It is a moment when the knowledge has moved from a fact of our history to a feeling that compels us to act. However, we have had this feeling before, and we cannot let this moment slip through our fingers again. Momentum for change and action was lost between the historic apology that took place on the floor of the House of Commons in 2008 and the issuing of the final Truth and Reconciliation Commission report in 2015. More momentum has been lost between the issuing of that report and now. We cannot let this moment pass without seizing upon it and taking real, meaningful and immediate action.

For many Canadians, this is the first time they have meaningfully engaged on this issue. They may have heard about it briefly in school, but perhaps it did not resonate with them at that time. They did not have their own kids at the time and could not relate to it. They were not shocked by it; it was simply something that happened to a past generation. However, as we have seen this week, that has changed. When change happens to people, when they go from knowing a fact to having something touch their heart, it can have a profound and positive impact.

For me, the moment I began to grasp what had happened in the residential school system and the multi-generational impact it had on indigenous people who lived in and around my own community of Chilliwack came when I bought a copy of a book written by a respected local indigenous leader, Ernie Crey.

• (1150)

His book is entitled *Stolen from Our Embrace: The Abduction of First Nations Children and the Restoration of Aboriginal Communities*. It was first published in 1997 and predates the historic apology to former students of Indian residential schools by more than 10 years.

I read it in the time period between the apology and the report of the TRC, and it completely changed the way I thought about Canada's relationship with indigenous people. It opened my eyes and my heart to the fact that this had not only impacted the survivors but their children and their children's children. It made me understand intergenerational trauma, which has devastating impacts to this day.

The book had a profound impact on my personal and professional life. I think that many Canadians, for the first time, have had a similar experience with the news of the bodies in graves in Kamloops, where we have finally seen, we have finally heard and we now know that we need to act. Therefore, how do we respond?

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission did not issue recommendations. It issued calls to action, not calls to talking about taking action at some time in the future. Quite frankly, government is designed to fail on this, and not the Liberal government, not a Conservative government. I am disappointed that some of the questions I have heard so far have tried to score some old political points, saying “You should have done better there” or “It's not our fault.” Today, who cares?

We are talking about 215 bodies that have been discovered in unmarked graves, and some people want to score cheap political points. Shame on them. We need to work together. We need to recognize that government, that the system is designed to fail. It is designed to protect the status quo. In big ways and small, the system of government abhors change, and successive governments have failed to make significant progress in breaking down these barriers.

Business of Supply

It is good to have accountability. It is good to take stock of where we come from and where we need to go, but it is necessary, right now, to take real, meaningful and immediate action to take advantage of the spirit of reconciliation that is sweeping across the country.

To that end, the Conservatives have put forward a list of meaningful actions that we believe could assist families and indigenous communities during this time. We are calling on the government to develop a comprehensive plan to implement TRC's calls to action 71 through 76 on missing children and burial information by July 1. The motion we are taking about today says "within 10 days", which sounds good too. We call on it to fund the investigation at all former residential schools in Canada where unmarked graves may exist, including the site where 215 children have already been discovered; to ensure that proper resources are allocated for communities to reinter, commemorate and honour any individuals discovered through the investigation according to the wishes of their next of kin; and to develop a detailed and thorough set of resources to educate Canadians of all ages on the tragic history of residential schools in Canada.

In addition to that volume 4 on missing children and unmarked burials, there is another volume, volume 6 on reconciliation. It is 288 pages long, and the TRC provided us a road map in that as well. In it, it says:

To the Commission, reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour.

Who needs to take action? The government needs to take action, and we need to work together to give it direction, which this motion would do. We also need to take individual action. We need to be compelled to learn more, to understand more, to build key relationships, to understand how important keeping one's word is when dealing with indigenous peoples and indigenous leaders. We need to open our hearts and we need to believe survivors, as they told us in this case, about these missing children in unmarked graves.

• (1155)

We all acknowledge the deep sorrow and mourning that all indigenous peoples and survivors of residential schools are experiencing at this time. The legacy of residential schools is a national shame that has had a profound, lasting and damaging impact on indigenous people, culture, heritage and language. This discovery is a sombre reminder that so much more work needs to be done to address the devastating and harmful effects that residential schools had and still have on many survivors and their communities today.

We must work together to ensure we bring our dark history to light, acknowledge it, learn from it and ensure nothing like it ever happens again. This must be done both collectively through government action and individually through our own personal decisions to learn more, educate ourselves and our children—

The Deputy Speaker: Unfortunately, we have run out of time.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today's speeches make me think of all the times over the past number of decades that Canada has stood on the world stage, lecturing other countries about their human rights record, while we have been so wilfully ignorant about what has gone on in our own backyard.

I appreciate that the member has devoted a lot of time talking about how we move forward. When I speak to the elders in my community, a lot of them have made mention of the fact that they will never be fully a part of Canada while the Indian Act remains, our most prominent colonial statute. We need to get rid of that offending legislation. Does he have any thoughts on how we begin that process? Governments have shown how quickly it can move when the times have demanded, such as through this pandemic. Does he have any opening thoughts on how we can start that process?

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, I have been thinking about that over the last number of days as well. What we tried to do when we were in government was to give first nations the opportunity to opt out of large sections of the Indian Act. It is very difficult at this time without recognizing the different sizes, regions and opportunities that exist for over 600 first nations to simply eliminate the Indian Act. It needs to be done in a careful way and it needs to be led by first nations.

What we can do in the immediate term is to provide ways out from underneath the Indian Act through things like the First Nations Land Management Act or the Elections Act. This opt-in legislation allows first nations to decide if they want out from underneath certain sections of the Indian Act. We have to let them lead and partner with them to ensure we get out from underneath that Indian Act as soon as we possibly can.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member pointed out that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission did not issue recommendations but calls to action, which require action. As he knows, in the last Parliament, we passed a private member's bill to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which is one of those calls to action in the TRC report. It was held up by Conservative senators and never passed.

Therefore, our government, in this Parliament, introduced Bill C-15, which would implement UNDRIP as it is called. It passed in the House of Commons without Conservative support at all. Now it has gone to the Senate.

I wonder how the hon. member can reconcile the fact that the Conservative Party seems to support some of the calls to action, but not all of them. Will he commit to helping, with those Conservative senators, to get this bill passed in the Senate and finally implement this call to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission?

Business of Supply

Mr. Mark Strahl: Madam Speaker, it was a Conservative government that first recognized the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as an aspirational document. We do have some concerns with how the free, prior and informed consent provisions of UNDRIP mesh with, quite frankly, the Canadian Constitution, section 35, and the duty to consult and accommodate, which has been honed over years in the courts and through negotiation; that is, the Canadian approach has been the duty to consult and accommodate.

Our concern with UNDRIP was with the free, prior and informed consent provisions and how that would interact with our Constitution, which does specifically acknowledge indigenous rights, and through our own court system, which has specifically endorsed a duty to consult and accommodate where necessary. That is the reason why we have raised our concerns.

The Senate, as the member knows, will take its own decisions as it always has. I am sure there will be robust debate in that chamber, which is controlled right now with a majority of appointees by the current Prime Minister.

• (1200)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Joliette.

It is with a great deal of emotion that I address the House today. I first want to extend my deepest and most sincere condolences to all first nations on the discovery of the remains of 215 children buried behind the Kamloops residential school. It believe that is appropriate. As a member of the Huron-Wendat nation, my thoughts are with the people who suffered too much neglect and mistreatment and whose pain I share.

This tragedy is a direct result of the violence of colonialism. In addition to defending many interests that are often self-serving, especially economic interests, the intent of colonialism, at least in the official line, is to civilize those perceived to belong to an inferior race. We can all agree that this is just plain repugnant, and that it is called cultural genocide.

Such atrocities must never happen again. As politicians, we need to offer our condolences, but that is not enough. We need to take action. Unfortunately, it is likely that this discovery is only the first of many. Other bodies may be found, not only at the site of the residential school, where not all areas have been investigated, but also in other Canadian cities. This may be just the tip of the iceberg, and we may find many other mass graves.

In fact, while the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation lists 4,118 deaths, former senator and chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Murray Sinclair estimated that as many as 15,000 children may have died in the residential school system. This is an approximate number, and we need to investigate, because we have a duty to remember. According to an article in *The Globe and Mail*, however, we do not know the names of about one third of the deceased children, and the cause of death in more than half of all cases was not recorded by the government or the school. This is serious.

The report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommended erecting commemorative monuments in Ottawa and other capital cities to honour the memory of residential school survivors, as well as that of children lost to their families and communities. These monuments would honour both those who were lucky enough to survive and those who were not, and yet the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage said in December 2020 that no subsidies had yet been awarded for the construction of a national monument in the national capital region.

There has been just as little follow through on the other recommendations. That is why we support the NDP's motion before us today. It is urgent and absolutely necessary that we accelerate the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action, in particular by providing immediate funding for more in-depth investigations into the deaths and disappearance of children in residential schools.

The commission's report clearly indicates that “assisting families to learn the fate of children who died in residential schools; locating unmarked graves; and maintaining, protecting, and commemorating residential school cemeteries are vital to healing and reconciliation.” In other words, first we must know, understand, verify and investigate.

The issue is becoming increasingly urgent, since cemeteries are disappearing bit by bit, and many survivors still have no idea what happened to their loved ones. Since no one lives forever and we all eventually die, these people could pass away without ever learning the truth.

This investigation, which is absolutely necessary if we are to finally salve the open wound, requires funding. The discovery in Kamloops was financed mainly by British Columbia and not by the federal fund specifically earmarked for the purpose. The 2019 budget set aside \$33.8 million over three years to fund the various actions recommended by the commission. That was a promising announcement, to be sure.

• (1205)

According to *Global News*, \$27.1 million of the \$33.8 million that was allocated was never spent. That is practically the whole amount. Since 2013, Ottawa has spent \$3.2 million fighting a group of survivors from the St. Anne's residential school in Northern Ontario in court, which is almost as much money as it has spent on reconciliation efforts.

As members know, setting aside funds in the budget is only a statement of intent, as the allocation must also be included in a budget implementation act. The current government's 2019 budget, tabled during the last Parliament, set aside \$33.8 million over three years. If we look at the Public Accounts of Canada for 2019-20, however, we can see that, although \$5 million was spent on the national day for truth and reconciliation, there is not a single trace of any spending to implement the calls for action. There is nothing in the main estimates for 2019-20, 2020-21 or 2021-22. The amounts promised in 2019 were not even budgeted. What happened to that money? Why was it not released? We need an explanation. Was it an oversight? A stealth budget cut? I think that our first nations brothers and sisters have a right to know.

Just recently, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services and the Prime Minister reiterated that they were committed to implementing all of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action. They brought up the \$33.8 million announced in the 2019 budget. Now, though, they have to actually budget that money. Reminding us that they announced it is fine, but now they must follow through and get things done.

The proposal to accelerate the implementation of the calls for action that was included in the motion tabled by our NDP colleagues has our support. My colleagues in the Bloc Québécois and I urge the government to act quickly. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights recently declared that it is essential that Canada do this work. Now we need to take the necessary steps. It is crucial.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his well-researched speech. He is obviously extremely familiar with the matter and genuinely concerned about the key issue raised by the discovery that shocked us all this week.

He touched on several important points, including the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action and the amounts needed to investigate in order to learn more. Does he not also think that we should stop spending public money on lawyers to challenge Canadian Human Rights Tribunal orders concerning indigenous children in Federal Court?

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. In examining this file, it becomes evident that it contains a rather large contradiction. In fact, the amounts spent on litigation almost equal the amounts that were truly invested in reconciliation, which is quite troubling. I agree with the statement of the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

• (1210)

[English]

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am getting really frustrated by the members of the Bloc who continue to repeat in the House that the federal government did not provide funding to the search that was done in Kamloops. The fact is that the community applied for and received a heritage grant of \$40,000 to conduct this search.

Business of Supply

Will the hon. member and his party acknowledge this funding and stop accusing the federal government of not providing funds to conduct the important search that was done?

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Madam Speaker, what frustrates me is to witness so much denial. Also being a member of the Huron-Wendat nation, and having dug deeper and deeper into this issue, I must say that it is a legacy that has become important to me over the years.

However, the more I dig, the more I realize that there have been historic injustices and iniquities. We have a duty to remember. I am hearing denial and I am hearing about \$40,000 that could have been put toward this discovery. I beg the House's forgiveness, but I want to address the comparison between \$33.8 million budgeted over three years, and \$40,000.

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

At the heart of what happened with the residential schools was the principle of colonialism: An external power tried to control indigenous communities and deny families, communities and individuals the autonomy that they should have had. In contrast to that, many people in the House try to stand up for the principle of subsidiarity: that families, individual communities and cultural groups should have a measure of autonomy and control over their own affairs. However, many colonial structures, which are perhaps more well-intentioned today, still exist in terms of federal control over what happens in indigenous communities.

Could the member share a bit more about how we can put this principle of subsidiarity, of autonomy of local control, into practice for these communities to a greater extent?

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Of course, the will of indigenous peoples must be taken into account when determining exactly what that autonomy should look like. We cannot assume that we know what is best for their well-being. We must engage in dialogue and support first nations for a new kind of sharing. I am sure we can find a way to move forward that is eminently better than the current structure.

My colleague touched on the act in question, and I do think the problem lies with that notorious legislation, which can only be described as racist. It is an unacceptable piece of legislation that needs to be completely overhauled.

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot for his speech.

Business of Supply

He spoke briefly about the importance of history in a healing and reconciliation process. Certain infrastructure projects are currently under way that could damage the sites. I wonder if he could speak to the urgency of taking action to protect those sites and keep the past in the spotlight.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Madam Speaker, I know how committed my colleague from Repentigny is to the environment. Often, this type of project is equally bad for the environment, the visual environment and the memorial environment. There may be connections between all of these issues. There are many infrastructure projects that could desecrate sites unnecessarily.

I would like the first nations to know that we are their allies when it comes to preserving their legacy and memory.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, yesterday marked the end of the public hearings regarding the tragic death of Joyce Echaquan on September 28. We anxiously await the coroner's report.

Yesterday, thousands of people gathered in Trois-Rivières to demand justice so that this never happens again. The Atikamekw of Manawan, Wemotaci and Opitciwan, other first nations and white people all gathered to say "never again".

The chief of the Atikamekw Council of Manawan, Paul-Émile Ottawa, said, "Without that video [taken by Joyce Echaquan], her death would have been considered just one of many. She is dead because people wanted her to die. She is dead because people did her wrong, but justice will be done. Justice will prevail."

Joyce Echaquan's husband, Carol Dubé said, "This is just the beginning. I want changes to be made, and I am hopeful that they will be."

As politicians, we have a duty to show solidarity and an obligation to get results. On that subject, at the same gathering yesterday, Ghislain Picard, chief of the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador, stated, "Many people think that things are not going fast enough and that it is too easy for governments to offload responsibility onto future governments, which is unfortunately the case. I think that today's gathering, which coincides with the end of the coroner's hearing, is the right time to remind the government of that."

We have an obligation to get results. Yes, we need to acknowledge injustice and racism. Yes, we must condemn injustice and racism, but what we really need to do is to take concrete action, adopt policies to make sure that all this stops and that things change. That is our job, and we have an obligation to get results. That begins with changing the old, racist Indian Act. Even the name is racist. It starts by really implementing the recommendations in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report.

The discovery of the remains of 215 children on the site of the former residential school in Kamloops leaves me speechless. It is a horror story. It is so tragic that I cannot find words for it. In all humility, I share the pain of the grieving families. In all humility, I would like to offer my sincerest condolences to the Secwépemc nation and to all indigenous peoples in Quebec and Canada, joined in mourning and suffering.

Like many people, I also fear that the discovery of these 215 small victims is only the beginning of a long series of unspeakable tragedies. This new tragedy reveals Canada's sad history, the history of residential schools, in operation for more than a century, from 1892 to 1996. The residential school system was the cornerstone of the assimilationist regime imposed on first nations.

More than 150,000 children were torn from their families, their friends, their community. They were forced to attend these institutions and to forget their language, their culture and their identity. They were made to feel ashamed of what they were. In anthropology, this is referred to as ethnocide or cultural genocide, which means to eradicate a people. The ultimate aim of the residential schools was to kill the Indian in the child. Once taken from their homes and made vulnerable, the children were subjected to violence, sexual assault and murder. How many gratuitous, criminal and unpunished killings took place in these schools?

Canada has a duty to remember what happened. Canada's history is dark and sad. Its history is one of imperialism and colonialism, a legacy of the British Empire. The hands of the father of Confederation, Sir John A. Macdonald, are soiled by injustice and racism. Compelled by a desire for the never-ending accumulation of profit and capital, the British Empire and Canada crushed the first peoples and rode roughshod over their rights so they could get their hands on the first people's lands and resources. That was the world view behind the creation of residential schools and the ensuing horror. That was the philosophy that enabled Canada to view the first peoples as an underclass of humanity and their misery and everything that was done to them as unimportant.

Canada has trivialized the disappearance and murder of indigenous women, girls and children. A member of the Atikamekw of Manawan community told me a story. For years and years, the community superintendent was usually a retired soldier who created a climate of terror.

● (1215)

An Atikamekw man refused to allow a large forestry company to cut down trees on his family land. The superintendent falsely diagnosed him with tuberculosis and forced him to go to a sanatorium for two years. When he returned to the community, his land had been cleared and he had contracted tuberculosis.

So much trauma leaves scars and breeds mistrust.

To make itself feel better about pillaging resources, Canada reduced the first nations to a sub-class of humans, making the abuse seem more acceptable. All of this was done with the complicity of the church, one in particular I am especially ashamed of. The church believed it was spreading a message of love, but by aligning with imperialism they brought in hatred, horror and sadness, all in the name of "civilizing" the indigenous peoples. It is disgusting.

Business of Supply

Unfortunately, there is nothing new about all this horror. This was and is the *modus operandi* of empires around the world, whether in Africa, Asia, Oceania or the Americas. Every empire has its own way of destroying minority peoples and cultures to expand its dominance. Canada is no exception. The history of Canada could have been a history of respect, collaboration and sharing among the various peoples. Instead it was a history of struggle, and the first nations were the primary victims.

They suffered unspeakable harm. The injustice persists to this day. The situation of first nations is proof of that. I am thinking about Joyce. I am calling for justice. I am thinking about all the communities that still do not have access to clean drinking water, and where there is still no equality in services to indigenous peoples and other Canadians. The injustice persists. Unfortunately, it is still downplayed, because the concept of subclass has been inculcated in our society for so long that it is still alive and well. We need to end this historically unacceptable prejudice. It has to stop.

The road to reconciliation will be a long and difficult one, but we as politicians have a key role to play today. We need to act now to effect change. Six years have passed since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission presented its recommendations. We still have not done anything. The federal government is quick to make speeches and express its intentions, but is slow to take concrete action to really change the situation.

In closing, I would like once again acknowledge all the pain felt by the grieving families. In all humility, I share in it and once again offer my sincerest condolences to the Secwépemc nation as well as to all first nations people.

My political party is obviously in favour of every item in the motion. The federal government needs to immediately drop its legal case against indigenous children and apply Jordan's principle across the board.

This is a reasonable proposal with a view to reaching an amicable settlement. It is appalling that the government is spending millions of dollars in legal fees to avoid compensating the victims of St. Anne's residential school. My party is urging the government to act quickly to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action 71 to 78.

As the commission indicated in its report, "assisting families to learn the fate of children who died in residential schools; locating unmarked graves; and maintaining, protecting, and commemorating residential school cemeteries are vital to healing and reconciliation."

As the commission pointed out, it is all the more urgent to implement these calls to action because, as time passes, cemeteries are disappearing bit by bit, and the survivors who are able to testify to their experience are getting older and still have no idea of what happened to their brothers, sisters and other relatives.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights recently declared that it is essential that Canada address the issue. Obviously, the victims and survivors and their families and communities are entitled to the resources they need to help them overcome the emotional, physical, spiritual, material and cultural trauma inflicted by the residential schools.

Lastly, it is imperative that there be an appropriate and timely follow-up of the progress of the implementation of the commission's calls to action in order to ensure true justice, and to see that indigenous people are no longer discriminated against and that Joyce Echaquan obtains justice.

● (1220)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Joliette for his excellent speech.

Is he hopeful that this week's disturbing tragedy, or revelation, could speed things up?

He spoke about the contradiction in fighting residential school victims' claims for compensation and failing to make much progress on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action.

Does he think that there will be a "before Kamloops" and an "after Kamloops"?

● (1225)

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for his question. There must be a "before" and an "after". Things cannot stay the same.

Since the report was presented six years ago, we have heard lots of talk but no real action. As my colleague pointed out, the government is still fighting these people in court. That must change. We must move from words to action.

The remains of those 215 little children are proof of an unthinkable atrocity and horror. Things cannot stay the same. They must change.

[*English*]

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for acknowledging that the treatment of indigenous peoples in this country has been based on colonialism and racism.

The death of Joyce Echaquan highlights this systemic racism that continues to exist in this country and in our health care system in particular.

Will the member and his party accept that systemic racism continues to exist in Canada and in our institutions and work with our government to implement Joyce's principle?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for her intervention.

The Bloc Québécois has acknowledged the existence of systemic racism from the start of the debate on this issue. As I mentioned in my speech, the Indian Act is a racist act that must be overhauled. The act's title is racist. This must change.

As an elected member in Ottawa, I carefully read Joyce's principle. I support the recommendations made to Parliament and to this government.

Business of Supply

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member spoke at the end of his speech about the urgency and my colleague from Chilliwack—Hope talked about not losing the momentum. There are many reasons which this issue cannot wait. One of them, of course, is that we want to be able to identify those points of reconciliation for people while they are still alive so that they can find that reconciliation, that closure for these victims before some of them pass on.

I would ask if the member could speak further to the urgency of action and to the importance of not losing the momentum we have now given this moment of awareness and of a desire for a response?

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I completely agree with him that there is an urgent need to act, and that we must act now. The discovery of the remains of 215 indigenous children is horrific. The House is discussing this tragedy, and the public is aware of it. We must seize the moment to take concrete action and change how things are done.

The indigenous people who were sent to residential schools are getting older, but they are still with us. We must take this opportunity to listen to them so we can take their experience and implement what they are humbly suggesting in order to effect real change.

There must no longer be two classes of people in Canada, with first nations on one side and all other citizens on the other. Unfortunately, this arrangement continues to this day. Let us seize the moment and take action now.

Fine speeches are all well and good, but what we need is concrete action and laws. We must overhaul the racist act and implement the measures in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to begin by saying that I will be sharing my time with the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

My colleague will share his opinion on the important motion that my party moved today. The motion has to do with a tragic event in history, and we hope that this grim discovery will mark the last chapter in this tragedy. The remains of 215 children were discovered in Kamloops, near a former residential school. These missing boys and girls were robbed of their lives.

I have to admit that I was stunned by this discovery, as were most Quebeckers, Canadians and people around the world who read about or saw this sad story on the news. I was particularly touched by the gestures made by our fellow citizens, who placed children's shoes on the steps of some public buildings. In my opinion, that is a good way to demonstrate that those who lost their lives were human beings. They were not just a statistic. They were individuals who suffered a shocking injustice. The families endured terrible suffering because of the secrecy surrounding these disappearances,

and they are still suffering today. There was a very high mortality rate in residential schools.

I would like to come back to the principle of residential schools.

In my opinion, this topic was not talked about enough in school. We were sometimes taught an idealized view of the relationship with first nations and trade with first nations. It seems as though the issue of residential schools, which were run by the Catholic Church, was glossed over because no one wanted to talk about it. However, we have a collective and historic responsibility with regard to the harm that was done to these people.

The former Kamloops residential school was one of 139 residential schools that existed in Canada for a century. Earlier, one of my colleagues pointed out that an estimated 150,000 children were ripped from their families and placed in these institutions.

I cannot imagine going about my life in a neighbourhood or a village and seeing whites and priests literally swoop in and steal all the children. It was mass kidnapping. It was cultural genocide. It is proof of deeply rooted colonialism and racism toward first nations.

I cannot imagine my children and my neighbours' children being taken away. In this case, literally every child in the village was taken away. From one day to the next, they were just gone. The goal was to kill the Indian in the child, to separate children from their roots, their culture, their language and their spirituality. The authorities tried to turn these children into carbon copies of the white settlers and Christians who ran the institutions. It was an indescribable horror. The former Kamloops residential school may just be the tip of the iceberg, unfortunately. All levels of government are going to have to work really hard and really fast to get to the bottom of what happened. We have to know what happened so that families can find closure once and for all and grieve. That is crucial.

Earlier, I said that this tragedy had attracted worldwide attention. As a matter of fact, this week, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights asked the federal government and the governments of every province and territory to take steps to initiate an investigation, carry out the necessary searches and protect documentation. If any documents are damaged, destroyed or lost, we will not be able to get to the bottom of this tragedy.

● (1230)

Today, everyone agrees that we need more than words. Concrete gestures need to be made. For too long now, the federal government has been either denying this problem, looking the other way or dragging its feet, which we have seen it do a lot in recent years. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission wrapped up six years ago. Of the 94 recommendations that the commission made, only 10 have been implemented. There is still an enormous amount of work ahead to take the measures that need to be taken.

Business of Supply

I mentioned this earlier, but we as New Democrats and progressives find it extremely unfortunate, hurtful and offensive when the federal government says one thing and does the opposite. On the one hand, it is saying all the right things, expressing sorrow and apologizing, and those are all great, because they are a good first step. On the other hand, the federal government is paying lawyers to represent it in Federal Court to challenge rulings by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal dealing with the rights of indigenous children and compensation for victims of residential schools.

It is not spending small amounts. For all of its legal challenges in Federal Court, the federal government has spent a total of \$9.4 million so far to dispute compensation for residential school victims and rights violations caused by the underfunding of indigenous child welfare services. It is crazy. In the St. Anne's residential school case alone, the federal government has paid lawyers \$3 million to challenge the rights of residential school victims.

We believe this absolutely must change. Once again, we are faced with the sad evidence of this colonialism and systemic racism, with the discovery of these 215 children's bodies buried in secret. It is proof that the dehumanization of first nations and indigenous peoples continues, and we all have a duty to work together for reconciliation, a better agreement and better mutual understanding.

We know that is not being done. A few minutes ago, the member for Joliette cited the tragic death of Joyce Echaquan at the Joliette hospital as evidence that the first nations are enduring discrimination, institutional bias, racism and systemic racism, sometimes at risk to their own lives. It is not just a matter of being negatively perceived or misunderstood, because this affects people's health and sometimes even their life.

Throughout this entire process of reconciliation and dialogue, we have to be consistent and take meaningful action. Under Canadian colonialism, first nations peoples were ignored and hurt, subjected to cultural genocide and shunted off to parks or reserves so they would no longer be seen or heard. Occasional progress is being made, but some communities feel like there are two different worlds that do not get along and ignore each other.

Unfortunately, there is still a lot of misunderstanding and ignorance about the realities of the first nations, who were living here before the arrival of European settlers. Sometimes they are our neighbours, but we do not know much about them, and we do not understand them. I think we need to make an effort to change that.

As a columnist pointed out this week, the news from Kamloops is not really news, sadly. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission told us that nearly 3,000 children may have died in or disappeared from residential schools. Another piece of bad news is that there was a tuberculosis epidemic in 1907. Peter Henderson Bryce, the chief medical officer at the time, noted that the mortality rate in residential schools went from 24% to 42% in three years. One residential school even had a child mortality rate of 76%, higher than the mortality rate of a World War II concentration camp.

We need to conduct searches and uncover the truth. Unfortunately, I fear that we will uncover more unmarked mass graves like the one in Kamloops.

• (1235)

[*English*]

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, part (d) of the motion talks about providing survivors, their families and communities with appropriate resources to assist with emotional, physical, spiritual, mental and cultural trauma resulting from residential schools, and that part of the motion I completely agree with.

I am wondering if he could explain to the House his understanding of spiritual trauma and why this support is important as we move forward.

• (1240)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her excellent question.

The vast system of residential schools and kidnappings constituted cultural genocide. The purpose was to separate these children from their world view and from their way of living in harmony with nature. The purpose was to destroy and eliminate indigenous spirituality in favour of a European world view and religious standard. These wounds take a long time to heal.

I think that we must all be capable of investing in and working with groups and communities to find the best way forward. We must, at the very least, provide the human and financial resources to help heal these wounds.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. As my Bloc Québécois colleagues have said before me, we will vote in favour of this extremely important motion. We are in full agreement with every item in the motion.

In light of what happened in Kamloops, we are calling for searches to be carried out across the country. What role should the federal government play in these searches, not only financially, but also in terms of reconciliation and compassion?

I would like my colleague's comments on that.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. The federal government has an enormous responsibility. It was the federal government that imposed the Indian Act, which is a racist act. As her colleague from Joliette said, the act's very title is racist.

The government does indeed have a financial responsibility. Hardly any of the money earmarked two years ago for carrying out investigations and searches has been spent. The investigations and searches were funded by British Columbia.

That means we really have to ramp up this process before it is too late, before survivors are too old or evidence disappears completely. The government has an institutional, legal responsibility but also a financial one.

Business of Supply

[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have noted throughout the course of this debate we have yet to hear from any of our Liberal colleagues that they intend to support this motion. I wonder if my colleague could remark on what message he feels that sends during such an important week, and whether he is hopeful that at the end of this debate all of us in this place will stand together in unity and send a clear message to indigenous people across this country that we stand with them.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent question.

Given the tragic circumstances and the grim discovery in Kamloops, I certainly expect all members of the House to vote in favour of this motion before us. The motion makes sense. It is coherent and logical, and it is in keeping with real reconciliation and the meaningful action that will enable us to reach out and have the dialogue that we all need to have.

I think it would be a real shame if the government members did not vote in favour of this motion for financial reasons or because of legal formalities. That would send a very bad message, particularly given the current circumstances.

[English]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I really struggled with trying to find the words to say during today's speech. I will start with an acknowledgement of this moment, the opportunity before the House and its members, and also of the trauma that is being relived right now by survivors and their families with the news this week.

I also want to acknowledge that I am privileged to represent a riding that encompasses the territories of many indigenous people, which include the Stz'uminus, the Penelakut, the Halalt, the Lyackson, the Cowichan, the Malahat, Ditidaht, Pacheedaht and the Lekwungen-speaking Coast Salish people. I know many of them are survivors and send my thoughts out to them for the difficult journey they have in trying to deal with this trauma.

The discovery of unmarked and undocumented graves of 215 children at the Kamloops residential school has reopened so many wounds that have never healed. It has reignited a discussion about the federal government's continued failure to properly address this shameful episode of our country's history and it has highlighted its continued hypocrisy. As Justice Murray Sinclair mentioned when the TRC report was presented, it is a sure thing that more unmarked graves will be found in the future.

Back in February 2015, I took a trip up Vancouver Island to Alert Bay, which is about four hours away from where I live. I went there because I was attending a healing and cleansing ceremony for the St. Michael's residential school on Alert Bay, which is on the traditional territory of the Namgis First Nation. Up until that point, because it was never mentioned during my time in school, I had never really fully grasped the history of the horrors of the residential school system in Canada.

After the healing and cleansing ceremony ended, I saw survivors of St. Michael's approach the building and scream in rage and anguish as they hurled bricks through its windows. I saw them collapse in tears after that huge emotional release. It is then that I finally grasped just what survivors have gone through, when I saw the emotional torrent come from people standing in front of a now empty building and what that building represented to them. That was a very powerful moment for me and it is one that has stuck with me all these years.

Members of Parliament often get comments from people about why residential schools still matter and why indigenous people cannot just get over this episode and move on. This was forced assimilation, a genocide that was inflicted upon an entire people. Indigenous people did not send their children to these schools. Children were forcibly ripped away from their families. They were forced to forget their culture, language and history. They were neglected, abused, both sexually and physically, and they died, often with no notice given to their families. The undocumented and unmarked graves were often a final resting place and that is a testament to how little value was placed on these children's lives, by both the federal government and the Catholic church that ran the schools. It is complete evidence of a system that just did not care. It was a system that sought to hide the brutal results of the way it operated.

The creation of Canada's residential school system was the result of colonial laws, policies and practices that failed to recognize and implement basic human rights. I am a parent of three beautiful girls. I try to comprehend the state arriving on my doorstep one day and forcibly removing them, never being able to see them again. That is a parent's worst nightmare. One does not just get over that.

● (1245)

There are the survivors who returned, and there is the intergenerational trauma that has affected entire communities. There is no indigenous person in Canada who is not in some way affected by this brutal and traumatic event in our history. Let us make that extremely clear from the get-go.

With respect to my Liberal colleagues, I know there are good intentions on the government side. They have made repeated promises to finally do this work, but they have not been fulfilled. We continue to see platitudes and symbolism in response, when it is quite clear we are well past the time for action.

This is a government that has only implemented a fraction of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action. I will remind my hon. colleagues that these are not recommendations; they are called "calls to action" for a reason. This is a government that continues to fight a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruling on the systemic discrimination against indigenous children, and that spends millions of dollars fighting residential school survivors in court.

As an example, the federal government is heading toward trial on a class action lawsuit that is seeking reparations for the devastation the residential schools inflicted on first nation cultures, language and communities. The federal government, in its court filings, is denying any legal responsibility. It is saying that the loss of language and culture was an unavoidable implication of children being taught in English or the Christian doctrine.

That is just so beyond the reality of what happened. What was avoidable was the policy of forcibly sending these children to schools where they were completely disconnected from their language, culture and history. We have a continued policy of federal government lawyers being completely at odds with where we need to be as a nation if we are to move forward.

Today's debate has made me also think of all of the times Canada has stood on the world stage over the last number of decades and lectured other countries on their human rights record while remaining wilfully ignorant of the rampant abuses in our own backyard. If that is not the most damning example of hypocrisy, I do not know what is. Because this news is now international, I think other countries around the world have every right to call us out on that rampant hypocrisy. When I think of the mass graves of children that are undocumented and unaccounted for, words fail me. We are going to find more of these. That is an unavoidable fact.

When I speak to my constituents about this, the overwhelming response has been a very real sense of frustration. They are tired of the lofty rhetoric, continued commitments and the constant repetition that no relationship is more important than that with indigenous people. If it is, then it is time act like it is. My constituents want to see action.

This pandemic has demonstrated just how quickly governments can move in times of crisis, both in changing policy and delivering assistance. If this is not a time of crisis, if this is not a watershed moment for us to look at ourselves in the mirror and figure out where we actually want to be, I do not know what is. I keep waiting. When are we going to reach that moment when the straw finally breaks the camel's back and we will start to see that movement?

This brings me to today's motion. It sets out not everything we can do, but an initial couple of steps. There are a limited number of options we have as members of the opposition, but one of the tools we have is enforcing House debate on a motion of our choosing and getting an eventual vote on it. I have heard members of other opposition parties indicate they are supporting the motion, but have yet to hear any of the Liberal MPs indicate that they are. I think it would be a very powerful message if this motion passed with the unanimous consent of the House.

In conclusion, I would ask that members of the government vote in favour of this motion. I know it is non-binding, but at least they could signal that they understand the action that needs to be taken. Hopefully, this will lead us to being on the road to the systemic change we must absolutely see.

• (1250)

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague gave a very heartfelt speech today.

The other night during debate, the member for Northwest Territories said, "It is time to move forward. It is time to take action. We have to start moving and get all the TRC recommendations done." We all agree with that, and the member mentioned it in his speech.

The TRC had a full section on child welfare, and I know the hon. member was part of the last Parliament when we passed Bill C-92. In 2020, the government allocated \$542 million for capacity build-

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ing and agreement tables to implement Bill C-92. There was additional funding in budget 2021.

I just wonder what the hon. member's thoughts are on the importance of implementing Bill C-92 so that we do not have children being taken out of their communities and away from their families, and on returning the inherent right to indigenous communities to look after their own children and provide—

• (1255)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I do have to allow time for other questions.

The hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, yes, I was in the previous Parliament when we debated that legislation, and I will admit that some of the measures announced in previous budgets were beneficial.

However, if the member were to talk to Dr. Cindy Blackstock about those measures, I think the member would see that she welcomed them, but she says they do not go far enough. We still have a case in which the government has not yet fully complied with the orders of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, and that is a real problem.

Therefore, I would ask the parliamentary secretary to build upon what has been done already and realize that much more is needed to be done. I hope she will find it in her heart, when this motion comes to a vote, to join members of the opposition and present a unanimous voice of the House on this particular motion.

[*Translation*]

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

Yesterday, in question period, the Prime Minister said that his government invested \$33.8 million to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action 71 to 76.

However, when we look at the Public Accounts of Canada and the main estimates, we see that only \$3.2 million was budgeted, and that the other \$30 million seems to have disappeared.

The government says that it wants to take action, but it is not investing the necessary funds, even though it promised to do so.

Why does my colleague think that is?

[*English*]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, we have seen this often in the past, when Liberal promises of specific funding amounts do not match up with what was actually spent at the end of the day. It underlines, first of all, why having the public accounts committee is so incredibly important.

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Again, it goes to the earlier part of my speech when I talked about how quickly government can move in times of crisis. The government was prepared to offer \$700 billion in liquidity supports to our financial institutions, which is a gargantuan sum of money, so the government absolutely has the ability to meet the financial requirements for us to get to the place we need to be. I implore my Liberal colleagues to find it in their hearts to join with us, so we can make this a unanimous vote on this particular motion.

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague and I are neighbours, so we share some of the territory that our ridings fall into for Lyackson and St'zuminus. I have heard from constituents who are very upset and have been re-traumatized by this discovery, which was, of course, not surprising to those who have been listening all along.

I did a video for the Cowichan District Hospital in which I interviewed elders who talked about their treatment in residential schools and in the health care system. I would like to ask my hon. colleague if he could comment on the legacy of the Indian hospitals, which were also across this country, including in Nanaimo.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, I will echo what I have heard, and it follows very much what the member said. I have spoken with elders who can go nowhere near a train because that was the vehicle that took them to a residential school.

With respect to the hospital system, we still have policies that were in place in our hospitals for first nations women to be forcibly separated from their newborn babies by agents of the government. That is a shameful policy that we also have to address on our path to reconciliation.

I appreciate the question from my neighbour.

• (1300)

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Vancouver Centre.

Kwe. Unusakut. Tansi. Hello. Bonjour. I want to acknowledge that I am speaking today from the traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

Indigenous communities, families and friends are hurting. Emotions are high, and the pain is real. For indigenous people, the events this week may not be a surprise. It does not make it less of a shock or less painful. There is not a single community that is not grieving today. The news that came from Kamloops last week has opened up wounds that were not closed, even if people thought they were closed.

Our thoughts and actions at this time must support the communities and families in recovering the truth, so that they could continue to heal. We cannot heal without the truth, as painful as it is. It is on the hearts and minds of all Canadians, and frankly, if it is not, it should be.

Over the past week, people have shared piercing and atrocious anecdotes that really show what kind of places those facilities were, and indeed the testimonials today from members in the House certainly reinforces that. I thank them for their testimonials.

I was reminded by a faith healer friend who I rely heavily upon that, for example, the Mohawk Institute in Six Nations had an orchard and had apples, but the kids could not eat them. They were punished if they did. There were chickens, but the kids could not take the eggs because the eggs were sent to market. The only time they would get one was at Easter. Calling those places schools is to use a euphemism. They were labour camps, and people starved.

I know people are eager to get answers as to what the federal government will do, what we will do nationally and what Canada will do. Let me say this clearly, we will be there for indigenous communities that want to continue the search for the truth.

The reality is that this is something that will be dictated to us by the communities that are affected, as set forth notably in call to action 76 in the body of the Truth and Reconciliation Report. We will be there for communities. We do have to respect the privacy, space and mourning period of those communities that are collecting their thoughts and putting together their protocols as to how to honour these children. They have asked us specifically for that. We will do that, and Canadians must respect that.

Yesterday, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations announced \$27 million in funding to support the ongoing NCTR and to implement calls to action 74 to 76. This will fund support for survivors, their families and communities across Canada to locate and memorialize children who died or went missing while attending residential schools.

[*Translation*]

We also have to look one another right in the eyes and face the fact that the general public either misunderstands or is ignorant of certain chapters of our history, especially the most painful ones. This truth is hard to bear, particularly for the indigenous communities affected and for the individuals and families who are reliving very painful parts of their own history or that of their parents, cousins, uncles and aunts.

As leaders, politicians and members of Parliament, it is also our role to educate and contribute to that education. In light of what we have learned this week, it is once again clear that many more truths remain to be uncovered. Explanations are needed. Too often, that explanation comes from indigenous peoples themselves. Too often, the job of educating Canadians has fallen to them, and, too often, we do not transmit that knowledge to our children. Fortunately, children are now learning about this in school, and they are telling us the harsh truth about what happened. Placing this burden on indigenous peoples is not fair. It should not be their burden to carry.

I repeat: We will be there for indigenous communities and families. We will support the search for truth and we will implement calls to action 72 to 76, among others, with an initial investment of \$27 million. This funding will be distributed according to the priorities and requests of the communities themselves.

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The government's role is to financially support communities in their grieving and healing process, as the wounds are still very fresh in this case. The communities will decide themselves whether they want to proceed with more extensive searches or not.

In this particular case, we spoke directly with indigenous leaders in Kamloops and the surrounding communities to offer mental health and security services, because emotions are running high, but we will respect the space they asked us to respect.

• (1305)

Obviously, this is painful for families who may have had uncles, aunts or cousins who disappeared and were never heard from again, but the key point here is that the Government of Canada will be there with the necessary support and funding for the communities that need it.

[*English*]

One of the many things being highlighted and underscored this week, in the midst of the heartache in Kamloops, is that indigenous children belong with their families and communities. Kids belong at home, where they can be with their relatives and elders; where they can learn their nation's culture, language and traditions; and where they can be given back all that was taken from, their parents and their grandparents. Bill C-92 affirms this inherent right. I would note that this basic right is one that the rest of us take for granted.

All of us share the responsibility to ensure this happens. The number of indigenous children who have been taken away in care in recent years far exceeds the number who attended residential schools. That should set in. In 2016, more than 52% of children in foster care in Canada were indigenous, and they account for 7% of the child population. The truth is that for children taken away from their community, their connections to their cultures and traditions were impacted too.

Fixing a broken system requires long-term reforms. The Government of Canada is determined to eliminate and continues to eliminate these discriminatory policies and practices against indigenous children, and we are doing it hand-in-hand with indigenous partners. The Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families, which responds to calls to action, is a new way forward. Indigenous governments and communities have always been empowered to decide what is best for their children, their families and their communities, and the act provides a path for them to fully exercise and lift up that jurisdiction.

As a result of this work, led by indigenous communities, two indigenous laws are now enforced: the Wabaseemoong Independent Nations law in Ontario and the Miyo Pimatisowin Act of the Cowessess First Nation in Saskatchewan. In each of these communities, children will have greater opportunity to grow up immersed in their culture and surrounded by loved ones. They will be welcomed home.

We are moving closer to achieving our shared ultimate goal of reducing the number of indigenous children in care. Systemic reform of the child and family services system is one important step. Compensation for past harms is another.

Since the CHRT issued its first order for Canada to cease its discriminatory practices in 2016, we have been working with first nations leaders and partners to implement the tribunal's orders.

We have the same goal of fair and equitable compensation. Let me be clear that no first nations children will be denied fair and equitable compensation. Children should not be denied the products or services they need because governments cannot agree on who will pay for them. It is why, via Jordan's principle, we have funded approximately \$2 billion in services, speech therapy, educational supports, medical equipment, mental health services and so much more. This is transformative and the right thing to do.

The government is not questioning or challenging the notion that first nations children who were removed from their homes, families and communities should be compensated. We are committed to providing first nations children with access to the necessary supports and services, but it is important to obtain clarity on certain limited issues, which is why we brought the judicial review forward. We need to focus on what is really important, ensuring fair and equitable compensation of first nations children affected by the child and family services program and that first nations children have access to the supports they need when they need them.

I would remind the House that there are also two competing class actions that deal essentially with the same group of children. We are, nevertheless, in discussions with the parties to the various cases, but those discussions must remain confidential out of respect.

Finally, no court case can achieve the transformative change that we need to achieve as a country.

[*Translation*]

As the recent discovery in Kamloops reminds us once again, every child in this country should have the support and services they need to thrive.

Removing a child from their family or community must be an absolute last resort. We need to do the work to change the system and ensure that every person is treated equally and fairly, without prejudice or injustice, and with respect and dignity. It is our responsibility as a government and as Canadians who want to make Canada a better place for everyone.

We cannot change the past, but we can learn from it and find ways to right some historic wrongs, to acknowledge what never should have happened and do everything we can to ensure a better future.

Meegwetch. Nakurmik. Masi cho.

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• (1310)

[English]

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Madam Speaker, as a father and grandfather, I have tried to put myself in the same place in this disastrous affair we are going through and imagine how I would react. It is very nice of the minister to be symbolic and say that the government will fly the flag half-mast. If I were in the same place, I would want full justice for my children. Would the minister not expect the same if this happened to him? Will he support the motion before us today to ensure that this moves in a speedy way?

Hon. Marc Miller: Madam Speaker, I cannot put myself in the place of an indigenous person to whom this has happened. It would be wrong. I certainly know how viscerally I would react if someone, no matter how well-intentioned, decided he or she wanted to survey a plot where my ancestors were buried when I knew how they had died.

I know and understand some of the reactions people have across the country in wanting to get to the truth and to proceeding with searches. However, we have to respect those indigenous voices and give them the space they need to express to the country how they truly feel. We will be there for them. The work of Indigenous Services Canada is to support these communities as they go through this process, decide their protocols and move on.

Symbolic acts are important for a reason, but we must go past that. We must move forward and continue to be there, and move along this path. Yes, it is slow, and we can ask ourselves if reconciliation has gone too slowly. That is a legitimate question, but we need to move forward with the truth, which is so important for healing.

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, considering the minister's military background, I think he will appreciate this.

I would like to read from the late Nawash Chief Wilmer Nadjison's book, *Not Wolf, Nor Dog*. He wrote:

The effects of going to Spanish [residential school] were worse than the post traumatic effects of a soldier on the battle field; I know ... I was there, and soldiered as an infantryman for most of the Italian Campaign in World War II. When I returned to Canada, I brought some of the battlefield demons with me and they were hard to chase from my mind, but I was eventually able to forget them.

Not so when it came to the residential school. The life I had for the most of six years in the Spanish Residential School cannot be erased. What I experienced there from early spring 1930 to 1935 cannot be erased. It has been a burden in so many ways for the full extent of my life.

Is the minister going to support the motion today?

Hon. Marc Miller: Madam Speaker, indeed, there are some uneasy parallels to people who have served and have had post-traumatic stress. The residential school system has broken people, languages and culture. My colleague for the Northwest Territories, whom I sat with on the bench for a year in Parliament, has certainly given poignant testimony as to those effects.

We will be continuing to support indigenous communities and those around Kamloops as they navigate this very difficult path. We will provide the supports necessary, and we will continue to reform

the child and family services to bring the country to the height of what people expect it to be.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for his remarks. His sincerity truly comes across in his voice. In the current circumstances, that is very much appreciated.

I will ask him a question that I asked my other colleague a bit earlier. I think that the minister is in the best position to answer.

In 2019, \$33.8 million was allocated to fund certain calls to action in the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. However, when we check the public accounts and main estimates, we see that only \$3.2 million was invested.

Can the minister tell us what became of the \$30 million that seems not to have been invested at all?

Hon. Marc Miller: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question.

At this time of national mourning, I do not want to offer excuses for the spending of money that was allocated.

At the same time, these monies did not come from thin air. They were allocated in the 2019 budget to respond to the calls to action, and these amounts have yet to be spent. They may not be enough, but we will continue to invest them in the communities because we know that communities across Canada will ask for research to be done and perhaps even searches if required.

• (1315)

[English]

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the New Democratic Party for bringing forward this topic on its opposition day. This is the kind of thing we need to do. We need to discuss this. We need to talk about it. We need to clarify and get to the truth of everything.

I know my colleague, the Minister of Indigenous Services, just said that he could not put himself in the place of those families and children. When I think of the residential schools, I think of what it would be like for my three boys to have been taken away from me when they were five or six years old. I think about them being told I was a bad parent and they would never see me again. I think of them being made to believe that everything they believed in, their family and their parents, was a lie or was untrue; making them feel ashamed of who they were, never knowing what it was to have been loved by a parent and living in an institution where they were abused. That makes me tear up because it must have been horrid.

When I think of those children who were buried in the mass grave in Kamloops, I think how they must have longed to see their parents, longed to be home, feeling ashamed every single day about being Indian and having to change who they were. I am just thinking about that.

In 2010-11, I chaired the status of women committee. We looked at the issue of violence against indigenous women in society, on reserve and off reserve. We went across the country, members from all political parties. We listened to the testimony of the women, the grandmothers and the elders. Every member of that committee did not have a single day in which they did not have tears unabashedly streaming down their cheeks, hearing those stories and the injustice of it all. Some of them came in saying things that they heard from other Canadians, such as “Oh, look at me”, that they had come here with no money in their pockets and they had survived. They wanted to know why these people were not able to do the same. They stopped saying that after the second meeting. They could not bear to listen to that truth.

I want to also note that during these committee hearings, I do not think we ever had more than two people in the room who were non-indigenous. Canadians did not care. They did not want to come and they did not want to listen. This was not an important thing for them to hear.

I hear people say that when they were in school, they were not taught this. That is the collective responsibility we bear for not caring, for pretending we did not know or for not wanting to know. That is important thing I want to park here. The facts are that most Canadians do not know and that most Canadian contribute to societal discrimination against indigenous people, calling them names, thinking they are, in fact, unworthy of the help or of anything. They do not understand the intergenerational trauma.

I have to mention South Africa. South Africa began apartheid because people came here, they saw what we were doing, they saw the carding system to be an Indian. They saw the residential schools and the reserves. They went back and did that in South Africa. They borrowed that for the way the Afrikaners treated the majority of that community. When we look at the parallels between South Africa, they learned apartheid from us.

However, we also learned something from them. We learned about truth and reconciliation. We are now talking about truth and reconciliation. We have been talking about it for a long time. When the people, the survivors, went and spoke, they mostly spoke to an indigenous commission. There still were no Canadians there, listening, learning and feeling heartbroken by what they heard. I do not believe there is a Canadian who would not be heartbroken by those stories. We have talked about reconciliation, but I want to talk about truth.

● (1320)

I want to make sure as we use this opportunity to speak together as a Parliament, we resist the tendency to want to have a quick and dirty fix and then go about our business and have feelings of “look at us, we just did all the right things”, that we can just feel not guilty and can assuage all of the feelings we have.

We should not do that, and we should not take this horrible, tragic, painful finding of the bodies of children in Kamloops to become partisan and political. We would actually be desecrating the bodies of those children if we built partisanship out of this, if we made political gains out of this.

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I would love to hear us talk about this and would love to not hear us say “and this is what you must do”, because are we not then doing what the colonials and the churches did, which is to tell everybody what to do? Do we not think we have told indigenous people what to do for long enough? Do we not think that reconciliation is a long journey? We learned that from South Africa. It still has not finished that journey. South Africa is still on that journey.

The point I am trying to make here is that we have to be very careful about how we use this tragedy to impose on and continue to pretend we know best for indigenous people. Reconciliation is taking a long time because we have to work and, for the first time, listen and respect what indigenous communities want.

Indigenous communities across this country have different journeys right now. Some of them are ready for reconciliation and self-government and some of them have a long way to go. We need to be patient and work with them in respect. As government, we love to say, “Let us get this done tomorrow; let us get this bill passed”, but this is not what this about. This is about a journey.

I want to talk a bit about all the tears, flowers and outpouring of grief by Canadians. This is good and is cathartic for everybody. At the same time, we know everybody will move on to a different site at the next tragedy that comes and put flowers, and that the grief will be just as great for that new thing as it is for this one. This is not simply an incident we must grieve over. This has been going on for a long time.

There has been intergenerational pain and grief. As Canadians, never mind government or institutions, but as Canadians, every day we judge indigenous people. We are responsible, as Canadians, for the systemic discrimination of “Look at that person. They’re probably drunk.” I heard from the witnesses in committee about how people would be taken to the hospital in pain, and someone talked about an incident where a young man had an abscessed tooth and was in such pain he was just crying all the time and the nurses and doctor said to bring him back when he was sober.

We are responsible for that. This is not just about what a government did. This is not about what churches did. This is about what everybody did because they thought they knew best. I do not want us to do that. I do not want us to always know best. I want us to heed, as we are already doing, the path to reconciliation and take the patience to walk with indigenous people, to listen to indigenous people and to heed what they are telling us. Not just to listen, but to heed it. We need to go at the pace they are ready to go at, and in the interim, to support, heal and make sure we build together a new society.

I want to talk about the truth part. We have talked a lot about reconciliation. In the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, the truth was told in public fora. The truth was told by witnesses who came to say what they had suffered under that horrible regime, and everybody heard. The Afrikaners heard, the white population heard, everybody heard. It was broadcast on television and everybody heard that truth.

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What we need to do is now go back to the schools and teach that truth. What we need today, other than teddy bears, flowers and quick fixes, is for every single Canadian in this country to own that truth. We need to own that shame. We need to own that guilt. We need to say to indigenous people that we have continued to do this and are sorry, not just that we are sorry but that we want to take the burden of guilt onto ourselves and that we want to take that shame and carry it with them. That is how it should go.

I just want to read something from—

● (1325)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member's time is up.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to the remarks from the member for Vancouver Centre. Some of what she said concerned me because I believe she was suggesting that it is inappropriate for Parliament to call on the government to take immediate and substantial action in this moment.

She said at one point that we should heed what indigenous people are telling us. The indigenous people who are speaking to me are telling me that the progress on implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action has been far too slow, that the actions of the government have not measured up to what is required.

My question is whether the member will support this motion, which I believe very closely reflects the calls we are hearing from indigenous people that the government should not be fighting indigenous kids in court, that it should be investing far more and taking far more dramatic actions to implement the calls to action. Will she support that motion?

Hon. Hedy Fry: Madam Speaker, I think it is interesting that we just talked about listening and heeding what people were saying. I did not say that. That is not what I said. I did not say that Parliament should not have a say in moving forward.

I do think we have taken a long time, but we have taken the time that we were asked to take as we moved along with every single first nation clearly as they were ready to move forward. We have said that we would do that and we have been doing it.

What I wanted to talk a little about is this. Let us not run off and say we have to do it now, we must do it within a certain period of time, because that means that we are not listening. We are not listening to what indigenous people are telling us about some of the things they need.

The hon. member knows that no one is taking indigenous kids to court. We know that the Human Rights Tribunal made some recommendations that were outside of its scope. That is why we are having a judicial inquiry into this—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We do have to move on to other questions.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Louise Charbonneau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Vancouver Centre for her heartfelt presentation.

I want to point out that in Trois-Rivières, there was a march in honour of Joyce Echaquan to mark the end of the inquest into what happened in Joliette. That attests to the sensibility of indigenous people.

Does my colleague believe that indigenous peoples should be consulted and be involved in decisions that will be made in cases similar to that of Kamloops?

[*English*]

Hon. Hedy Fry: Madam Speaker, absolutely. I think we need to give the assistance that is needed monetarily and in other ways, such as mental health, healing and support systems for families, to be able to go across the country and find out where there are other similar graves of lost children who never went home. We need to move forward to help. That is a thing we can do now, but I am speaking of some of the things within the reconciliation package and in this motion that ask for things to do, which would mean that we would be imposing things on indigenous communities that are not ready.

The indigenous peoples of Canada are not one amorphous mass of people. They are made up of different communities that have different first nations groups within them that have their own pace at which they are ready to move forward. They have bigger griefs, more griefs. They have a lot of things. We have to listen and work with them. That is what I am trying to say.

There is somebody called Geswanouth Slahoot, known as Chief Dan George. I will always remember what he had to say, when he stated:

Many have been shamed of their Indian ways by scorn and ridicule. My culture is like a wounded deer that has crawled away into the forest to bleed and die alone.

The only thing that can...help us is genuine love...a love that forgives the terrible sufferings your culture...[has imposed on us] when it swept over us like a wave...a beach...a love that forgets and lifts up its head and sees in your eyes [you, Canadians, in your eyes] an answering love of trust and acceptance...

I think that is what I was trying to talk about here. It is not about quick fixes or immediate things. It is not about us all grieving at this one moment and forgetting about it as we move on to something new. It is about that steady moving forward and it is about Canadians taking the guilt, the blame and the shame, to say that all of us, even if we were only born 10 years ago, have to carry that, to acknowledge it.

● (1330)

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am joining the debate today from the unceded lands of the Wet'suwet'en people. It is an honour to be sharing my time with the member for Winnipeg Centre.

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Canadians have been shocked to learn the truth that indigenous people have been telling us for a long time. The validation of 215 unmarked burial sites near Kamloops has brought intense grief, despair and pain to indigenous people right across the country. My heart is with them today, especially the survivors of the residential schools that once stood in northwest B.C. at Lejac, Kitimat, Port Simpson and Lower Post. My heart is with them and their families.

I say “once stood”, but in Lower Post, a small village of the Daylu Dena just south of the B.C.-Yukon border, the residential school still stands. In fact, since the 1970s, this community has been forced to use the former residential school as its band office. I went there two winters ago and heard stories of how elders who suffered abuse in that building were forced to walk through its doors again and again to access basic services. Survivor Fred Lutz, who was the deputy chief at the time, took me to the basement and showed me the dark place behind the stairs. It is an image that will stay with me forever.

The Daylu Dena have been calling for the demolition and replacement of that building for years. It was good to hear just recently that in a few short weeks, it will finally be demolished. That is thanks to the leadership of people like Deputy Chief Harlan Schilling, former deputy chief Fred Lutz, their councils and others in their community. A new building will finally be built for the Daylu Dena. It is a long overdue step in the healing process and we have to ask ourselves why it took us so long.

I know a lot of non-indigenous people are feeling sad about the tragic discovery near Kamloops, but what I hear from indigenous people is that having us indulge in our sadness does not make the situation they face any better. What they want us to do, especially those of us in positions of power and influence, is to fight like hell for real action in this moment when people care about something they should have cared about a long time ago. That is where this motion comes from. We must act now.

How is it that six years later, so little progress has been made on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 calls to action? I remember when they came out in 2015: It was the year the Liberal government took power with a majority. How is it that by last year, 2020, there had only been significant progress on a quarter of the calls to action? How is it that so few of those calls have actually been completed?

A portion of this motion would require the government to accelerate implementation of the TRC calls to action related to investigating the deaths and disappearances of children at residential schools. We have heard much about that in this debate. The indigenous people I have spoken with over the past week overwhelmingly want the truth. They want to know where the other burial sites are and how many children are there. They want to know where their loved ones are. I was infuriated to learn that in 2009, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission asked the Harper government for \$1.5 million to search residential school properties. Shamefully, those funds were denied. What would indigenous communities know today if that money had been granted 12 years ago?

The call to find all the lost children echoes what I have heard from the families of women and girls who have gone missing and have been murdered along the Highway of Tears in northwest B.C.

where I live. I have been honoured to work alongside Brenda and Matilda Wilson, whose beloved Ramona was found murdered along Highway 16 near Smithers in 1996. We worked together to get better public transit along that highway, but what they want more than anything is to know the truth about what happened to Ramona. Twenty-five years later, they keep encouraging the RCMP's E-PANA division to continue its investigation and not stop until they finally know what happened. The families whose children were taken from them and never came home want and deserve the truth too, which is why investing resources and expertise in the residential school investigations is vital. “Truth” comes before “reconciliation” for a reason.

● (1335)

The other parts of this motion are important and deserve mention too. St. Anne's Indian Residential School is a long way from where I live in northwest B.C., but its story illustrates clearly the contrast between the government's carefully scripted performative gestures and its relentless denial of basic justice. I will not pretend to know the details of the St. Anne's issue as well as the member for Timmins—James Bay does, but reading about the government's fight against survivors is nothing short of enraging.

How can the federal government explain its department withholding key person-of-interest documents that would have helped justly resolve survivors' claims? How is it that the government continues to spend millions of dollars in its effort to minimize its responsibilities as a result of the Human Rights Tribunal ruling on indigenous kids in care?

In its 2016 ruling, the tribunal was crystal clear that services for indigenous children were being underfunded, and that as a result more kids were being taken away from their families. The government is fighting that ruling in court. It is arguing that because the discrimination was systemic, individuals harmed should not be entitled to compensation. The system that facilitated this harm was designed by people, and those people worked for our government. It is both astounding and infuriating. If this motion passes, I hope the government will obey the will of Parliament and call off its lawyers. The people affected by this discrimination deserve no less.

What both the St. Anne's case and the case involving indigenous child welfare show is that Canada's shameful treatment of indigenous people continues today. As one person said, it is not a chapter in our history: it is the entire plot of the book. The people in this place have the power to change it if we have the courage.

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Last weekend, my friend Dolores told me that people were gathering at Lejac. It is located west of Prince George near Fraser Lake, about two hours from where I live, so I hopped in my vehicle and I drove out. Lejac is the site of the former Lejac Residential School, to which so many indigenous kids were taken from communities stretching from Prince George to Hazelton. The former school site is situated on a hill overlooking Fraser Lake. It is part of the territory of the Nadleh people.

On New Year's Day in 1937, four Nadleh boys between eight and nine years old escaped from the Lejac school. Allen Willie, Andrew Paul, Maurice Justin, and Johnny Michael set out to walk seven miles to their Nadleh home. They were found frozen to death on the ice of the lake just a mile short of their destination. It is just one of the hundreds of stories of heartbreaking loss stemming from that place.

As I drove up to the site of the former school last weekend, I was struck by how many people had travelled on short notice to be there together that day to share their collective grief, to drum and dance, to honour the survivors still among them, and to stand in solidarity with the families of the children whose remains were found only a few days earlier. I was struck by their resilience and their strength.

Most of all, I will remember Lheidli T'enneh singer Kym Gouchie calling all the children present into the centre of the circle. She taught them the actions for a kids' song that she wrote. As she sang, they followed along, touching their toes and reaching for the sky and singing out the words, and the instructions got faster and faster and the children's laughter rose. Dozens of indigenous kids laughing and dancing on the exact same ground where that horrible school once stood was an expression of joy in a week with so much pain. I will remember that hopeful sight for a long time and it makes me more determined than ever to fight for the justice that the motion before us represents.

I urge every member in this place to vote for this. After the flags go back up and the news media moves on, let us show indigenous people that we still hear them and are willing to act.

• (1340)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have listened to many members on all sides of the House talk about this very important issue.

In the north end of Winnipeg, whether it is this issue or the murdered and missing indigenous women and girls over the last many years, there are daily reminders. I am thinking of red ribbons, and now the hearts with "215" on windows. This has touched Canadians in a very traumatic way. For me, it is a time when we might want to reflect, and renew our commitment to move as quickly as we can on the issue of reconciliation.

Could the member provide his thoughts on how important it is that we depoliticize and try to unify and move forward in a constructive, positive fashion of reconciliation?

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Madam Speaker, the imperative is that we act now.

Those of us in this place should not have to take the next two weeks to reflect. We should know the truth that is represented in the calls for justice and the calls to action. Right now, we have a moment when the country is asking for immediate action and indigenous people are asking for immediate action.

In putting forward this motion, our party is attempting to bring focus to those calls. These are things people have been requesting for a long time. I implore the hon. parliamentary secretary to vote for this motion alongside us. That is what depoliticizing this issue looks like. It looks like unity, and sends that message to indigenous people across the country.

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be supporting the motion today.

I think there is a lot more tragic news that we are likely to discover as we continue to investigate. I would like to quote Duncan Campbell Scott, the 1909 appointed superintendent of Indian education, who said in 1910:

I can safely say that barely half of the children in our Indian schools survive to take advantage of the education we are offering them.

Duck Lake Indian Agent MacArthur later added:

The children "catch the disease ... in a building ... burdened with Tuberculosis Bacilli".

Unfortunately, I think we are going to find more tragic situations in the coming days and weeks. We need to get to the bottom of this and do what we can to help in the healing process.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Madam Speaker, I agree wholeheartedly with the member's comments, and I thank him for his support for this motion.

The quote he read mentioned the educational aspect of these schools, but as so many other members have mentioned, these were not places of education. The Lejac Residential School that I mentioned in my speech had the students digging potatoes and clearing the land. It was forced labour.

We need to very accurately portray the intention behind these schools and the horrible things that happened, and not give any more credence to the suggestion that these were places of education.

• (1345)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very moving speech. I spent some time yesterday paying my respects at the centennial flame, right here on Parliament Hill, where people have come to leave plush toys, children's shoes and messages.

One of the people there told me how much they had suffered in their lifetime with the loss of friends, family and people from their indigenous community, but that the loss of those 215 children was what hurt the most.

How would my colleague like the government to respond to people like that individual, through either words or actions? What would he like the government to do?

[*English*]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Madam Speaker, we have such a clear roadmap before us, not just in the 94 calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission but also in the calls for justice in the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls final report.

We need to ensure the full implementation of all of those calls to action and all of those calls for justice. This motion, I believe, is a first step. It is something we could do in this moment when the eyes of the country are turned to this issue and when there is a chance we could make real progress. We could have the government call off its lawyers, and we could see real resources and a concerted focus placed on finding the other unmarked burial sites across Canada.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his beautiful speech.

I want to start out today by sending my sincere solidarity to all the survivors, families and communities that were shaken once again by the discovery at the Kamloops residential school, particularly the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation. I lift them up today and every day.

The TRC reported that at least 40% to 60% of all children who attended the schools died, and sometimes, as I indicated yesterday, according to Mary-Ellen Kelm, as a result of purposely exposing children to infections such as TB, spreading the disease throughout the school population. Murray Sinclair, who chaired the TRC, has indicated that he believes the death count could be much higher due to the schools' poor burial records, as many as 25,000. These are burial grounds that we know about, but the current government has failed to act to bring our loved ones home.

On calls to action 71 to 76 of the TRC report, former lead commissioner Murray Sinclair has indicated there has been no action. Once again, it was left up to indigenous peoples to find our own loved ones.

These findings have left shockwaves of trauma, grief, hurt and betrayal throughout indigenous nations across the country, as a result of the violent genocide perpetrated against indigenous children and families simply for being who they were, for no other reason than to advance the government's economic agenda, behaviours that continue today. These violent acts were rooted in the violent dispossession of lands, eradicating our cultures and leaving us sometimes sheltered on our very own lands. This included attempting to assimilate our children to get us out of the way, which we are now finding out resulted in the deaths of thousands of children, a genocide.

Here we are again today fighting to get immediate resources and support from the government in order to, at the very least, provide families with closure as a result of this genocide. We are fighting with the federal government to stop fighting first nations kids in court and St. Anne's residential school survivors. This is a government that will not even acknowledge that what it committed and

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continues to commit against indigenous peoples in Canada is genocide. The hope of achieving some sort of justice and closure is waning.

Former commissioner Murray Sinclair stated:

I can hear not only the pain and the anguish, but also the anger that no one believed the stories they had told. I can also hear their sense that they have lost some hope that maybe those children that hadn't returned might still be found. They now know that may not happen.

These are the sacred lives of children exposed to acts of genocide who never returned home, which was a violent violation of human rights.

Let us not forget the parents. I have spoken before in this House about the countless stories from parents and the heartache they feel each September when their children were robbed once again and taken away to residential schools. There was no more laughter, play or joy. Imagine how their heartache grew when their children never returned home, never to hear the echoes of laughter and play, never to have closure, wondering where their babies were. These were cruel, violent acts of genocide, something the government refuses to acknowledge, continuing to leave it up for debate whether indigenous peoples experienced genocide in residential schools.

• (1350)

In fact, there is a class action lawsuit involving 101 first nations seeking reparations from the federal government for the impact of residential schools, and the federal government continues to deny any legal responsibility. In court filings, the government "admits the schools were meant to 'assimilate' Indigenous people, but denies the federal governments of that era 'sought to destroy the ability... to speak their Indigenous language or to lose the customs or traditions of their culture.'" This is a government that has made genocide denial a norm.

The truth needs to be honoured. The experience of parents needs to be honoured and lifted up. I wish to honour all parents and families today who lost loved ones as a result of genocide. We will fight to bring home their children, their siblings, their cousins, their aunts, their uncles, their sisters and brothers. The number of murdered and missing indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people is reported as a genocide in the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls.

Genocide continues, with no action from the federal government. There was an announcement today of releasing an action plan, but the implementation plan is still to come, with no release date in sight. This is something that Chief Judy Wilson, secretary-treasurer of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, has called "another delay, a tactic, and also delaying the funding resources that families of survivors need now. We have people today going missing and murdered. Things have got to change now." She went on to state, "Canada's genocidal legacy is going to continue because there's no change, real leadership, and real commitment. We just get the flowery reconciliation speeches that fall short in action."

Statements by Members

Pam Palmater, a professor from Ryerson University, stated, “That’s code for we didn’t come up with a plan”, further noting that “[a] plan that doesn’t have concrete actions, clear timelines, and measurable outcomes is not acceptable”.

There is a growing distrust from indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people across this country, including NWAC, which has lost faith in the federal government and is done with its “toxic, dysfunctional” process. Instead, NWAC is planning to release its own national action plan, which President Lorraine Whitman said is one that “puts families, not politics, first.”

Let us not forget the millennium scoop and the fact that the government continues to break the law, failing to uphold the Human Rights Tribunal ruling to immediately stop racially discriminating against first nations children on reserve.

Canadian hero Cindy Blackstock has affirmed in The Tyee the following:

The federal government has repeatedly failed to adequately compensate 165,000 First Nations children and families whose childhoods—and lives—were stolen through government neglect...

What we know from the tribunal’s uncontested legal findings is that Canada’s non-compliance has been linked to the deaths of some children, harms to other children and unnecessary family separations of thousands of others. So it’s not unlike the types of things that children in residential schools faced. Canada is continuing that behaviour.

She went on to further note, “It reinforces the responsibility that I and everyone else have to make sure the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action are actually implemented. And that the federal government stops fighting against the equity of First Nations, Métis and Inuit children today, and stops fighting residential school survivors in court.”

The residential schools, the sixties scoop, the millennium scoop and MMIWG are a continuation of ongoing genocide. As Murray Sinclair stated in The Globe and Mail in 2018, “We would have been apprehended by the child-welfare system if it had been organized as it is today.”

I am asking all members of the House to support this motion, to listen to calls coming from indigenous peoples across this country and act now.

● (1355)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member will have five minutes of questions and comments after the question period.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ALLEGED USE OF UNPARLIAMENTARY LANGUAGE—SPEAKER’S RULING

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): On Tuesday, I committed to come back to the House following a point of order raised by the member for Kingston and the Islands.

In his remarks, the member indicated that the member for New Brunswick Southwest, in a preamble to a question, was imputing motive upon another member of this House. I reviewed the Debates and I am of the view that the remarks in question did not meet the threshold needed to be considered as a personal attack or unparlia-

mentary language. As indicated in my initial ruling, the question raised is one of debate and not a contravention to our rules.

That being said, I can only repeat myself and invite members to remain respectful and ensure that the language used not be construed as being derogatory toward another member. Remarks that are overly provocative can often create disorder and quickly fall in the category of unparliamentary language.

I thank the hon. members for their attention.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Madam Speaker, this government’s so-called “climate accountability act” is climate action theatre. I have heard MPs say that this piece of legislation is better than nothing, patting themselves on the back for making meaningless changes.

The Canada Energy Regulator has reported that Canada will miss its Paris Agreement targets because of the oil and gas sector. Billions of taxpayer dollars continue to flow into the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion. Subsidies for fracking and fracked gas continue to increase.

Yesterday, to mark Environment Week, I put forward Motion No. 90 calling for a national ban on gas fracking in Canada. Fracking is a climate killer. Continuing to support and expand the fracked gas industry is incompatible with combatting climate change, protecting fresh water, maintaining a healthy environment and respecting indigenous sovereignty, rights and title.

Canada needs to stop engaging in climate action theatre and implement a national ban on fracking.

* * *

● (1400)

ALS AWARENESS MONTH

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, June is ALS awareness month, a time when the ALS Society of Canada raises awareness and funds for research and support for those who suffer from this tragic disease.

About 3,000 Canadians are, at any one time, living with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. This rapidly progressing neurological disorder can strike anyone, young or old, regardless of age or socio-economic status. As the disease progresses, cost of care and equipment becomes exorbitant and is often borne by family members. The need for research and support to families is critical.

In memory of our late colleague, Mauril Bélanger, whose sudden and rapid demise from ALS affected this House profoundly, let us vow to increase resources dedicated to this disease. However, first, let us join the virtual Walk to End ALS on June 19.

* * *

SEMICONDUCTOR SHORTAGE

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Madam Speaker, over the past 18 months, our economy has been struggling due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, we have another looming crisis that threatens to drastically affect our economy and even shut down many Canadian production facilities.

There is a global shortage of precious and important semiconductors. I recently spoke with many local car dealerships that are having problems receiving new inventory due to this shortage. I have also been in discussion with Napoleon, a manufacturer of fireplaces and barbecues, which is headquartered and manufactures in Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte. Napoleon's shortage is so dire that, in approximately seven days, it will be out of inventory. Therefore, it may no longer be able to manufacture product and could potentially be forced to lay off hard-working Canadians. This semiconductor shortage has the potential to affect tens of thousands of supply chain, manufacturing and distribution jobs across Canada.

I have brought this serious and imminent matter up with the Liberal government. Now, we all need to cross party lines to work together and avert this looming crisis and keep hard-working Canadians producing great Canadian products.

* * *

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on June 4, in front of Surrey City Hall, the south Asian community will hold a candlelight vigil to remember the 215 indigenous children whose remains were found in Kamloops on the grounds of Canada's largest former residential school. The vigil is one of hundreds happening across the country to show solidarity with all indigenous communities in Canada.

This terrible tragedy has touched us all. Regardless of race, religion, geography or cultural background, we are all mourning these innocent souls who were subjected to appalling abuse under the residential school system. Canadians are standing united in support of a different future for indigenous peoples.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Madam Speaker, June is National Indigenous History Month.

Statements by Members

This year, the theme can be no other. It is heart-wrenching. It is about the children. Children like the 215 whose remains were found buried anonymously, without respect and without compassion at the residential school in Kamloops; children torn from their families, culture and land; children who were mistreated and whose identity, pride and dignity were taken away; children who had to endure residential schools for almost two centuries of racism; children like the missing and murdered girls for whom justice still has not been done two years to the day after the final report of the national inquiry was released.

We owe it to these children to ensure that National Indigenous History Month is not just a commemoration. We owe them respect, justice, equality and reconciliation, nation to nation. It is our duty.

* * *

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a woman, I could not stay silent about what happened yesterday in the House, when 81 official opposition members voted in favour of a bill to restrict a woman's right to make decisions about her own body. That number represents a majority of official opposition members.

This debate is closed. Women fought too hard for these rights, and we cannot go backwards. The official opposition has introduced bills undermining women's fundamental rights seven times since 2007. That is appalling.

How can women's rights be challenged over and over? On behalf of all of the women who fought this battle and all those who will follow, including my 20-year-old daughter, we must denounce this irresponsible attempt to undermine a woman's right to choose.

As a member of a feminist and progressive party, I assure all women that our government will always stand up for women's right to choose and to make decisions about their own bodies.

* * *

● (1405)

[English]

HOMELESSNESS

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege today to recognize Medicine Hat, Alberta in its historic, national achievement in reaching functional zero chronic homelessness. For Medicine Hat, functional zero means there were three or fewer individuals experiencing chronic homelessness in the community over three consecutive months.

Statements by Members

Medicine Hat achieved this dynamic milestone by developing an effective data collection strategy, by creating strong community partnerships and by designing systems with engagement from people with lived experience. It continuously conducts reviews in order to improve systems and enjoy support from a very engaged community. Ending homelessness does not mean that people will never again be homeless. It means that systems are in place to ensure that any experience of homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring. It is time to stop managing homelessness and begin ending it.

Let Medicine Hat be a living example that broken systems can be fixed and homelessness can be solved. To Robin, Jaime and the team from the Medicine Hat Community Housing Society, and everyone who has been part of making this a reality, I say, “Well done.”

* * *

NATIONAL HEALTH AND FITNESS DAY

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Milton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like most Canadians, I have found it really tough to stay physically active over the last 15 months. Sport, physical activity and recreation are super important for our physical and mental health, but they also build communities and help to maintain our connections and friendships. Being active is an essential part of Canadian life. However, it has been especially hard for kids and families.

That is why I was so excited to see \$80 million over the next two years for Canada’s active recovery in budget 2021. These investments will remove barriers to participation, increase enrolment and help kick-start organized sport programs that are accessible to every Canadian.

This Saturday, June 5 is National Health and Fitness Day in Canada. It is a great chance for people to set some goals for the summer or try some new activities with family. It is a great time for a healthy new habit.

I am challenging all of my MP colleagues to do something active this weekend, and encourage our communities to get moving as well. Post it on social media with #ShowUsYourMoves, #NHFD2021 or #BougeAvecNous. If anyone needs a few ideas, they can check out activeforlife.com and have a healthy and active weekend.

* * *

ALEXANDRA PARK

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Spadina—Fort York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about a community in my riding locally known as “AP”. It is often called Alex Park, but its proper name is Alexandra Park.

While Alex Park’s roots run deep, its branches reach the sky. The community boasts that it sends more of its kids per capita to post-secondary school than any other public housing project in Canada. A few years back it turned itself into a co-op housing community. The co-op is named for the man who had that vision of self-determination: Sonny Atkinson.

Even during the pandemic, Alex Park is rebuilding itself, adding new homes and new hope to the neighbourhood. The community

centre is at the heart of AP and during COVID, it saw its young leaders rise to the challenge. It has built a bigger kitchen, turned spare rooms into a food bank, and delivered groceries to families in need, while delivering home-cooked meals to hundreds of seniors every day, every week and every month.

Resilient, remarkable, beautiful and bold, caring and full of characters, it is an honour to be their MP and it is an honour to share their story with Canada through Parliament.

* * *

FUNDRAISING IN WALLACEBURG

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on March 25, Seth Nottley, a 10-year-old boy from Port Lambton, suffered cardiac arrest on a playground. Seth suffers from a rare heart condition and he has been in hospital for treatment and recovery since his health emergency.

Even in the middle of lockdown, people and businesses in Wallaceburg stepped up to raise money to offset the expenses incurred by his family while in treatment. Several thousand dollars was raised by the community. Riverport Restaurant donated 50¢ from every breakfast and \$1 from every dinner it served on April 8. Big Chief Drive-In donated the proceeds from cheeseburgers sold on April 27. Supported by other Wallaceburg businesses, the Sombra Township Optimist held an online auction to raise money. Students launched a Rice Krispies square fundraiser at Christ the King School.

On behalf of the community, I add my hopes and prayers for a speedy path to Seth's full recovery. Let us celebrate Wallaceburg people and businesses who stepped up even in lockdown. They truly understand do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

* * *

● (1410)

[Translation]

MALIK DUGUAY

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the young people of Madawaska—Restigouche are certainly inspiring.

A 12-year-old young man from my riding decided to start a business. With the help of his family, Malik Duguay started a company called Hogwork's. He makes and sells magic wands inspired by the Harry Potter universe. He sculpts the wands himself, paints them and adds details. He also adds copper and metal detailing, depending on the order. The company continues to grow, year after year, and is now doing so well that Malik has made over 200 magic wands that have been sold to customers around the world. His fondest dream is for his company to grow even bigger. Given his perseverance, I have no doubt that he will succeed.

Statements by Members

On June 9, Malik will receive the Leaders de demain award for future leaders. [English]

Anyone who would like to experience a little magic during this pandemic can buy a wand on the Hogwork's website or Facebook page.

Congratulations, Malik, and good luck with this venture.

* * *

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want everyone in this House to imagine being a child who is going through something traumatic and just wants to feel loved. Picture this child being approached by an older individual on Instagram who promises gifts and love. Now imagine this child being violated, groomed and sold into human trafficking by that same predator. According to cybertip.ca, they saw an 81% increase from April to June 2020 of reports of youth who had been sexually exploited.

Last week, I introduced Bill C-304 to enforce harsher punishments for child grooming and exploitation. I have two young daughters and I want to see them and the rest of our youth grow up in a safe environment free from child groomers and predators.

I ask everyone in this House to support Bill C-304 so that we can put a stop to this evil.

* * *

[Translation]

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES IN PORTNEUF

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, ever since 2016, it has been my pleasure to give high school graduates certificates to mark this important milestone in their lives.

This year, graduation ceremonies are being modified or cancelled, but we still need to recognize our young people's achievement. I am particularly pleased to be able to continue this initiative this year by signing 810 certificates that bear the following message:

Graduation is an important milestone. This year in particular, you have developed unique skills that will serve you for the rest of your lives. I want to congratulate you on your resilience, your adaptability and your perseverance. Follow your dreams. The future is yours.

These certificates will be handed out to graduates of all high schools in Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier: Dollard-des-Ormeaux School, École secondaire Louis-Jobin, École secondaire de Saint-Marc, École secondaire Mont-Saint-Sacrement, the Séminaire Saint-François, École secondaire de Donnacona and the Pavillon Laure-Gaudreault at École Des Pionniers.

I want to sincerely congratulate all of the graduates and wish them a good summer.

[English]

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Ms. Mumilaaq Qaqqaq (Nunavut, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said that the remains of 215 children are from a dark and shameful chapter of our country's history, but indigenous peoples know that colonization is not just in the past. It is an ongoing reality.

More than 50% of children in foster care are indigenous, but they account for less than 8% of the child population. More than 30% of inmates in prison are indigenous, and Inuit in Nunavut die by suicide at nine times the rate of non-indigenous Canadians.

Colonization is not a dark chapter in Canadian history. It is a book that the federal institution continues to write. We are tired of living in someone else's story and refuse to continue to have it written for us. We have written and will continue to write new chapters and will not ask for permission to live lives full of dignity and respect. We will demand it.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this week is Environment Week, and I want to take this opportunity to emphasize the government's hypocrisy, after celebrating Clean Air Day yesterday.

The government claims to want to “recognize how important good air quality is to our health, our environment and the economy”.

Let us talk about health. Health Canada estimates that air pollution contributes to 15,300 premature deaths per year in Canada, including 4,000 in Quebec, and that does not include the non-fatal health outcomes. Those outcomes include 2.7 million asthma symptom days and 35 million acute respiratory symptom days per year.

Let us now move on to the economy. The economic cost of health impacts attributable to air pollution in 2016 was \$120 billion, which is equivalent to 6% of Canada's gross domestic product. That is not nothing.

I will now conclude on the subject of the environment. This government keeps blithely subsidizing the oil and gas industry that, I should point out, emits the most greenhouse gases out of all industries, including transportation.

Can someone tell me what there is to celebrate? It is all one big charade.

Oral Questions

• (1415)
[English]

THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives have a clear vision for securing Canada's future, but unlike the Liberals, we believe our country's success lies in the Canadian people, not in government. Canadians are the problem-solvers, the solution makers and the wealth-creators. They have and will continue to make Canada great.

Instead of liberating Canadians to succeed without obscene interventions, the government is set on picking winners and losers based on a Liberal value system. Whether through excessive taxation, meddling with Internet algorithms to promote some Canadian creators over others, over-regulating industries it does not like so other industries it does like can succeed, or telling Canadians what they can or cannot say, the government is obsessed with engineering a future of its own making rather than letting Canadians determine their own fortune.

It is dictatorial. It is destructive, and it is altogether wrong. A Conservative government will secure Canada's future by unleashing the power of Canadians right across the country. Canada's Conservatives will let the people design their future.

* * *

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, weeks before the discovery of the graves of indigenous children at the Kamloops residential school, our weekly webcast to Fleetwood—Port Kells featured two stories that illustrated Canada's systemic racism toward indigenous people.

Genesa Greening, president and CEO of the BC Women's Health Foundation, told of how indigenous women still dress in their best clothes to go to the emergency room. They do that because still, today, it is too often suspected or assumed that they are drunk or high. If they take their kids in for care, well, there is always the fear that those kids will be apprehended.

Keenan McCarthy told us of how he only discovered his heritage shortly before his grandmother passed away. She told him about how, after her service in England during World War II, she came home only to be denied her demobilization package because she was Métis.

Much harm has been done by past governments, but we are the government now. Canadians look to us to act on truth and reconciliation, and we will do it.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, empty shoes are being left at memorials across the country. Flags are at half-mast. Canadian families are grieving the loss of children, but they have not yet seen swift action.

We have been asking the government for a new plan and new resources to respond to calls to action 71 to 76 in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report, and to do this by Canada Day. Will the government commit to delivering the plan so that families can begin the process of healing?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are all heartbroken by the discovery of the remains of children at the Kamloops residential school. Our thoughts are obviously with the Kamloops Secwépemc First Nation and the surrounding communities that had children stolen by that institution.

Presently, we are working with those communities, which have asked for space, to help them with their mental health supports and to help community members. We are working to help indigenous peoples across the country who are hurting and to accompany them in that search for truth. We have invested \$27 million, and we will continue to do so to help those communities establish their protocols and give them the space to speak, so we can help them learn the truth and then heal.

[Translation]

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, flags are at half-mast and shoes are being left out, but Canadians want action. I asked the government for a plan and for new resources to address the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action 71 to 76 by Canada Day. Will the government commit to developing a plan to help these families heal?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, indeed, it is a question of healing and of grieving for all indigenous peoples in mourning right now, specifically the communities around Kamloops whose children were scooped up, only to die, as some did, at the Kamloops residential school. Our thoughts are with them. We will be there to take action, to support them in their needs. They have asked for space, and that is what we are giving them. We will be there for them with mental health and other services, as long as they need them. The process of uncovering the truth, and then healing, will take a long time, but it is essential.

• (1420)

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last night, a Liberal spokesperson suggested the government would refuse to turn over documents to the House regarding the security breach at Canada's highest-security laboratory in Winnipeg. So far, what the government has released has been heavily redacted, and significant correspondence from the Wuhan Institute of Virology has been blacked out.

Has the government had any communication with the Chinese government about making this information public?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have been repeatedly clear on this side of the House, of course we are committed to sharing information in a manner that will not compromise national security. There is a committee, as the member opposite knows, the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, which is well situated to review these documents. This is an opportunity for the House to participate in this review.

As the member opposite knows, we will never jeopardize national security.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this security breach shows the minister has already jeopardized Canadian security. We know from the first media inquiries on these scientists that the lab directly involved security services and the Privy Council Office.

The Prime Minister and the minister knew they had a security breach on their hands from the start, and they know it is Parliament's job to hold them to account for it. Are Canadians going to get the truth from the minister, or is she at the origin of yet another Liberal cover-up?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the researchers are no longer with the National Microbiology Lab. As I have said, this government takes national security extremely seriously. In fact, as the member opposite knows, we have been repeatedly committed to providing the House with the documentation. There is an appropriate committee in this House to review that documentation.

I will just say this: We will not play games with national security, unlike the member opposite.

[Translation]

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a liberal spokesperson suggested the government would refuse to turn over documents to the House regarding the security breach at the laboratory in Winnipeg. The documents submitted by this government have been redacted, including important correspondence with the Wuhan Institute. Has the government had any communication with the Chinese government about making this information public?

Oral Questions

[English]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said repeatedly in this House, the government is prepared to turn over the documents while protecting national security.

The member opposite knows that there is an appropriate committee of the House that can look at these documents. It is important that the member not play games with Canadians' safety and security.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Quebec National Assembly has passed unanimous resolutions requiring that Bill 101 apply to federally regulated businesses. That is why the Quebec government introduced Bill 96, which seeks to ensure that Bill 101 applies.

However, in its language reform document, the federal government does not propose that Bill 101 be applied in order to protect French. Instead, it proposes that the Official Languages Act be applied in order to protect bilingualism. Why not stand with Quebec and support its will to apply Bill 101?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that we want the right to work and be served in French without discrimination for being francophone to be protected in federally regulated businesses in Quebec and in regions with a strong francophone presence across the country. That is our commitment, and that is what we will do. I look forward to working with my colleague on this issue.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am hearing that my colleague wants to protect French in Quebec, and I am offering to help her. What the federal government can do is ensure that federally regulated businesses provide a French-language workplace, which only Bill 101 can do.

That is why the Bloc Québécois introduced Bill C-254, which would apply Bill 101 to federally regulated businesses. My colleague says that she wants to protect French and I would like to help. Will she vote for our bill?

• (1425)

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned and as my colleague reiterated, it goes without saying that the Government of Canada wants to protect French because the use of French is declining across the country. We will protect it and we are the first government in our history to do so. That is why we will be introducing a bill on the Official Languages Act to ensure that we can do so.

*Oral Questions***INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruled that Canada violated the rights of indigenous children. Even so, the Prime Minister is still taking indigenous children to court. Will the Prime Minister support our motion and stop prosecuting indigenous children, yes or no?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government and the Prime Minister have been clear. Our goal is comprehensive, fair and equitable compensation to support the healing of those affected by the historical inequity of discriminatory policies governing services to first nations children and families.

We maintain that there remain substantive unresolved questions about the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal's jurisdiction. We are committed to this project and to ensuring that all first nations children receive fair and equitable compensation.

[English]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal found that Canada discriminated against indigenous children. It also found that it did so willfully and recklessly. Despite that, the Prime Minister continues to fight indigenous kids in court. Indigenous survivors of residential schools are demanding justice, but the Prime Minister is fighting them in court as well.

How could people take the Prime Minister's commitment to reconciliation seriously, when he continues to fight indigenous children and residential school survivors in court?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to be clear with the member opposite, and with all Canadians, that every first nations child who suffered discrimination at the hands of the child and family services system, which is broken, will receive just, fair and equitable compensation.

We maintain that there are substantive unresolved questions on the CHRT jurisdiction. On the other court cases that are outstanding in class actions, we are in discussions with the parties, but those discussions remain confidential out of respect for the process.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our relationship with the Chinese Communist regime is strained right now, and the situation with the two Michaels plus the Uighur genocide are only making things worse.

Our National Microbiology Laboratory is internationally recognized for its scientific excellence. Did the government ensure that no scientist with ties to the Communist regime or the Chinese People's Liberation Army is currently working in our laboratories?

[English]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have a crown jewel in the National Microbiology Laboratory. This is a lab that has provided amazing service to Canadians through this

pandemic and, indeed, before. In fact, this lab is well known around the world for its efforts to understand pathologies and support Canadians.

As I have said, it is important as well that Canada collaborate in research and science. In fact, attending the G7 virtually, collaboration has been raised a number of times today as an important principle to not only managing COVID-19, but also to dealing with pandemics in the future. We will continue—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, two scientists have already been fired after shipping samples of highly contagious pathogens to the Wuhan Institute of Virology in China, namely samples of the Ebola and Henipah viruses. This breach of security is extremely worrisome.

Why is the government refusing to take action and why is it allowing the Chinese Communist regime to do as it pleases, without any consequences?

• (1430)

[English]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, the Conservatives are trying to sow fear in the work that the National Microbiology Laboratory conducts. As the member knows, the scientists and researchers in question are no longer with the lab. The lab is a secure facility. Everybody working and visiting at the national lab must undergo security clearance and screening, and adhere to strict protocols and policies.

We will never put the health and safety of Canadians at risk, but on this side of the House, we will continue to support research and science.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, I asked the Minister of Finance how much her government had invested in the China-controlled Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. She refused to say. I asked her how much more taxpayer money she planned to throw away on this foreign bank. She would not say. I asked her whether she had made the funding of this China-led bank conditional upon China releasing the two Michaels. She refused to say.

Why will the minister not place the welfare of two innocent Canadians over her fascination with appeasing China?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with great respect for the hon. member, it is deeply disappointing for him to suggest that any member of the House, regardless of party, would put the appeasement of a foreign power ahead of the well-being of two Canadians who have been in arbitrary captivity for such a long period of time. It remains our top priority to secure the release of the two Michaels, and we have a number of other outstanding matters with the Chinese government, such as the treatment of Uighurs within its borders or the 300,000 Canadians in Hong Kong.

With respect, on our side of the House, and I expect for all parliamentarians, the well-being of Canadians comes first.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal record speaks for itself. Time after time, the minister has refused to say how much she has spent on the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, but government documents show that she is spending hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars on this China-led bank. She will not even tell us whether she made the return of the two Michaels a condition of her investment with the Chinese communist regime.

The two Michaels deserve better than that. Why is the minister pouring money into this foreign bank when China will not release two innocent Canadians who are languishing in prison?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will continue to engage with other developed economies on matters of global concern. However, with respect, I want to reassert that our top priority when it comes to our relations with China is securing the release of the two Michaels.

We remain focused on ensuring the fair and equitable treatment of the Uighur population and we are focused on the well-being of Canadians in Hong Kong. I do not take kindly to the suggestion that we are putting the appeasement of a foreign power ahead of the well-being of Canadians whatsoever.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in six years, only 12 of the 94 calls to action in the Truth and Reconciliation report have been completed. At that rate, it will be 2057 before we address them all.

There are 231 calls for justice in the murdered and missing indigenous women and girls report. With the government's track record, we are looking at 115 years to respond to these recommendations.

The Prime Minister promised action. Therefore, when will the government provide action, attention, urgency and resources to these important recommendations and reports?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would remind the member that these calls are for all of Canada and particularly non-indigenous Canadians. The federal

Oral Questions

government has a very large role to play in this and there are a number of calls to action that we have moved on quite quickly.

I would note the implementation and passage and royal assent of Bill C-91 on indigenous languages, and Bill C-92 on child and family services. These are all transformative documents to fill the inequities that have characterized our relationship as a country.

We will continue to move on today's pathway announced by the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations. It is one that is equally transformative with respect to missing and murdered indigenous women. I would point to the over \$2 billion in the budget dedicated to implementing that.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me quote the Native Women's Association of Canada, which could no longer partner to the toxic, dysfunctional MMIWG action plan process. It said that it experienced "lateral violence" and more "red tape", that the government did not "seem to have a plan that was concrete initiatives that were measurable and costed out" and that the process was a purely bureaucratic approach to this issue of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

When will the minister take seriously the criticism being directed at the government and act, rather than releasing another plan for another plan?

• (1435)

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier today, contributing partners from across Canada came together to release a national action plan and the federal pathway to finally end this ongoing tragedy. The federal pathway is a key contribution in the national action plan that will leave real lasting and widespread changes. We provided funding to indigenous women's organizations, including NWAC, to engage with its membership on the priorities included in the national action plan.

We are greatly appreciative of NWAC's work from past engagement efforts. We value its input to date, respect its position and will continue to work with it through the Canada-NWAC accord.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the federal government is asleep at the wheel when it comes to the temporary foreign worker file. I am not the one saying that. It is the Quebec minister of labour.

Oral Questions

He is fed up with the fact that, every year, farmers and business owners are unable to get their workers on time. There are major administrative delays, the workers are getting stranded because of the chaos at the Canadian borders, and businesses are paying a fortune for workers who are not able to get here.

What will it take for the federal government to take action so that we can stop wasting our time, money and crops?

[*English*]

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the importance of temporary foreign workers for our producers and our food processors. We are working tirelessly to ensure that temporary foreign workers can arrive safely in Canada, by supporting employers with additional costs incurred to accommodate the isolation period.

All federal departments involved in this program have worked together to simplify processes. I have worked hand in hand with my counterpart in Quebec, Mr. Boulet, and we are working very hard together. We understand the importance of these workers to our food security.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec is quite bluntly asking the minister to hand the temporary foreign worker program over to Quebec if the minister cannot handle it himself.

We are past the discussion stage. Half of SMEs are turning down contracts right now because of the labour shortage. These files need to be processed more quickly, the government needs to make the 10% cap more flexible so that companies can hire, and, most importantly, the workers need to be able to get to Quebec.

Will the minister finally take charge of the program or hand it over to Quebec, as Quebec has asked?

[*English*]

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure everyone in the House and all Canadians that we respect and understand the role that temporary foreign workers have played in ensuring our food security during this pandemic, and they deserve to be safe.

We are ensuring employers are preparing to safely welcome and quarantine workers. We are ensuring employers meet quarantine program obligations. We are improving the tip line to provide services in multiple languages. We are providing direct assistance to workers. We are also responding quickly to emerging issues.

This is an example of a program where we are working hand in hand with Quebec to ensure that employers and, in particular, agriculture employers get the workers they need in Quebec.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, our farmers pay a lot of money for foreign workers. They pay for the market studies required by the federal government and they pay for the quarantine facilities.

Canada's border management is a mess, and this means that farms are not getting their workers but are still paying. We have a serious problem when farmers are resorting to paying immigration consultants so that they can harvest their asparagus.

When will the minister simplify or speed up the program? If he does not want to handle it, he should hand the program over to Quebec.

[*English*]

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have made many important changes to this program over the past year to ensure employers across the country get the temporary foreign workers they need to ensure our food security in Canada. We have also made sure workers are better protected during this time of crisis, and have worked very closely with both employers and source countries to ensure the safety of all citizens and every single worker in Canada, including our temporary foreign workers.

As I have said, I have a great working relationship with my Quebec counterpart. We meet and speak regularly, and that is because we know we have a common interest in keeping our workers safe and our employers have the labour they need to deliver for Canadians.

* * *

COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is appalling the Prime Minister's disregard for the lowest-earning households in the country. The government's pandemic aid was focused on the top 20% of income earners, who received \$6,700, while those who are working to make ends meet received \$4,100. It is apparent the programs were ill-designed, especially for those in dire need.

Will the Prime Minister agree today that a review of the efficiency and effectiveness of these programs will be completed immediately?

● (1440)

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have delivered our emergency and recovery benefits to Canadians, we have absolutely reviewed them. We have made changes as we have course corrected as the pandemic threw different balls into our court.

Eight million Canadians got access to the CERB; 700,000 students the Canada emergency student benefit; 1.9 million Canadians on the CRB; 582,000 Canadians on the CRSB, the sickness benefit; and another 500,000 Canadians on the caregiving benefit; never mind the almost 1,000,000 applications received for EI. Almost 12 million Canadians have benefited from our emergency and recovery, and our changes to EI.

Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister irresponsibly financed our country with hundreds of billions of dollars of new debt and he did it on the backs of those struggling most. Of the \$95.2 billion in direct government transfers related to COVID-19 last year, the bottom 20% of earners in the country got just 14%. Canadians needed help, but due to poorly directed programs, those who needed it most were left behind.

Will the Prime Minister fix this mess through calculated actions or will he just continue to blindly make decisions hoping things will just work out?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's line of questioning suffers from deficits of both fact and principle. On the facts where he says it has been irresponsible, I would point him to the AAA credit rating reaffirmed this week by Moody's, which has also been upheld by other major credit rating agencies. The fact is that we are on a sustainable path.

As a matter of principle, he suggests these programs are flawed, when, from the very beginning, the Conservatives literally held a press conference so they could oppose the big fat government programs that have actually kept nine million Canadians with the ability to put food on the table and a roof over their heads.

The reality is that we will be there for Canadians as long as it takes, no matter what it takes.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while public service retirees are anxiously waiting for compensation for the problems with Phoenix, we have now learned that the government sent more than \$9 million to dead people. The government is creating two classes of seniors, yet it has no qualms about helping out the wealthy during the pandemic. The richest families got on average \$2,600 more than the families that needed help the most.

How can the Prime Minister claim that payments to people who are dead or to the wealthy helped the Canadians who are struggling during the pandemic?

[English]

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have taken a disability inclusive approach to our pandemic response since the beginning. We created a one-time payment that 1.7 million Canadians received. No one had to apply for this payment; it was based on eligibility for federal disability supports. Yes, there was a group of Canadians who received this money that the govern-

ment had not been advised yet that they were deceased, and we are working on this.

We created this one-time payment; no one had to apply. Everybody was eligible for federal supports. That is how it worked, and it worked for 1.7 million Canadians.

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[Translation]

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals just promised \$5 million for Laurentian University, but the university needs \$100 million.

Does the minister understand that is nowhere near enough?

Does she really expect Ontario to come up with the missing \$95 million?

When will the minister show leadership and finally protect French across the country? When will the minister introduce a bill to modernize the Official Languages Act with binding language clauses?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that what is happening at Laurentian University is completely unacceptable. It is unacceptable that a francophone university, or any university in Canada, has to resort to using the creditors arrangement act to deal with its problem of being underfunded by the province.

What are we doing? We are working on solutions. We are putting \$5 million on the table to ensure that the community can develop a plan by and for francophones in northern Ontario and that we have an important post-secondary institution for francophones in the region.

For the rest, I can assure my colleague that we are of course working on modernizing the Official Languages Act and I hope that—

[English]

The Speaker: The hon. member for North Island—Powell River.

*Oral Questions***VETERANS AFFAIRS**

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Veterans Ombud's report released yesterday says that VAC has been telling survivors of military sexual trauma to get help somewhere else. For too long this government has been blocking the voices of women in the military. Women veterans who experience this trauma have been asking VAC for years to fund a peer support program to share their stories in a safe place and begin to heal. Veterans should not have to keep settling for less.

Will the minister step up and implement a peer support program for survivors?

• (1445)

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we thank the Veterans Ombud for her report and agree with her recommendations. We know how important peer support can be for survivors and in budget 2021, we committed to implementing a dedicated program for veterans and members of the Canadian Armed Forces. It is our responsibility to be there for those who are harmed in the service of our country, and we will continue to work to ensure that survivors of military sexual trauma receive the support they need.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Lenore Zann (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, two years ago today, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls released 231 calls for justice and called for the federal, provincial, territorial and indigenous governments to work together to build a national action plan to end the ongoing national tragedy and shame of missing and murdered indigenous women, girls and two-spirit LGBTQIA+ people. They all have the right to live and be respected and valued in their communities.

Can the Minister of Indigenous Services please update the House on our government's progress on co-developing this—

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for her advocacy and deep personal commitment to these matters.

Earlier today, contributing partners from across Canada came together to release the national action plan and the federal pathway to addressing the ongoing tragedy. The federal pathway is a key contribution to the national action plan that will lead to real, lasting and widespread change. By working with over 100 indigenous women and 2SLGBTQIA+ people including indigenous, provincial and territorial partners, we now have a comprehensive plan to put in place concrete measures and the accountability framework that will truly keep indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people safe.

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HEALTH

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in spite of repeated requests, the Liberals have never pro-

duced evidence to show that their hotel quarantine program stops the spread of COVID over other measures. However, there is evidence of COVID-19 outbreaks at these facilities and there is also evidence of sexual assaults occurring there. Now the government's own expert panel of scientists has called on the Liberals to scrap the program, but instead today the Liberals are inexplicably doubling down on it.

Will the Liberals let the hotel quarantine program expire on June 21?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me start by giving my thanks to immunizers and Canadians from coast to coast to coast, because today Canada is leading the G7 in the number of vaccines administered. This is a good news story for Canada. In fact, it is a story of team Canada.

I want to say that we will make sure that whatever we do next on the border will be through the lens of science and evidence, and in full partnership with provinces and territories.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in early 2020 this health minister did not listen to science. She said that border measures did not work and subsequently refused to close the border when it really mattered. She is continuing the trend of not making science-based decisions today and that is really unfortunate. The government's own expert panel of scientists, with a report full of science, is calling on the government to immediately scrap the hotel quarantine program in favour of other measures.

Will the minister finally listen to science and let the hotel quarantine program expire on June 21?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yet again, we see the member opposite fail to recognize that science evolves, that it is a new virus and that it is a global pandemic the likes of which we have not seen in 100 years. In fact, that is exactly what we have been doing. We have been following the advice of public health scientists and researchers. That is why we are in the position we are in today. I want to thank all of the immunizers across the country and Canadians who have stepped up in historic ways to get vaccinated. We are leading the G7. Over 28.6 million vaccines have been delivered to provinces and territories.

We can see the finish line.

• (1450)

HOUSING

Mr. Kenny Chiu (Steveston—Richmond East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister wondered how a young family could afford a home, yet the Liberals' only solution to this appears to be slapping a 1% tax on foreign home ownership. I would like to point out that in my home of Richmond, in the past year during the pandemic travel ban, benchmark house prices shot up by over 22%, edging close to \$2 million.

Will the government put aside its sound bites and red herrings and detail a meaningful solution to the housing crisis?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every Canadian deserves a safe and affordable place to call home and, as the numbers show in the national housing strategy report tabled this week, we have helped over 200,000 families get the housing they need through building new homes, repairing existing ones and providing affordability support. Since 2015, our government has supported the creation of over 100,000 new units and repaired over 300,000 more across the country.

It is very rich for the party opposite to talk about affordable housing, when it did not do anything in its almost nine years in power.

Mr. Kenny Chiu (Steveston—Richmond East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, young Canadians are struggling to afford homes. The first-time home buyer incentive is inadequate, and publicly the Prime Minister ignorantly underestimates the housing costs in the Greater Vancouver Area. Perhaps that is why budget 2021 proposes nothing useful for young families.

Will the government finally admit how out of touch it is with Canadian needs and detail an effective solution to the housing crisis immediately?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very rich for the party opposite to talk about this issue. It provided no leadership and no serious investments in housing. We introduced the national housing strategy because we believe every Canadian deserves a safe and affordable place to call home. As part of that strategy, we introduced the first-time home buyer incentive, which will help many middle-class families achieve the dream of home ownership. We are also expanding the first-time home buyer incentive to enhance eligibility in Toronto, Vancouver, Victoria and the greater regions of those areas by raising the qualifying income threshold from \$120,000 to \$150,000 in household income. The party opposite simply has no credibility when it comes to affordable housing. It can run, but it cannot hide.

* * *

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the judicial appointment process is broken.

Everyone knows that the Liberals screen candidates for good donors. The Prime Minister's Office, cabinet, MPs, the entire Liber-

Oral Questions

al family talk to one another to ensure that Liberal judges are chosen. However, I am convinced that even they would say that it is dangerous to insert partisanship into the justice system.

Will the government agree to create a committee to study the judicial appointment process to ensure that it is impartial?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government believes that Canadians' confidence in our justice system is enhanced by a transparent and accountable selection process.

This process identifies candidates that reflect Canada's diversity. Since 2016, we have appointed quality judges whose diversity reflects that of Canada.

I am proud of the appointments that we have made. I can assure my hon. colleague that the process is independent and focuses on quality and diversity.

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are not questioning the quality of the appointments. That is not the issue.

We are proposing that a committee examine the appointment process, and the Liberals are already panicking. If the judicial appointment process is so great, why are they afraid to let a committee examine it?

If the process is truly independent, what have they got to lose if some members and experts confirm that? If it is untrue that they have set up a system to ensure their Liberal cronies get judicial appointments, what are they afraid of?

We want an impartial system. Can we have fair justice?

• (1455)

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have a just and impartial system. We implemented it in 2016 in response to the well-deserved criticism that had been levelled at the previous Conservative government.

We have advisory committees working very hard across Canada reviewing the candidates. Half of the people do not get past this stage, which is completely independent of politics.

We put a system in place in 2016 that works very well, and I am very proud of the results.

* * *

[English]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the agriculture minister said that support for the 14-day quarantine for foreign agricultural workers was “an emergency program, not a compensation program.”

Oral Questions

However, it expires August 31, even though farm workers will continue to arrive in Canada for the fall harvest and farmers will continue to incur expenses. Ending the program before quarantine restrictions are lifted is premature and completely unacceptable.

Either the minister thinks the emergency is over, or the government just does not care about food sovereignty. Which is it?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is obviously very committed to supporting our agricultural producers and agribusinesses, because our food security depends on them.

We have created a wide range of programs to help them, including everything from making their workplaces and workers' residences safe, to helping them bring in foreign workers.

The program that helps cover some of the costs associated with quarantine will indeed come to an end at the end of August. It is an emergency program, not a compensation program.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, summer is right around the corner, and with it come seasonal jobs.

Two businesses in my riding, Groupe Ferti and Émondage Pouliot, are already on the verge of losing valuable contracts because of a labour shortage. Their files have been gathering dust at the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada office for quite a while. Time is running out and the deadlines are getting tighter.

The immigration minister has announced that the processing of files will be improved in the coming years, but what is being done for right now?

Are we telling those businesses to cancel the contracts, to go back on their word? Is that really the message the minister wants to send?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are on track to meet the targets set by Quebec in 2021.

Since September 1, 2020, more than 60,000 temporary foreign workers have arrived in Canada to support the economy. In April alone, more than 11,500 temporary foreign workers arrived. More than 8,000 other workers are ready to travel and more than 3,000 applications are being processed.

In 2021, we keep exceeding our targets and I will continue to work with my colleague on this case.

* * *

[*English*]

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last month the government released the details of its financial aid program for this country's struggling airports. The Regina International Airport will receive approximately \$2.6 million. That is enough to keep it operational for about two months. Meanwhile, the

government's bailout for Air Canada included \$10 million for executive bonuses.

Why are Air Canada's executives more important to the government than the entire Regina International Airport?

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question, but I will take a moment to correct him. He is comparing apples and oranges.

I will repeat what the Prime Minister said yesterday. We were disappointed by the decision that Air Canada has taken to pay executive compensation prior to the signing of the agreement. Our agreement ensures that there is a limit on executive compensation.

Secondly, I am really happy to announce to Canadians that we are standing by airports and providing support at a time where we know the pandemic has had a significant impact on their operations.

* * *

● (1500)

[*Translation*]

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week is National AccessAbility Week. It is an opportunity to celebrate the valuable contributions of Canadians with disabilities and to recognize the efforts of individuals from communities and organizations who are actively working to eliminate obstacles to accessibility and inclusion.

Can the minister inform the House about how budget 2021 supports Canadians with disabilities and helps build an inclusive Canada?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Châteauguay—Lacolle for her advocacy for people with disabilities. This week is indeed National AccessAbility Week.

We have accomplished more than any other government for inclusion and accessibility. Budget 2020-21 builds on our pioneering work by continuing to implement our "Nothing without us" plan.

[*English*]

We are investing in accessible communities, inclusive child care, students with disabilities, training opportunities and job creation for Canadians with disabilities, and we are expanding eligibility for the disability tax credit.

We are moving forward with the first-ever disability inclusion action plan to better support persons with disabilities.

Oral Questions

Mr. Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that answer is just false. Since 2018, the Liberals have been trying to cut funding for Canadians with disabilities.

Last winter, at the height of the pandemic, the Liberals tried to slip past a \$4-million cut, but the disability community fought back. Libraries across Canada, including in Saskatoon and the city of Delta, in the minister's own riding, fought and shamed the Liberals into reversing their cruel cuts.

This is National AccessAbility Week, and so it would be a perfect time for the government to reverse course. When will this minister do the right thing and finally commit to a long-term funding solution?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where to begin.

We have championed the fact that everyone should be able to access information and reading materials. That is why we developed the first-ever and have been implementing a long-term strategy for the production of alternate format materials that includes support to the publishing sector, advancements in technology and investment in non-profits.

In recognizing that the pandemic has affected the timeline of this transition and the ongoing need for alternate format materials, we are actually funding CELA and NNELS with an additional \$1 million in addition to the money we committed in the fall economic statement. This is keeping us on the path to accessible publishing and ensuring that persons with disabilities continue to have access, particularly during this unprecedented time.

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week is National AccessAbility Week to raise awareness to promote a more accessible Canada.

My private member's bill, Bill C-256, would waive the capital gains tax on the arm's-length sale of private shares or real estate when the proceeds of the sale are donated to a charity. This will generate up to \$200 million per year for charities, including those promoting accessibility and supporting Canadians living with disabilities.

Will the government commit to supporting Canadians living with disabilities by voting yes on Bill C-256?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, we have done more to support Canadians with disabilities than any other government in the history of our country.

We are working now on a very exciting disability inclusion action plan, which we laid out the parameters of in the fall economic statement. We are going to create a Canada disability benefit and an employment strategy. We are going to reform and modernize our eligibility processes for federal government disability supports and create a dignified approach to disability across this government.

When we put in place the Accessible Canada Act two years ago, we made the most historic advancement in disability rights since the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982, and we are just getting started.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we knew the Liberals tried to give dead people the vote, but this week we found out they were perfectly willing to send cheques to dead people. That really takes the cake.

How can the Prime Minister justify sending \$9.2 million in COVID-19 support to dead people? This is unbelievable.

This being National AccessAbility Week, I would like to know if the money that was sent in error will be recovered properly so that it can be used to help people who actually need help.

• (1505)

[*English*]

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we delivered a \$600 one-time payment during the pandemic to over 1.7 million Canadians who were eligible for federal disability support programs. This was an automatic payment. No one had to apply for this. They got it if they were eligible for the disability tax credit, Veterans Affairs disability support programs or the CPP disability. There was a time lapse between the establishment of the lists and when Canadians received their cheques. Of course, unfortunately, in that period, some Canadians had passed away and we had not been informed yet of their passing. We are working to remedy this.

However, let us be very clear. There were 1.7 million Canadians who got \$600 in their desperate time of need.

* * *

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Pat Finnigan (Miramichi—Grand Lake, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know how crucial rail transportation is for communities across the country, including in my riding, with VIA Rail's Ocean passenger train, which links Halifax to Montreal and the rest of the country. With the pandemic, many passenger rail routes, including this one, have been suspended.

Points of Order

Can the minister update this House on future plans to bring back this important and indispensable public transit system for our region?

Hon. Omar Alhabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend, the member for Miramichi—Grand Lake, for his advocacy.

He and I, along with New Brunswick Liberal MPs, have had discussions on the current situation with transportation in their region. The pandemic has dramatically impacted the transport industry and I want to assure the member and his constituents that I will continue to work with him and our colleagues to have reliable transport options.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last October, this House passed a motion requiring the government to provide the health committee with important documents concerning the COVID crisis no later than December 7. Liberals bitterly fought against this move for accountability and transparency and admitted there were at least a million documents in their possession. As of today, eight months later, they have disclosed fewer than 9,000.

Will the Liberals admit that they are deliberately withholding documents and showing contempt for Parliament and explain to Canadians what they are hiding?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, every step of the way we have been transparent with Canadians. In fact, I have appeared before the health committee multiple times, as have my officials. We are always available to speak to Canadians. We have supplied the documents in due course, as requested by the House of Commons. We will continue to work to get those documents to the health committee and to be there to answer the questions of the committee.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Vancouver Granville, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, it is dangerously misleading for the government to suggest significant progress is being made on 80% of the TRC calls to action. Endless meetings and process is no substitute for substance. Leadership is required to change colonial laws, policies and practices that perpetuate systemic racism and injustice. The Prime Minister knows that adjusting the ongoing colonial legacy requires a comprehensive indigenous rights recognition framework. How do I know this? The Prime Minister said it in this House on February 14, 2018—

The Speaker: I am going to have to interrupt. We have a problem with translation. There is an issue with the mike. It is very distorted and loud. We want to make sure we hear the question.

Let us try again, from the top.

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Mr. Speaker, it is dangerously misleading for the government to suggest significant progress is being made on 80% of the TRC calls to—

• (1510)

The Speaker: I am afraid we are still having trouble. I am not sure what it is, but I am sure we will get it figured out. You are going to have to work with IT.

I will ask the minister if he heard enough of the question to answer.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this moment, in front of the House, to thank the former attorney general and minister of justice for the work she did to move these important issues forward, in answering the TRC's calls to action and the MMIW's calls for justice, in making sure that indigenous languages affirmed their inherent right to have a rightful place in this country, and that child and family services, which betrayed indigenous children and is broken in this country, was reformed through Bill C-92.

Obviously, this time of mourning is a time to reflect on the speed at which reconciliation is going, but as we continue to search for the truth, I think it is also a time to recognize the progress and the tens of billions of dollars this government has invested in reconciliation. I want to thank the former attorney general and minister of justice for the work she has done in contributing to this.

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POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Given the technical difficulties the hon. member for Vancouver Granville just experienced, I return to the point that we should have more time within question period for members with a status such as hers, whose voice is so important in this country. Perhaps we could add one slot to next Wednesday so she could ask her question again.

The Speaker: Adding another slot somewhere for the repeat of that question is definitely something worth discussing. We will discuss it and get back to the chamber.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères on a point of order.

* * *

AIR CANADA

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

Tributes

That the House denounce the decision of the Air Canada's executive officers to award themselves bonuses of \$20 million while the company received nearly \$6 billion dollars in public aid.

• (1515)

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

I hear none. The House has heard the terms of the motion. All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

Hearing no dissenting voice, I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot on a point of order.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion: That the House recognize that U.S. economic policy, specifically with respect to the trade embargo against the Republic of Cuba, must in no way restrict the right of Canadian and Quebec companies operating in accordance with Canadian law to do business with their international partners.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

* * *

[*English*]

MEMBER FOR SIMCOE NORTH

The Speaker: Before continuing, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the fact that, since I became Speaker in December 2019, I have had the remarkable good fortune to have by my side the Deputy Speaker, the member for Simcoe North.

[*Translation*]

I am in fact the third Speaker to be able to count on his wise counsel, steady hand and tireless commitment to Parliament. For the past 10 years, he has served this House by tapping into his experience as a member, his courtesy and his many talents as a chair occupant.

[*English*]

As someone who has worked closely with him for many years, I know he has always done so with a desire to uphold the finest traditions of this House. I, as well as my predecessors, the member for Halifax West and the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, and in fact, the entire House, owe him an important debt of gratitude, not only for his support but also for his important contributions in serving this House.

On June 6, the member for Simcoe North will mark his 10th anniversary as Chair occupant, and in a few short weeks, he will become the longest-serving Deputy Speaker in the history of the House of Commons.

To show just how wonderful this gentleman is, I told him I was going to need him to come in a bit early to cover for me and he did not hesitate. He is right here waiting to come up, not knowing what

he is in for in the next couple of minutes, but he will be up here taking care of things.

I know all members join me in congratulating him on these upcoming milestones.

The hon. member for Simcoe North.

The Deputy Speaker: First of all, thank you, Mr. Speaker. This truly was a surprise. I had no indication of this. Earlier today we heard that there would be an opportunity to properly bring thanks for the amazing years that I have had in this House with all of you, and with many members who I have served with since 2006 who are no longer here. It has been a tremendous honour and privilege to serve as a servant of the members of this House.

[*Translation*]

It has been a great honour for my family and me to have the privilege of serving the House of Commons.

• (1520)

[*English*]

I see several members standing.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that was the first time, in my time in this Parliament, that I have seen you a little uncertain when you first rose from the chair.

I want to thank the Speaker and you, Mr. Speaker, for your tremendous contributions as the hon. member for Simcoe North, who, in a few short weeks, will become the longest-serving Deputy Speaker in the history of this Parliament. However, most important, every time you sat in that chair, you brought the level of decorum and debate in this House to a higher level. You have presided with unmatched dignity and professionalism.

[*Translation*]

He has presided over the House with dignity and remained impartial. I am proud of my colleague and friend, an extraordinary Speaker.

[*English*]

We often, as a courtesy, Mr. Speaker, refer to other members as honourable, but few deserve that title as much as you. The only regret with your retirement will be that you served as the longest-serving Deputy Speaker and that we did not get the chance to see you as the full Speaker.

As one quick note, when I was elected in a by-election and gave my first speech in the House, I received a note from the chair occupant, a note congratulating me on my speech and commenting on the delivery. It was from you, Mr. Speaker. I was a new rookie MP getting a note of encouragement from the chair occupant. I keep that note to this day because it embodies the professionalism and the high ethical standard to which you hold yourself in this House.

I want to wish you and Heather an incredible retirement. You have left Canada's Parliament in a wonderful place due to your honourable contribution, so on behalf of the opposition, the Conservative Party, your party, I would like to say thank you.

Tributes

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to salute your 10 years of hard work in the chair.

I have not been here that long, but I have always appreciated the work you do, your characteristic courtesy and your proficiency in the beautiful French language, delivered with a slight accent that only makes it even more charming. Above all, we wish you could stay much longer. We are always very happy to see you when we arrive in the House. I do not want to offend anyone, as this is also true of the Speaker and the Assistant Deputy Speakers. You make a great team.

We are always happy to be here, and it is an honour to serve alongside you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, that is one of the things I will be speaking about in my speech, a few days from now: the richness and the privilege of learning French since 2006 with the House of Commons language training service.

The hon. member for Halifax West.

[*English*]

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to join with the Speaker and with other colleagues in the House in congratulating and thanking you, the hon. member for Simcoe North, for a decade of excellent service as a chair occupant, including, of course, nearly six years as Deputy Speaker, soon to be the longest-serving Deputy Speaker in Canada's history.

Along with a deep knowledge of procedure and a great sense of this place, you have demonstrated grace, professionalism and courage. On a personal level, Bruce, if I may, I have appreciated your wise counsel, your good humour and your friendship.

Kelly and I extend to you, Heather, your children and grandchildren our very best wishes.

The Deputy Speaker: I have appreciated serving with the hon. member for Halifax West, and we continue to serve, as it turns out, in different ways. Thank you so much.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of our leader, the member for Burnaby South, and of the entire NDP caucus, I am pleased to congratulate you on 10 years of incredible service in the House of Commons and to thank you sincerely. Day in and day out, you have carried out your duties efficiently and effectively.

• (1525)

[*English*]

I know that we can stretch the rules a little, so I would like to say I think you are so effective because you operate under what I like to call “the Stanton rules.”

First, you understand the rules as good as anyone in the House of Commons. Your knowledge of parliamentary procedure gives us all confidence, and the confidence you give from that knowledge is

something that helps us navigate what can sometimes be stormy waters, when there are differences of opinion about the best way to proceed.

Second, you treat all members of Parliament with the utmost respect, and we see that each and every day. You are the embodiment of a fine parliamentarian, and, because you show such respect to every member of Parliament, regardless of the circumstances, it helps us show more respect to each other.

You also bring a terrific personality, with a great sense of humour. You are unflappable. Goodness gracious, we have tried to knock you off, confuse you, make you hesitate a bit, and it has never happened in the years you have been Deputy Speaker. You are always concise, competent and unflappable in the House with your great sense of humour. It contributes so much.

[*Translation*]

It is also important to note your respect for both official languages. I think my colleague from the Bloc Québécois mentioned it as well. You always make sure that both languages have equal status in the House of Commons. That is an extremely important aspect of our work, which you accomplish very effectively.

[*English*]

The last element of the Stanton rules is you have treated members from across the political spectrum as friends. There is no one in this House who does not see you as a colleague and somebody who is trying to embody the very best in our Parliament.

I say, with some regret, knowing that you are stepping down, that I hope we will have continued months before there is an election, and continued months, if not years, of your parliamentary wisdom, so we can continue the effective work that we should be doing every day on behalf of the people of Canada. You certainly, by the high standards you have set as a parliamentarian and as the Deputy Speaker, have helped us so much to navigate those waters.

We wish the very best to you and Heather, and your entire family. Thank you for 10 terrific years of service.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby. All I can think of is that this is taking time away from the day's business here.

We will go to the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, this is a moment filled with emotion for me, and I believe it is for you as well.

I have the honour of joining my colleagues in affirming that you are an extraordinary person.

I have worked with you on several issues, not just in your capacity as Deputy Speaker, but also as the MP for your riding. We worked together on several issues and matters, and I must say that you have an extraordinary record.

[*English*]

I am switching back to English to say that I am really impressed with your French. You know I try my best. As other colleagues have mentioned, when you are in the chair as Deputy Speaker, it is always a time when we have a steadier hand in choppy waters. I am not comparing you to other deputy speakers. They are all fantastic, but you will be missed. I will miss, very much, working with you. I will come visit in Simcoe North because you have a beautiful riding, and I love visiting.

Please, dear lord, bless you, Heather, and your family with the most wonderful of retirements. May you never regret for one minute that you stepped down from this place, and may you not be wishing that you could come back. You will be enjoying a retirement as full and as glorious as you uniquely deserve. Thank you.

• (1530)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: I will start by thanking the Speaker for taking the time to remember the work we have done these past few years. I thank my leader, the leader of the Conservative Party, for his kind words. We have been good friends since 2013, I believe. I thank the member for La Prairie and the entire Bloc Québécois team for their excellent ongoing attention to the affairs of the House of Commons.

[*English*]

I thank my friend from New Westminster—Burnaby and his party. They have been nothing but attentive to the work of the House each and every day.

As well, I thank my good friend, the former Speaker, from Halifax West. The current Speaker and I have worked with him, and I had the honour to serve with the hon. Speaker from Regina—Qu'Appelle. Each of the teams I worked on with my fellow chair occupants was a pleasure and a privilege. One of the current team is here today, and I have to be careful with that, because the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands will call me out for reflecting upon the absence or presence of members.

The team I work with, the Speaker and my two fellow Chair occupants, has been nothing but a pleasure to serve with. I am now very cognizant of the time this is all taking. As servants of the House, we are here first and foremost for the members. We live that each and every moment. We are in service to the members, and what a privilege it is to do so.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a wonderful place to be as we honour you today.

On behalf of the official opposition, I would like to ask the House leader what our scheduled business will be for the remainder of this week and next.

Business of Supply

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to join my colleagues in congratulating you and thanking you for all that you have done. The fact that you have been there for so long attests to your sense of ethics, professionalism and collegiality, among other things. Thank you once again, and congratulations for all that you have done.

In response to my esteemed colleague's question, this afternoon, we will continue the debate on the NDP's opposition motion. This evening, at the expiry of the time provided for Private Members' Business, we will have a series of speeches and then proceed to the passage of Bill C-8, an act to amend the Citizenship Act regarding the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's call to action number 94, at third reading.

Tomorrow morning, we will begin with the second reading of Bill C-21, an act to amend certain acts and to make certain consequential amendments regarding firearms, and then, in the afternoon, we will move on to third reading of Bill C-6, an act to amend the Criminal Code regarding conversion therapy.

As for next week, on Monday, we will resume second reading of Bill C-21. Tuesday will be an allotted day. Wednesday, we will proceed with Bill C-30, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 19, 2021 and other measures. Debate on that bill will continue on Thursday and Friday.

Congratulations once again, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleague for her question.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—ACTION TOWARD RECONCILIATION WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe congratulations are in order from the sounds of things.

I really appreciate the opportunity to speak today and to say to all members of the House *ulaakut*. I speak today in representing the indigenous people of Labrador, all Labradorians who live in the lands of the Innu and the Inuit of the region.

Like many before me today, we acknowledge our Parliament is located on the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people. I, like many Canadians, am thankful for the freedom we have to speak and for the opportunity to speak to what has been a sad legacy and a dark chapter of residential schools in Canada.

I will be sharing my time today with my colleague, the member for Winnipeg North.

Business of Supply

The residential school system is a national tragedy. It was born of colonialism and it was propelled by systemic racism. We can all agree on that. I think all of us are still very shocked and profoundly upset with the news we heard coming out of Kamloops in the last week. Unfortunately, the first nations of Kamloops are alone and, once again, this is evidence of the pain experienced by generations from the legacy of residential schools and the system in which they were entrapped.

Many continue to experience that pain today. I know this very well, because I know my riding and the people I serve. Many of them are victims of residential schools. The pain and hurt of that experience follows them to this day and unfortunately will follow them and their families for generations to come.

Our government is the first in Canadian history to step up and talk openly about reconciliation with indigenous people. We are the first government to establish that reconciliation with indigenous people is a priority for us and for Canada, and Canadians support and embrace this.

I also want to outline that as a government we are deeply committed to advancing reconciliation, the healing of Indian residential school survivors and their families, and providing supports, depending on the wishes of those communities. More specifically, we are deeply committed to supporting survivors, families and communities, and helping to locate and memorialize through ceremony the children who died and went missing.

The first residential schools were open toward the end of the 19th century and never ceased operation until nearly the close of the 20th century, in 1996. That is only about 25 years ago, so it is not ancient history and it is not without its impacts being felt as deeply as they are today.

The darkness and the pain that came with learning the news is not going to cease today, tomorrow or in the days and years ahead. However, I hope someday in our country we will have achieved reconciliation and healing for all those who were deeply harmed and hurt.

The legacy of residential schools continues to this day with indigenous people, as I said, and it is felt in many ways, through poverty, food insecurity, mental illness, physical health and, more commonly and most known, through death by suicide. This is the sad outcome and the legacy that follow residential schools.

● (1535)

For first nations, Inuit and Métis, while they live with this legacy, they also live with the post-traumatic stress and the intergenerational trauma that accompanies it.

What I do know is this. In the riding I represent in Labrador, despite consistent lobbying and advocating, despite good investments that we have made and continue to make, there still needs to be more focus on mental health and on healing. There are still far too many people who are asking for help that they are not getting. There are still far too many people who are reaching out in words and actions to a dead end. We need to focus on that.

If we are really to help in this healing process, it has to start with mental health services. It has to start with providing the supports

that people need to function in everyday life. It has to start with ending poverty and closing the gap that exists between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians. It has to ensure that there is food security, that there is heat security and that opportunities are equal to all kids.

As we talk about the dark chapters and the sad legacy of residential schools, I also fear for the future yet of many indigenous kids in our country, only because I see what transpires before our eyes each and every day still. Far too many kids are still being removed from their communities, cultures, language and the people who love them. While they may be removed to be safe, we need to find ways to keep indigenous kids safe without having them lose everything else that provides value in their lives.

I deal with issues almost on a daily basis in my riding of children who are being sent hundreds and, in some cases, thousands of kilometres away to be fostered in families and homes, which I am sure, in many cases, are loving and supportive. However, I know these children are losing things that are very valuable to them. They are losing the opportunity to grow up in their own culture and to learn their own language. They are losing the opportunity to visit with those they have learned to love and know.

We need to find a better way, and we can only do that when we work with leadership within first nations, Inuit and Métis governments. This has to be a priority for everyone. Indigenous children have to be a priority for everyone. While it is a priority in terms of when we speak and give that commitment, we need to ensure that it translates into real, substantial change on the ground that will ensure the safety of these children, of their mental and physical health, and the overall well-being of these children as well.

When we talk about the legacy of residential schools, we feel each and every day, as we walk with those we know and love, the serious consequences that it has left behind. I know many people have asked that history be erased in some way, but we should never erase history. When it is so bad, so sad, so horrifying, we should never repeat it. For that to happen, we need to fully understand it.

● (1540)

If we are to move toward meaningful reconciliation for indigenous people and non-indigenous people, together moving forward, then we need to have that level of respect. We need to have transparency. We need to have accountability, but we also need to have understanding, a full understanding—

● (1545)

The Deputy Speaker: We will need to leave it there. We are a little over time, and we will now go to questions and comments.

We will begin with the hon. member for North Island—Powell River.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, again, I would love to express my deep gratitude for your amazing work in the House.

Yesterday, the minister reannounced the \$27 million to help indigenous communities bring their children home. It came under the 2019 budget. When asked why the money was coming now, the minister indicated that the communities were not ready.

However, today in committee we heard from the chair of the governing circle from the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation that this was simply not the case. She told the committee that survivors have been asking for funds for years, especially through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

I am wondering if the member could speak to why that is.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her work on this issue and other issues related to indigenous children in Canada.

First of all, she is well aware that we are committed to implementing the calls to action within the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report and we are continuing the process of truth-telling, as we have already seen, which is a part of the healing for indigenous people that has been laid out by the commission.

Also, I want to reiterate the investments that we are making, and we are moving forward with these investments. There are many cases of unmarked graves across the country as well. We have started the work toward locating them. Unfortunately, what we are discussing today is very tragically not an isolated case in this country. It is one glimpse of the dark reality, the grim reality of residential schools.

We have committed funding in previous budgets that is still being rolled out. I am sure there are many who wish it could be moving much more quickly, but we also have a—

The Deputy Speaker: We will get on to some additional questions.

The hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I also would like to thank my colleague for a very powerful speech.

This morning at the indigenous affairs committee, we had an hour when we listened to the commissioners and we did not ask questions. It was very powerful testimony. There were a few things that bring me some concern.

One was when Commissioner Wilson said that we have not acted with the attention, urgency and resources that are needed. Commissioner Littlechild talked about call to action 81 being stuck. They made it clear they believe this should not be a partisan issue, that there have been successive governments that have perhaps made mistakes and have done wrong.

Today, the NDP members put forward a motion. It is an important motion. It is not perfect, but it is their effort to move things forward. I would certainly like to hear my colleague indicate that she will be happy to support the motion.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, I have shared with the member on committee many different important topics related to indigenous people in Canada, including this one.

Decolonizing the process that has impacted people in this country for many generations is not going as quickly as any of us would like, such as removing the Indian Act, ensuring the protection and safety of children, and closing the gaps we currently have between indigenous and non-indigenous children in the country. Denouncing

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the colonial systems is a part of that. Reconciling historical wrongdoings is a part of that, but rebuilding our relationship with indigenous people is also a critical piece to all of this.

In order for us to move forward, to do the investments that we currently have on the table and are prepared to invest to help support survivors, families and children, we can only do that in partnership with all of the indigenous governments and organizations that are there. Do we want to fix this? Do we want to make sure that people have the healing and supports they need? Absolutely.

I look at people every single day in my job, because it is my job to represent them. I see the hurt and pain of the experiences of residential schools. I would like nothing more than to take that away, just like every other member in this House, but it is a process. We have to work with them to make sure that we do the right things: investing in mental health, investing in closing the gaps, investing in indigenous children and their families. This is the right thing to do. I hope all governments, not just the government today, not just members in the House today, but all governments in this country in the future will see that as well—

• (1550)

The Deputy Speaker: We went a little over time there.

The hon. member for North Island—Powell River is rising on a point of order.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and I believe that if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to extend the time for today's supply proceedings by 15 minutes.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any members opposed to the motion?

[*Translation*]

I hear no opposition. The proposal is therefore adopted.

[*English*]

Resuming debate, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I get to the matter at hand, I want to add a few thoughts regarding this special day for you as a Speaker. I have always addressed you as Speaker and it is the way I see you. The NDP House leader referred to you as “unflappable”, and that is what I was thinking. I thought it encapsulated your basic understanding of doing what is right in the chamber. No matter what the temperament of members might have been in the chamber, you always seemed to have things under control.

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Mr. Speaker, as someone who has been in the House for the last 10 years, I have always, without exception, respected your wise words, even when they went against me at times, and appreciated your many contributions to the House of Commons. I hope there will come a day in your retirement when we will have a chance to talk. I know you are a passionate parliamentarian and have a lot of good ideas to talk about, maybe rule changes or how the House of Commons could be more modernized. I want to thank you for everything you have done in representing your constituents and for being such an outstanding parliamentarian. I have a great deal of respect for everything you have done.

Having said that, I would like to add my thoughts on this very important issue. Members may not be aware of this, but the demographics of my riding of Winnipeg North are the answer to why I feel very passionate about what has been taking place over the last couple of weeks and far beyond that. It goes back to the days when I was in opposition many years ago and wanting to see inquiries on this very important issue. For me, reconciliation is not an option. Reconciliation is something we all need to work on, not only the national government, but all levels of government. It supersedes governments and should also be applicable to the private sector, non-profit groups, people as a whole. We should be looking at our educational systems, for example school boards. Reconciliation is absolutely essential. It is not just for those who were directly impacted, but all of society. If we are to hit our potential, we need to resolve and work toward it.

A number of parliamentarians talked about taking partisan politics out of this. No party in the chamber can escape the damage that has been caused. Different levels of government and political parties have to take some sense of ownership. I like the idea of exploring where we go from here, as opposed to passing blame.

Every week I go over the Salter Bridge and see red ribbons. On Dufferin Avenue, there is a red dress in the window of a home. Earlier today, I saw hearts with the number 215 on them. The discovery in Kamloops is absolutely horrific, and for the very first time, for a vast majority of Canadians, it sunk in that this actually took place.

• (1555)

Many in our society were aware of it or had heard about it. A number of MPs spoke about that. We cannot just let this go by. We need to ensure that we continue to move forward.

The one question I was afforded to ask, was for me personally to reflect and renew my commitment to do whatever I can to push for reconciliation.

A picture is worth a thousand words. I know I am not allowed to display things, but I have a very good friend who often provides me with advice on indigenous matters. She sent me three pictures with news stories. We have all heard the phrase “a picture is worth a thousand words”. The first picture she sent me was of an Indian burial ground.

The news article is entitled, “City of Brandon should buy back land where residential school children are buried, family member says”. We talked about Brandon, and Brandon is not alone. We found out about Kamloops and saw the public's reaction. It was im-

mediate. Most Canadians were shocked. Kamloops is not the only community or the only residential school, so there is a need that is real and tangible. When we see the plaque embedded and read this, it reinforces that. We need to look at this collectively and provide whatever support we can.

This article claims the city should buy back the grounds. That is why I say it is not just one government but all governments, stakeholders and even members of the public.

Another story that I was provided is entitled, “Indigenous Manitobans call for empathy about residential schools after remains of 215 children found in B.C.” The picture shows the footwear of children. I thought of candles and those lives that were never fully lived. It is hard to imagine how one could be taken away from their home or family environment as a child. These are the types of imagery portrayed there.

The third article that was sent to me is from Smithsonian Magazine. I want to ensure members know what I am referring to, so I will quote from it. Imagine a picture with red dresses hanging outside.

It states:

On a steel-gray winter day, the red dresses each hung, flapping in the wind along the plaza surrounding the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian—35 of them—in different shapes, sizes and shades. They serve as stand-ins for the potentially thousands of native women who go missing or are murdered each year.

That is the imagery portrayed there.

I see my time has expired. I will continue on in my first question.

• (1600)

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member said that he will do whatever he can on the path of reconciliation. There is something that he can do: He can tell his own government to stop taking indigenous kids to court. The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal found Canada's discrimination to be “wilful and reckless”, in a worst-case scenario, resulting in unnecessary family separations for thousands of children, and serious harm and even death for some others. The tribunal ordered Canada to pay \$40,000 to each child. The Prime Minister wants to quash that order.

Will the member tell the Prime Minister that he is wrong, and join the NDP and tell the government to stop taking indigenous children to court?

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Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I like paragraphs (c) and (d) in the motion. I think there is a great deal of merit to it. I do not believe the New Democrats are doing a service to the issue by trying to politicize it to the degree they are.

I was commenting about the red dress hanging in a window on Dufferin Avenue right by the Salter Street bridge. To me, that is a reminder I see quite often, as are the red ribbons on Salter Street bridge.

A community of close to 20,000 indigenous people lives in Winnipeg's north end. This is a community I often go through and it is where I have an office. These are the reminders that are very real and these are why it is so important for me personally to renew my commitment to do whatever I can to deal with these important issues and make sure we continue to move forward.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this debate is very interesting and it is certainly very important.

Rather than ask a question, I would like to make a few comments.

There are a lot of grey areas in this debate. Everything seems kind of vague: the number of children who died, where they died, the illnesses they had and all the circumstances surrounding the whole thing.

It is a bit strange because we can assume the federal government covered the children's cost of living or, in this case, their cost of not living. When children died in some residential school or another, be it in British Columbia, Quebec or elsewhere, a member of the clergy surely had to notify the federal government so it could stop sending money. One would expect some bureaucrat to record the fact that the child had died, how old the child was and the circumstances of their death. How can it possibly be that there was no file comprehensively documenting what happened?

If there is no such record, maybe that means the church communities themselves kept the money. If they did not inform the federal government, we might be staring at a financial scandal here. Church communities might have kept the money. These are really important questions that have not really been addressed in this debate.

Would my colleague care to comment on that?

• (1605)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I do not know the specific answer, but I want to emphasize one last point.

We hear about the 94 calls to action that came from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We know there are 231 individual calls for justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. If members want to get a sense of obligations and some of the stakeholders, the national inquiry report has highlighted who has the responsibilities. I really like that. It is highlighted in colour so it is very easy to see. They will see that it is not one level of government. To have it resolved is going to take a while, but it is going to take people, agencies and govern-

ments working together to get it done right. That is how I would conclude my remarks. We all have to do something to work toward full reconciliation.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I join members from Treaty 5 territory, the territory of the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, from my home in Thompson. I would like to share my time with my colleague for North Island—Powell River.

Today I rise along with my NDP colleagues to call for immediate action by Canada for justice in memory of the 215 children found in a mass grave at the Kamloops Indian Residential School on the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc territory, and in memory of the countless other indigenous children who were victims of Canada's genocide against indigenous peoples.

The news of the shocking reality of the abuse and murder of these 215 children has shaken our country to its core. People are in shock. People are mourning. People are asking how this could have happened and how such unspeakable cruelty, horrific violence and abuse and deliberate, culpable negligence could have been part of an official state policy. It was a state policy of genocide. First nations in our region have been grieving. Survivors, their children and their grandchildren have been reliving unspeakable trauma. They are sad and they are angry.

A couple of days ago I received a call from Eunice, a respected elder from Tataskweyak Cree Nation. She is a survivor. I asked her at the beginning how she was doing. She told me she was sad and that she was angry. In residential school, “they taught us not to cry”, she said, but she wanted to. Eunice was clear, as a survivor, that there must be action for current and future generations. Every single survivor I have heard from has been clear. Their children and grandchildren have been clear. There must be action.

Today, we in the NDP are standing in solidarity with first nations, survivors and intergenerational survivors, and calling for truth, action and justice. Pimicikamak Cree Nation has called on the Prime Minister to fund the search of the site of the residential school that was imposed on them for decades. They are certain more bodies of children will be found. They want to bring them home. York Factory First Nation has called on the federal government to protect each of the sites for proper investigation, ceremony and commemoration. They have said that burial sites must be found, school records must be available and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls must be fulfilled.

Every single first nation in our region is clear: There must be action and there must be truth.

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There has not been truth for indigenous peoples in Canada. The truth starts with making it clear that Canada's treatment of indigenous peoples is genocide. The genocide of indigenous people was a deliberate state policy of colonialism and ethnic cleansing. Let us be clear that the Government of Canada had an agenda to intentionally take over the lands of indigenous peoples to exploit them for profit. This included a policy of deliberately starving people off the land and killing their leaders, and a policy that seized children from their parents and communities and placed them in church-run institutions that devalued their way of life, their culture and their lives.

The story of Canada is rooted in genocide. The discovery of a mass grave of 215 children is further confirmation of that genocide: a genocide that is ongoing. There must be truth.

It starts with calling residential schools what they were: detention centres, prisons and, all too often, torture chambers. There was physical, sexual and emotional abuse perpetrated by staff, including clergy. The abuse was sanctioned by the state and was known about, but too often covered up. There were 215 deaths at a school that had only 50 recorded. There are hundreds, if not thousands, more children unaccounted for across this country. The victims were as young as three years old. Many of them died with no official records of death, their remains not even treated with dignity. They were buried in unmarked mass graves with no consideration of returning them home to their loved ones.

This was not in a far-away country. This is Canada. This is a system that was in place until the 1990s.

• (1610)

Let us be clear. These were not just unfortunate coincidences or incidents, or the actions of a few. What occurred was part of deliberate state policy. It did not just happen; it was a system designed this way.

There must be action. Two days ago in Parliament we had a chance to talk about the 215 children found at the Kamloops residential school. Instead of action from the government, we heard more words. The Prime Minister stated that Canada failed indigenous peoples. The Minister of Indigenous Services told us to speak to our kids, because they know what happened. This is not acceptable. This is gaslighting, as though Canada is not the one responsible, as though its current government does not have a direct responsibility for this genocide.

To the Prime Minister I say this is a genocide against indigenous peoples.

The irony is that we in Canada lecture the world on human rights, peace and justice, but we ignore the brutal history of colonialism and the vile racism and white supremacy at its root. We lecture the world while we gloss over, even deny, the genocide against indigenous peoples here at home. We talk about reconciliation, but we do not mean it. We ignore the truth.

We still defend the people and the systems that upheld colonialism and genocide as state policy. Let us be clear. What happened to indigenous children, generation after generation, was a policy rooted in colonialism that was administered with unspeakable cruelty

and inhumanity. If people are not part of the solution, they are part of the problem.

The world is watching. It is time for Canada to say the truth, to uncover the truth. It is time to state clearly that racism, colonialism and genocide are part of our history and our current day-to-day reality. It is time to commit to nothing less than decolonization.

It is time for actions, not words. It starts with justice for the children and working with indigenous communities to uncover every single site that children were abducted to, and to find them and bring them home. Let us treat this for what it was: crimes against children and indigenous people that should and must include the laying of criminal charges. Let us also stop using the court system to fight against indigenous children and people.

Let us ensure that the government pays its reparations for the incalculable damage and horror that this genocide has caused. Let us also not forget the many dimensions of this colonial system, both the historic legacy and current reality, and that there are first nations, to this day, that still do not have clean drinking water and adequate housing, that live in abject poverty and that have second-rate health care services, underfunded education, a lack of social services and a lack of recreation. In 2021, we still have states of emergency because children are taking their own lives because they feel hopeless.

In the memory of these children, in the memory of and in honouring all survivors, their children and grandchildren, there must be justice. As a mother of two children who are three, the age of the youngest victim in Kamloops, I cannot imagine what their mothers went through and what those children went through. In their names, there must be justice.

The colonialism and genocide that have caused and continue to cause immense suffering for indigenous peoples must stop. We must hear them when they say that they are here, that they are not going anywhere and that the history of the colonizers and their view of the world are not what stick. Colonialism is doomed to fail. Indigenous peoples deserve respect, deserve justice and deserve clear recognition of this being called what it is: a genocide.

Every child matters. The 215 indigenous children who died at the Kamloops residential school mattered. The indigenous children who died at residential schools across Canada mattered. We will not forget them. In their memory, we must and we will achieve justice and decolonization for indigenous peoples, for Canada.

• (1615)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to congratulate you and pay tribute to you. You were probably one of the first people to say hello and welcome me to the House of Commons. I truly appreciated it and especially appreciated that you did so in French.

Getting back to my colleague's speech, I want to congratulate her on her dedication. She always speaks with such conviction, and I think that this debate requires great sensitivity.

She gave several examples of how we, as a people, may have mistreated indigenous peoples. She made recommendations. We should make these recommendations a priority, especially with respect to housing.

I also want to point out that the New Democrats are proposing actions that have the potential to receive unanimous support, and I commend them for that. However, how far does my colleague believe, deep down, we should go right now?

I think this is all connected to what happened with the Indian Act. Should we review this act, or even repeal it and start over?

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his words.

The decolonization process is a multi-stage process. We absolutely have to not only think, but also act to put an end to a colonizing law.

At the same time, we have to work with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to really support first nations, who are doing everything they can for their people.

To be clear, this all has to happen—with the engagement, investment and support of the federal government, not acting in a paternalistic way but as a responsible partner.

Regarding today's motion, it is clear that the Government of Canada is guilty of genocide. We must do everything possible to bring justice to indigenous peoples across the country.

• (1620)

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to add my voice to the voices of those who are congratulating you today. You have always been very generous in allowing me time to speak, so thank you. I would also like to congratulate the hon. member for her dedication and commitment to these issues.

My good friend Bill Yoachim is the executive director of Kw'umut Lelun, which is the delegated aboriginal agency for child, family and community services on Vancouver Island. One thing he reminds me constantly is that the number one reason children are apprehended by the system is poverty and a lack of affordable, adequate housing.

The residential school system is a legacy we are dealing with, but having children in foster care is an outrageous legacy we are dealing with. It is a continuation of this system of apprehending chil-

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dren from their families. About 4.9% of children in this country are aboriginal, but 48% of children in care are aboriginal.

I would like the hon. member to comment on the continuation of this legacy of removing children from their families and their culture and what we should be doing about it.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, poverty is a form of violence, and we know that in my part of the country, indigenous children face some of the highest rates of poverty in Canada. In a country as wealthy as Canada, we are talking about third world living conditions.

Today, we are saying there must be action in light of the news coming out of Kamloops of the 215 children who were found. We must do so in their memory. We must also put an end to the ongoing abuse of human rights of indigenous children and indigenous peoples in our country today.

I am hopeful that MPs of all parties will recognize that this is a moment in time, a moment in history, when Canada must change course and must commit to decolonizing. That includes putting an end to the poverty and third world conditions that indigenous children and communities face.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her passion and determination in getting action for indigenous peoples and for true reconciliation. We have heard some political parties talk about framing Canada's actions as a “cultural” genocide, but the UN convention on genocide is crystal clear: It meets all of the article II conditions for genocide.

Can my colleague speak about why it is important for the Government of Canada to make a clear statement that Canada committed genocide against indigenous people.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, very clearly, for there to be reconciliation there must be truth, and the truth is that this is genocide. We need Canada to acknowledge this, recognize it and act accordingly. These are crimes against humanity. This is inhumane state-sanctioned and church-sanctioned violence, gross negligence and even death. It is extremely serious. Canada lectures the world on human rights in all sorts of ways. Well, it is time to recognize what has happened here at home. That begins by recognizing genocide and committing to decolonization today and going forward.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I will start my speech with a thank you. I want to thank and acknowledge my Granny Minnie who went to Lejac residential school for far too many years of her life. When I was growing up, she would say to me, “No complaining, Rachel. We are all still here. Get to work.”

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It took me many years to fully understand that she understood that Canada had tried to kill her, had tried to kill her community and had succeeded in killing too many. She also recognized that, although she grew up indigenous in a country trying to kill indigenous people, they are still here. She built us strong, carrying a lot of multi-generational trauma, which my family continues to work through. We are strong and the preciousness of our children is powerful, even for the little two-year-old white girl they picked up along the way.

I want to also thank and acknowledge my husband, who is a survivor of a residential school. His love for all of his children and grandchildren is deeply tender and kind. He grapples bravely with the wounds he has, and he has succeeded in a commitment of making sure that not one of his children or grandchildren will ever see him under the influence of any drug or alcohol.

I also acknowledge how he has carried the tradition of his people, especially in his spirit baths. He has taken many people to bathe when they come into their maturity as young people and when they are grieving. This includes our two sons, Henry and Kai, who completed one full year of bathing daily in the river when their voices changed.

I want to thank the many elders who have guided me in my life. There are so many who are still with me, and some who are on the next step of their journey. I want to thank them for holding me up and setting me straight with a kindness and gentleness that I am still practising to emulate. I want to thank all the generations of indigenous children, and my children and grandchildren, who are so generous in their forgiveness for the wounds we are all trying to heal together. I am awed by their love and strength for what they must carry.

I also want to send a special moment of love to Rebecca, who lost her mother several years ago today. She was another victim of a colonial past that damaged her so badly and deeply that it was impossible for her to continue. I want to thank all indigenous parents, and my sister is one of them, who have had to tell their young children about residential schools sooner than they wanted to because of the public discovery of these 215 precious babies.

It is hard to know when to tell one's children that Canada has waged and continues to wage a war on them because of who they are and because they are indigenous. When is the time to tell one's children to be prepared for the racism in Canada because it is coming for them? At what age is it appropriate to tell one's children the one thought every indigenous parent must think about in this country?

I recently heard a non-indigenous person expressing their grief on the discovery of the 215 precious children. They spoke about the loss of innocence they were experiencing in Canada. An indigenous woman, much wiser than me, responded with such kindness, acknowledging that for this person and many Canadians, this revelation has been an awakening.

I hope all Canadians are having this awakening and that their perspective of Canada is fundamentally changing. This is what has happened and is happening in our country. We need to own that as

Canadians because this is not a surprise or a shock for indigenous communities across this country. This is a confirmation.

Former senator and chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Murray Sinclair, said in an interview recently that survivors of residential schools called him and said, "I told you so." I want to tell non-indigenous Canadians to stop trying to fix this and to help the nations carry it. They should carry with them this knowledge that generations of indigenous communities have had to carry by themselves. When they told, their voices were ignored and silenced.

Canadians should understand that this genocide happened and is happening in Canada. They should listen and amplify the voices of indigenous people and where there is injustice, they should help the fight. Many indigenous elders and leaders have told me that there can be no healing without justice and truth. It is hard to keep fighting when they are the ones who are wounded. What Canada needs now is for all Canadians to stand together and fight the injustice that is happening today and in the past.

● (1625)

Canadians can help by telling the Government of Canada, both historically and today, to stop putting the responsibility at the nation's doors and start looking for the truth.

I will give Canadians an example. Yesterday, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations reannounced \$27 million from the 2019 budget to help indigenous communities find their children who died in residential schools, to help bring them home. When the minister was asked why the money was only coming now, the minister said the communities were not ready before this time. I can promise members that there is not one indigenous community across this country that was not wanting their children to come home.

Today, in the indigenous and northern affairs committee, the chair of the governing circle of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation was very clear in response to the minister and said that this is simply not the case. She told the committee that survivors have been asking for funds for years, especially through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, but those requests have been severely underfunded and often not responded to.

I believe the chair of the governing circle of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. I believe the communities and the voices of indigenous leaders across this country, who have told us again and again that there are children buried. I have no doubt that all communities have always been looking for the children to be returned.

After hearing this, a chief asked me, "Are first nations now responsible for investigating their own genocide?" I agree. Whatever action that is taken should be done 100% with the lead of the nations every single time. However, the reality is that Canada is the perpetrator of this genocide. Canada has information that will guide them from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

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In fact, former senator Murray Sinclair spoke to the work done to identify potential grave sites. This information is there, and I would suggest to the government that it is a very good place to start. All too often the government tells Canadians that indigenous communities have other priorities on one issue or another. I want to be very clear in this House that that is complete gaslighting. What is true is that, even with the work being done by the government, first nations children are still in court and a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal order is not being honoured.

I want to thank Cindy Blackstock for her amazing work on this, and I would say to the Government of Canada, it is time to let her put this burden down. It is time to make sure that no more first nations children lose their childhood. It is time to step up and do the right thing. It is time to get it done.

I also want to say that St. Anne residential school survivors are still being denied access to justice. They are survivors. They have a right to have a voice. For too long, the government has blindsided them with processes that continue to keep the agony alive.

The implementation of the TRC calls to action are not being honoured with the seriousness that they must. We are hearing that from indigenous communities. The people who are experienced in this are the experts. That is who we should be listening to.

It is time for there to be spaces for trauma healing centres across this country for indigenous communities. Former senator Murray Sinclair said it very well. He said it is time for us to have spaces where survivors and their families can come together and share this together. It is time for us to make space for that and honour that.

To all of the indigenous communities across this country, from this deep sadness, what I wish them all is joy. For so many generations, with every child that was taken and every child that is taken today, the joy has been stripped from the communities.

It is absolutely time for Canada to step up, recognize the basic human rights of indigenous communities and finally do the right thing, have justice and have truth, so these communities can finally have joy.

• (1630)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was in committee this morning when we heard from the commissioners. It was very powerful testimony. There was a few things that the member brought up in her speech that were particularly concerning.

Certainly, when they indicated that the attention, urgency and resources needed to be made available, the comparison was made to COVID and how quickly the government responded to the COVID crisis. That is what she described there being a lack of. It was also important that she indicated successive governments share the blame and that this is a non-partisan issue.

I come to the House today to speak to a motion that I think is important for us to move forward with, and I would appreciate any further comments my colleague might have about the testimony she heard today.

• (1635)

The Deputy Speaker: We will go back to the hon. member for North Island—Powell River. I will just ask her if she could just move the microphone out slightly. We are getting a bit of distortion.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the interpreters who have to put up with this. I know it is so hard on them, and I would like to express my deep appreciation.

I thank the member, who I know is finalizing her time here, as a future retiree of this place. I want to thank her for her commitment and work on this file. I deeply respect some of the work she has done.

I could not agree more with the testimony we heard today about how the urgency we have seen for COVID needs to be applied across the board to indigenous communities in Canada. The reality is that we know we are not meeting basic human rights in Canada. Not one Canadian should be okay with that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for that beautiful testimony. This day, today's debates are rather special. There have been some very moving testimonies just like the other evening when we had the take-note debate.

I think that, in a debate like this one, words matter. The other evening and today as well, to the question as to whether those children and indigenous peoples in general have experienced a cultural genocide in the past 150 years in Canada, I have no doubt. I get the feeling that my colleague has no doubt about that either. The House is not unanimous on this. People on both the Liberal and Conservative sides do not agree with that term.

My question is this: What do members of the first nations call this phenomenon?

What do they call the experience children had in the residential schools, in other words the fact that these children were kidnapped, transported across the world, uprooted and stripped of their culture?

Do the first nations see this as cultural genocide?

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, this was absolutely genocide, and it continues to be genocide. When they find a mass grave of 215 children, all explanations end.

I encourage all of us as parliamentarians, regardless of party, to own this history. Until there is truth and until there is justice, indigenous communities will not be able to fully heal, and that is our responsibility.

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pick up on something my colleague indicated earlier, and this is with respect to the role of the federal government and ensuring the federal government is directed by the wishes of the community.

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I know she had not come up with a full answer because she was also grappling with it. Perhaps she could give us a bit more clarity on what that needs to look like in terms of the interactions and the support that the federal government needs to give, while at the same time, having the decisions directed by local communities.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, former senator Sinclair was very clear in his testimony in INAN today, where he outlined the fact that there has been research done on where some of those graves are projected to be.

It is absolutely essential that Canada be very respectful in its conversations, but that it take a leadership role in making sure that if, for example, there is private property, that property is dealt with so we can get those babies home. That has to be a number one priority. Genocide was committed and continues to be committed by Canada. Canada must own it and take a lead on the steps to remedy this.

● (1640)

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Parkdale—High Park. My hon. colleague, of course, serves as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice as well.

Mr. Speaker, let me just quickly take a moment to recognize your accomplishments in this House. I did not know the gravity of this and, of course, I have only had a short time to sit in this House, but I have found that our dealings have been jovial. I appreciate your leadership and wish you all the best in the days ahead.

I have said it before, but I will say it again. I have the privilege of representing three indigenous communities in my riding of Kings—Hants: Sipekne'katik, Glooscap and Annapolis Valley first nations. Particularly pertinent to today's discussion is the fact that my riding is home to where the Shubenacadie Residential School existed from 1930 to 1967. I have seen the legacy. This was the largest school in Atlantic Canada. It did not only tear children away from their families in the local area; it brought Mi'kmaq children from across Nova Scotia, indeed across the Atlantic region, to face the horrors of what residential schools represented.

I think for many of us in this House it is very difficult to try to understand because we do not necessarily have that lived experience. I am going to try to explain by using a quote I found from a member of my community, the late Isabelle Knockwood. She was the author of a book called *Out of the Depths: The Experiences of Mi'kmaw Children at the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia*. There are a whole bunch of passages that I could quote, but this one was particularly jarring for me:

...from our first day at the school speaking our own language resulted in violent physical punishment. Since we knew no English we had to hide to talk to each other in Mi'kmaq. Even after a few years had passed and we had learned enough English to communicate with each other, it still was often dangerous to talk. We were forbidden to talk at night in the dormitory. Brothers and sisters were strictly forbidden to speak to each other.

There is a lot that I could quote, but it is about the language and culture, trying to take that away from indigenous children at that time. It is one illustration among many that I could point out that are problematic.

We recognize, of course, the harm in Kamloops, but we know that it is also in our own backyard. The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation recognizes the deaths of 16 children. I would like to read their names into the record here today, if I may. Let me also acknowledge that we know there could be more, and indeed that work has to continue. The names are as follows: Albert Pictou, Bryan Simon, Colin Bernard, Doris Acquin, Ella Cooper, Irene Mitchell, James Paul, Josephine Smith, Joyce Delores McDonald, Mary Agnes Ward, Mary Gehue, Mary Ginnish, Mary Madeleine Bernard, Mary Toney, Maurice Young and Nancy Lampquin. I wanted to make sure those were in Hansard, in our records.

This past Sunday, I had the opportunity to join members of the community of Sipekne'katik as they gave prayers and a smudging ceremony to those who have been impacted by the legacy of the residential school system.

Many in indigenous communities of course knew that what was found in Kamloops was a likelihood, and indeed this will not be the only type of tremendous harm we will find. We need to prepare ourselves, as Canadians, that this is not an isolated incident. I say this recognizing that we have to continue the work in this domain.

I have asked myself over the last number of days how best I can be an advocate in this particular space. The member opposite last mentioned the \$33 million the government had set aside in budget 2019 to be able to do the important work of finding these burial sites. For instance, my understanding is that in Kamloops it was the funding that helped find these individuals, and hopefully bring home even more children.

There is ongoing work right now in Shubenacadie, through The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, at the Shubenacadie site. It is a large area, 250 acres. Despite this being a national issue, I ask myself how best I can help in my community, in my riding. That is where I am going to turn my attention, in terms of working with indigenous leadership in Kings—Hants and indeed across Nova Scotia on how we can make sure that this particular site has the recognition it deserves.

For the members in this House who may not be familiar with the area, there is nothing there right now that actually gives credence to the horrors and the tragedy that happened in that place. Although it is not my place to say exactly how that should happen, as it has to be through the eyes of the survivors who had gone to this school, I do think it is important and it will be my focus in the days ahead.

There has been progress, and I say that hesitantly. We should not shy away from the fact that we have moved the yardsticks on reconciliation in the right direction. I am proud to be a member of a government and caucus that I believe have done more than any government in Canadian history in this particular work to reconcile with indigenous people. I say that recognizing and certainly making very clear that there is more work to be done, and that includes of course not only the work in Shubenacadie that I will undertake with my colleagues and indigenous leaders, but indeed a lot of the work that has to happen to be able to implement the TRC calls to action.

I want to highlight some of the work that I believe is important and is going to be fundamental for us, above and beyond the particular issue of the residential school system, to continue to build that relationship, because members and indigenous community members would say it is absolutely important that we recognize and we do right by the harm, but we also have to build on a better future.

I look at UNDRIP, the legislation that was passed in this House and is now before the Senate. It represents a historic opportunity for us, as a government, to continue to move and build partnerships nation to nation with indigenous communities. I look at Bill C-5 and take notice that all members of this House supported the fast-tracking of that particular legislation to establish a national day of truth and reconciliation in this country. Those, although alone they will not be enough, are important to being able to move the yardsticks in the right direction.

I look in my own community. Recently, I sat down with Chief Sack. We had a very important housing announcement through the rapid housing initiative, where we were able to make investments in the community for 20 units. Is there more work to be done? Absolutely, but this is an important investment I am proud our government has made to try to improve the lives of the indigenous communities I represent.

I look at Annapolis Valley First Nation and the ability for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to work with that community to make sure there is access through Canada Creek for their fisheries and their opportunities to exist in that domain.

• (1645)

I look at Glooscap Landing. Although it was a project that was advanced under my predecessor, Scott Brison, in partnership with the Glooscap community, it is a prime example of the opportunities that exist to be able to move and build commercial partnerships with the Glooscap community.

I have about 90 seconds left by my clock, so I will conclude by saying this.

My commitment to the members of my community, both indigenous and non-indigenous, will be to continue to advocate for and advance the priorities of indigenous communities in Kings—Hants, and of course beyond, with my colleagues in this House.

Reconciliation will not be an easy path. We know that. There will be remaining challenges and there will not always be agreement on the best pathway forward, but it is the spirit of being willing partners and working with each other that will be crucial.

To the survivors of the residential school system in my riding, and those who were impacted at Shubenacadie, I will do my utmost to ensure that this tragic legacy and the harms that have been done are known so we can all move collaboratively to reconcile and be able to advance and move forward from this darkest period of Canadian history.

• (1650)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. We cannot overlook the current court challenges with regard to compensation for the victims of St.

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Anne's residential school. I would like my colleague to say a few words about the time, energy and especially the money that has been devoted to this challenge. Could it not be used for something else? Does this not also send the message of a step backward instead of a step toward reconciliation?

[*English*]

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, as I understand, it relates to the decision from the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. I think the government has made it very clear that it is committed to compensating the individuals who have been impacted by the residential school system.

The background here is whether or not the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal had the jurisdiction under the statute to be able to move this forward, so it is less about the particular decision at hand and more about the consequences of allowing the tribunal to be able to award in this fashion, which has traditionally been the place of the courts.

Our government is committed to finding that settlement and that compensation. I believe that is important, and I know the members of my community believe it is as well.

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, one of the things I have brought up here is that this genocide that occurred with our residential school system carries on with children being apprehended and removed from their homes based on poverty and lack of affordable housing. There has been a call for indigenous housing designed by indigenous people that is culturally appropriate. In my riding, Tillicum Lelum and the Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre have both put forward proposals for housing and want to see more funding for culturally appropriate indigenous housing, to ensure that indigenous people who face poverty or inadequate housing do not have their children removed from them for those reasons.

Does the hon. member think that we should have a fourth leg to the national housing strategy for urban indigenous people designed by urban indigenous people?

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, of course housing is top of mind for individuals across the country, and indeed for indigenous communities. While the member opposite represents an urban riding, my riding is primarily rural and remote. I agree with him about creating a program around trying to serve the needs of indigenous communities. I know we have done a lot of work in this domain, but there is more to be done. Working toward giving ownership to indigenous communities to make their own decisions in this regard is something I support, so on the broad principles of what the member is advancing I agree with him.

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Ms. Marci Ien (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the meetings that my hon. colleague has had with the community since this happened, what is he hearing from young people in particular, who no doubt see themselves in this tragedy? What are their needs? At a time when we have been going through and continue to go through COVID, the mental health of young people is at stake. With the number of admissions to hospitals and so forth being so high right now, what is he hearing from young people in the communities about what they need?

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, I might not have mentioned it at the opening of my remarks. I was nervous because this is one of the most important speeches I have had to give in the House.

I actually joined the community on Sunday night, and a number of young people addressed the member's question. What I would say is there was a desire to come together. We know that through COVID, beyond this particular challenge and, frankly, this national tragedy, people want to be together writ large. There is a pride and a desire by young people to be proud of where they came from, a desire to make sure these stories are told, and to make sure that the history, the culture and the language of these particular communities is taken up by this generation.

That is the work that our government has done, and that is the work we need to continue, to embolden and to make sure that next generation of leaders has the tools to be able to maintain their culture, unlike what has happened in years past.

• (1655)

The Deputy Speaker: Before we get to resuming debate, it is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member North Island—Powell River, regional development; the hon. member for Bow River, Canadian heritage; and the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, the environment.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me start by congratulating you on your 10-year anniversary in that chair as Deputy Speaker and your distinguished service as a parliamentarian in this chamber, respected by every one of your 337 colleagues.

I want to speak today about something that is critically important, not just now but all of the time, that has come to the forefront given this opposition day motion that we are discussing, and that is the events at Kamloops in terms of the shocking discovery of the mass grave of 215 children who belonged to the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation.

After hearing about it on the radio, and the sheer magnitude, my first reaction was simply one of horror, and I had to explain to my kids why I was reacting the way that I was.

My second response was as someone who came to this chamber as a lawyer who has some experience with international law, particularly with Rwanda at the UN war crimes tribunal. I thought of how we usually associate mass graves with foreign conflicts and not with Canada. Then I started to think of what we have done vis-à-vis indigenous people of this land and how sometimes it is not much different in terms of the overt assimilation that we have prop-

agated against them, and when the declared policy of the government at the time was to “take the Indian out of the child”.

I also reacted as a parliamentarian who has not been in this chamber as long as you, Mr. Speaker, but for six years now, who feels like he has gathered some understanding of the situation. I had gone through the calls to action, but I was still shocked and surprised. However, we do not have to dig too far to realize that there were a lot of people who were not surprised, and a lot of those people are indigenous people of this land, particularly elders.

This led me to the question of how we value knowledge and recognize its legitimacy, and how this Eurocentric idea has been passed down that unless something is reduced to writing or photographic or video evidence, it probably did not happen. This is a bias that we bring to the table that we have to acknowledge. I thank a constituent of mine who wrote to me about the issue of Canadians, including Canadian parliamentarians, who need to learn to embrace oral histories as legitimate histories so that we can truly come to terms with the magnitude of what we are dealing with.

I also reacted as a father, as I mentioned, when I heard the news that morning on CBC Radio while my children were eating cereal in front of me. My boys are very dear to me. I mean, everyone's children are dear to them. My wife, Suchita, and I are raising two young boys, Zakir and Nitin, and we try and do right by them. However, it is one thing for me to imagine my children being removed from my home against my will, but it is another thing entirely to imagine them never returned to me and to never know their whereabouts, which is exactly what has transpired over and over again with indigenous families of this land. This is the true tragedy that needs to be dealt with and understood, and it needs to be accounted for, which can only start with a very strong, historical, educational exercise.

There are some people in this House who are younger than I am, which is the tender age of 49, who had the benefit of actually being educated on this. However, I went through every level of school, including post-secondary education and through law school, and never once was I instructed about the history of the residential school legacy in this country, which is quite shocking for a guy who graduated law school in 1998.

I know that people are now getting that education, and that is important. I also know that people are taking steps, and we heard the member for Kings—Hants talk about what was happening in his community in Nova Scotia. In my community of Parkdale—High Park in Toronto, there was a vigil just yesterday about this very issue, which raised awareness, and that is important. I thank my constituent, Eden, for organizing the vigil. She took the reins on doing so, because she felt so strongly about it. I took my oldest son to that event, because I wanted him to be there to understand, to learn, and to see how others were reacting to what we had learned on Friday morning.

It is one thing to read stories, and I do read him stories, particularly the orange shirt story of Phyllis Webstad, the woman who wore that infamous orange shirt, which was removed from her at that residential school. She is also a member of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation. However, it is more than just the stories, and I wanted him to get that. It is not just past or distant history, it is still unfolding around us, which is very important, because we should not deem it relegated to the past. It was also important for him and for me to see the turnout, the number of young people who were there, and to hear the demands, and there were many.

• (1700)

There were many directed at the federal government, the government that I represent. There was outrage, shock and horror, but it was important for me to hear the demands. It was important for my son to hear the demands. If I could summarize it, which is difficult to do, but they want justice, accountability and transparency and they want it now, not at some date to be determined in the future.

I hear that sentiment and I very much share that sentiment. I say that in all sincerity in this chamber for those who are watching around the country. In particular, what I think is most critical is just having a sense that if this happened to the Tk'emlúps First Nation, in Kamloops at that former school, we know that there are 139 sites around this country where it may very well have happened there as well. That forensic investigation, that radar investigation must be done and it must be done immediately.

I know that we have dedicated as a government almost \$34 million to address some of the calls to action we have heard extensively about during the course of today's debate. If more money is needed, it must be provided forthwith. That is what I am advocating for.

Others have also said to me just get on with every single one of those calls to action, get it over with now. It has been far too long. I hear that outrage and that sense of urgency. I pause because I know in looking at the calls to action that some of them relate to us at the federal level, us as parliamentarians in the House of Commons. Some of them relate to provincial governments, city governments. Some of them relate to institutions and school boards. Some of them even relate to foreign entities.

I, for one, would be dearly appreciative to see a formal papal apology. That is call to action 58. That is a call to action that the Prime Minister squarely put to the Pope on a visit to the Vatican and that has not yet been acceded to. I think that stands in stark contrast to what we see with other denominations of Christian churches in this country that have formally accepted and apologized for the role that the church played in terms of administering many of these residential schools. That needs to be forthcoming and Canadians are demanding that, rightfully so.

Others I believe have been met at least in part if not fully. I count myself as very privileged to have served in the last Parliament when I was the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Heritage. We worked on and co-developed with first nations, Métis and Inuit leaders what became Bill C-91, Canada's first ever Indigenous Languages Act.

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I personally count that as one of my most significant learning opportunities as a parliamentarian. It took that lawyer who was not educated about this stuff in law school and it turned him into a parliamentarian who was dealing directly with first nations, Inuit and Métis leaders about the difficulties of not having that connection to one's language and what that does to one's psyche, one's level of mental anxiety, one's connection to one's culture.

We have remedied that. It speaks directly to TRC calls to action 13, 14 and 15. We have also made great strides with respect to indigenous child and welfare legislation. That was Bill C-92 in the last Parliament. The most important piece there is that the norm now based on that legislation is if we must remove a child, then we keep them within their group, within their first nation, among their community and only as an absolute last resort would they be removed.

We have worked on UNDRIP with members of the opposition parties including the NDP. We have worked on Bill C-22, which I count myself privileged to have worked on as parliamentary secretary to the current Minister of Justice. It deals with curing the over-representation of indigenous people in this land. Much more remains to be done. I do not discount that and it needs to be done quickly. We need to do that work together.

I welcome this debate. I welcome the discussions we have been having literally all week, not just today about this important topic, because they are critical. I do feel at my core that we will only gather sufficient momentum when all Canadians are talking about this stain on Canada's history and Canada's legacy. That is critical to see. We have seen it over the course of this pandemic where people, non-white and white, people who are racialized or not racialized have taken up the call for addressing systemic racism and systemic discrimination in wake of George Floyd and in this country people like Regis Korchinski-Paquet.

I am seeing that again now. I am seeing that massive outreach now and that is a good thing because it gives us momentum. It gives us the initiative to keep working hard at these issues and to keep focused on these calls to action in addressing the needs of indigenous people, but always in a manner that is led by indigenous people and done on their terms, because gone must be the paternalism where Ottawa dictated to indigenous people the appropriate remedies. We must be listening and responding.

• (1705)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. colleague, but I did not hear him speak about what we are going to be voting on.

The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal found the Liberal government guilty of what it said was willful and reckless systemic discrimination against first nations children. There have been 19 non-compliance orders against the government, including the non-compliance order over the deaths of Jolynn Winter and Chantel Fox, because the government refused to respect Jordan's principle. Children have died because of the government's refusal to act.

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I hear momentum from the Liberals. The big momentum is in two weeks. Are they going back to court against Cindy Blackstock and the children or will they respect the will of Parliament, call off their lawyers, sit down and respect the rules and the decision of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal? It is a simple question.

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the response is not simple. We believe in compensation and ensuring that all those who have been disadvantaged or discriminated against by the child welfare system are compensated.

The issue with the CHRT decision is about jurisdiction. It is about the size and the scope of the decision. It is also about ensuring there is proportionality between what is merited and meted out to individual claimants. The decision itself purports to provide \$40,000 of compensation to every indigenous child, regardless of whether the child spent a week in the child welfare system or up to 20 years. That subverts a basic principle of proportionality that needs to be addressed.

We are not seeking to deprive compensation to first nations children; we are seeking to calibrate it carefully, so that in some cases they may merit more than \$40,000-worth of compensation. To show good faith—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, it seems obvious that all parties in the House will agree on the fact that this is a genocide that could, at the very least, be characterized as cultural. Unfortunately, it takes tragedies such as this to raise people's awareness and provoke their thoughts. Let us not forget that the goal of this "Canadianization" of indigenous people was purely and simply to kill the Indian in the child.

How does my colleague explain that, in the meantime, the federal government spent \$3.2 million over eight years fighting a group of survivors of St. Anne's residential school, located in Fort Albany, northern Ontario, in court? What is it hoping to achieve? That seems to be something of a paradox.

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for his question. I can give him the same answer I gave the member for Timmins—James Bay.

[*English*]

An example of the government's good faith is with the class action that deals with the exact same issue of residential school survivors. We have actually certified and agreed to certify the class action, which is the first step toward meting out compensation. Compensation is difficult. Compensation needs to be calibrated. It also needs to be safeguarded by certain principles of confidentiality.

In the St. Anne's litigation that the member opposite has raised, 95% of the people who were victims in that situation have been paid out. The remaining portion remains to be determined, including whether the compensation needs to be enlarged, which we very much believe may be the case in certain instances.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate you on your retirement. I remember when we

came here in 2006 as rookies, and it has always been fun and an honour working with you.

I absolutely agree with the hon. member that this terrible tragedy has touched us all, regardless of race, religion or cultural background.

If the Kelowna accord would have gone through in 2005, would it have made a positive and significant difference in the lives of indigenous peoples?

• (1710)

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, obviously, it is a bit speculative, but I know that the Kelowna accord represented a grand opportunity to right the path that we had been on for so long as a federal government vis-à-vis indigenous people on this land. Unfortunately, that met its demise with the change in government in 2006. Therefore, we will never know the answer to that question. I know people have talked about that and about the path moving forward.

Apropos of some of the questions I heard earlier from other members of the parties opposite, I would underscore the significant investments we have made as a government in indigenous people on this land, up to \$18 billion, most recently, at the last budget's counting in 2021. Those are important investments. Does more need to be done? Yes. Lifting 99 boil water advisories is important, but 57 remain. The work remains to be done. I am committed to advocating for it, and our government is committed to implementing it.

* * *

PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and if you seek it, I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That routine motion No. 97, standing on the Order Paper in the name of the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons concerning the reappointment of Daniel Therrien as Privacy Commissioner, pursuant to Standing Order 111.1(2), be deemed adopted on division.

[*Translation*]

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

I hear none. The House has heard the terms of the motion. All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

There being no dissenting voice, I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—ACTION TOWARD RECONCILIATION WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Nunavut.

I am speaking today from my home in the territory of the Nuu-chah-nulth people, just 25 kilometres from the territory of the Coast Salish people and the Qualicum First Nation. There are 10 first nations communities in the riding of Courtenay—Alberni.

Like most members, I have spent the last week listening to the elected and hereditary leadership of these nations and their tribal councils, listening to the words of residential school survivors and to the advice of the elders following the horrific revelations one week ago today on the grounds of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School.

I join them all in sending my thoughts, prayers and healing energy to the people of Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc nation and all those survivors who attended this institution. I recognize the emotional and spiritual burden of searching for and finding the remains of these unnamed children. I want to thank them all for their courage in doing so.

There were four so-called Indian residential schools in Nuu-chah-nulth territory. Children were removed from their families and kept for 10 months or more each year. Others were sent to other territories, including to Kamloops, more than 500 kilometres away. Brothers were separated from sisters, and they were punished if they dared to speak their mother language.

As Canadians, we have long known this, and about the unspeakable acts of cruelty, physical and sexual abuse inflicted upon the children in these places. We have also known that many of the children did not return. We knew this from their families, from survivors and from the research conducted by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. As shocking as the revelation of last Thursday was for Canadians, it should not come as a surprise. We heard this. Survivors have always known.

I want to thank the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc nation and the researchers who have carefully led us to these children. I also want to thank the media for its care in routinely publishing the help line for those who are triggered by reports of the findings, because they are.

Chief Greg Louie, of the Ahousaht First Nation told me, “With two residential schools in the Ahousaht territory, many children from other nations attended, many didn't return for 10 months or return at all because of death. The atrocious treatment has caused generations of trauma. Please assist Ahousaht and all nations with appropriate resources to bring closure and healing to our people.”

Chief Louie's words have been echoed by all the leaders with whom I have spoken over the past week. Some have been more blunt, of course, and the time for words has passed. Their people are in pain. They are losing survivors and the children and grandchildren to whom the pain of their trauma has been transferred. They need closure and healing, as Chief Louie says.

Business of Supply

Vice-president Mariah Charleson of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council said, “Though Canada's mandate to assimilate us all failed, the legacy is still alive in each of us. Let's commit to healing; I believe our land and teachings as Nuu-chah-nulth-aht will be instrumental in this.”

As this motion says, resources are required to support first nations to do the work.

In 1998, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation was established to provide indigenous-led community-based programs for survivors and those who were affected by the intergenerational legacy of these schools. It was cut by the Conservative government in 2010, and closed although in 2014.

Nuu-chah-nulth children were removed from their families by missionaries, beginning in the late 1800s, a practice that continued until the last school in Nuu-chah-nulth territory in 1983 was closed, about 100 years later. The healing foundation and the communities it had funded had just over a decade to do the work of healing. Clearly it was not nearly long enough.

The elected Ha'wiih Council and the hereditary leadership of the Tseshaht First Nation continue to ask the Government of Canada to provide the necessary resources to remove the remaining buildings of the former Alberni Indian Residential School in its territory, and to build a healing and wellness centre for survivors and the generations that have followed and have been impacted by a century of genocidal policies by Canada.

At a community vigil this week, elected Tseshaht councillor Ed Ross gathered the children around me so they could hear his words to me. He had a message to send to Ottawa. He wanted us to fight for this. In the presence of the children he said, “If the government and the church could build a residential school here, they could also build a wellness centre to help our people heal.”

● (1715)

He explained that the community does not want to be known as the place that had a residential school that caused harm. They want it to be a place where they can reclaim their power. Chief waamiiš Watts reminded me that first nations leaders believed the Prime Minister would implement all 94 calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. So far, only 10 have been implemented. Chief Watts said the Prime Minister has not lived up to those commitments and needs to ensure all first nations and indigenous people are provided the necessary resources and information they need to do the important work in their communities to support healing.

Resources for healing were paramount in the direction given to me by first nations leaders, survivors and elders, but the need for accountability was also emphasized. The president of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, Judith Sayers, said:

Business of Supply

It is important that light has been shed on this tragic truth that many have known for so long, that numerous of our loved ones never returned home from residential school... The reality is that the federal and religious institutions may have wanted to silence these innocent children and forget about them, but these children can be silenced no longer.

We cannot expect first nations and indigenous people to resort to GoFundMe pages. There is one in my riding right now to do the work to find and identify the children who have been buried on these sites. It is the government's responsibility to do that work and provide the resources. The tribal council is calling on the government to "work with First Nations to discover the truth around other residential schools using ground-penetrating radar to find any other burial sites. We cannot rest until this is done."

The government needs to stop fighting first nations in court over their rights, whether these are the children the Human Rights Tribunal has repeatedly ruled are entitled to care or the fishers the courts have said are entitled to catch and sell fish within their territories. The government must call its lawyers off and stop wasting precious resources that could be redirected to reconciling historical wrongs. We are losing the survivors of these residential schools every day. The government must implement the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission without further delay. They are important to healing within families and communities. They carry the truth of what happened in these schools: the source of trauma for their children, grandchildren and children yet to be born.

I want to think about so many who have contributed: Hereditary Chief Maquinna, Chief Racoma, Barney Williams, Chief Moses Martin, Archie Little, Dolly McRae, Clifford Atleo Wickaninnish, and my adopted father from the Fisher River Cree Nation for giving me sound advice and sharing.

This motion is clear. I urge its unanimous approval. The government needs to cease the belligerent and litigious approach to justice for indigenous people immediately, find a just solution for the St. Anne's residential school survivors, accelerate the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action and provide survivors, their families and their communities with appropriate resources to assist with the emotional, physical, spiritual, mental and cultural trauma resulting from these residential schools.

• (1720)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have enormous respect for the passion and work my hon. colleague has done in his region and with indigenous communities there.

We talk about intergenerational trauma, the crisis and the terror of mothers watching their children leave, but those children grow up to be parents. I would ask the member this: What effects has he seen in his communities of the children who were raised in residential schools, having been pulled out of families and away from the support and teachings that make healthy families, who then went on to raise their own families?

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, it is deeply personal. I just talked to my father. His two older brothers went to residential school and they never came back the same. My late grandmother cried every day. She felt guilty and responsible, when it was the government that was responsible for inflicting the pain.

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know this is a very difficult conversation for many and I truly appreciate the depth of the member's commitment to the issues.

One of the things that Senator Sinclair outlined today in his opening remarks at the INAN committee was the need to make this a non-partisan issue: to depoliticize it and work in collaboration. I am wondering if my friend could offer some suggestions as to how all parties represented in the House could work collaboratively on this issue.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, the answer is simple: support the motion and vote in solidarity for the motion. All parliamentarians need to get behind this motion. It directly gives an action to the government to stop litigating against indigenous people.

In my own riding, the government is not just fighting the children, but also the Nuu-chah-nulth. There have been three upper court decisions, and the government has until the middle of June to decide whether it is going to fight them again. The government appeals the Specific Claims Tribunal decisions. It is non-stop. We must stop litigating against indigenous people. We must stop the violence. That is what has to happen.

Members can vote for this motion. I urge them to. I urge them to have courage. We need it and they need it. They need to see that members are truly behind reconciliation. It is time.

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member, my neighbour and colleague, for his very heartfelt speech. I hear him. I have adoptive family who went through the residential school system, and family friends who have dealt with the abuse. My father, who was a United Church minister, felt the guilt of the involvement of the church at the Alberni school and sat with Willie Blackwater through the Arthur Plint case.

We need to take these things seriously. I will support this motion and I recognize this is a genocide. I thank the member for his words and his commitment.

• (1725)

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate my friend and colleague for showing unified support and solidarity behind this motion, which needs to be passed and enacted by government.

This is very difficult for a lot of people. They need to see action, but they need Parliament to be united in solidarity. They need to know it is going to support this motion, stop the litigation and help those families heal. I want to send my deepest healing and thoughts to my colleague and his family, because the intergenerational impacts are huge on everybody in these communities.

Business of Supply

I cannot talk about some of the horrific things that were shared with me this week because it will trigger people, but the pain is deep and this is an opportunity for Canada to turn the tide.

The Deputy Speaker: Before resuming debate, I will just let the hon. member for Nunavut know that we have about five minutes remaining in the time for business of supply this afternoon.

We will go to her now. The hon. member for Nunavut.

Ms. Mumilaq Qaqqaq (Nunavut, NDP): Mr. Speaker, *matna*. For much of Canada, the 215 children found on the Kamloops residential school grounds was a shocking discovery, but for indigenous peoples this was not a discovery. This was a confirmation of the reality of genocide we have known all along.

I am glad to hear members finally waking up to what indigenous peoples already knew, but many in this chamber clearly have more to discover about the reality of the ongoing colonization of indigenous peoples across Canada. I see this every day in my riding, and I need my colleagues, Canadians and the world to listen.

Recently I spoke with a friend of mine, Nikki Komaksiutiksak. Nikki is originally from Nunavut, but moved to Winnipeg at a very young age with her mother to live with her aunt. Both her mom and her aunt are residential school survivors.

After arriving in her new home, Nikki experienced severe amounts of abuse. Eventually she ran away from home to escape the violence, but police found her and took her back to her house. They thought her resistance to going home was because she was a defiant kid, so they pushed her to the front door. Nikki was so terrified of what was on the other side that she tore her clothes off to show the police her injuries. They stared at Nikki, a 13-year-old, with hundreds of whip marks and stab marks all over her body.

The police took her to the hospital, where she stayed for 24 hours, and immediately afterward she was taken to her first group home. She felt incredibly alone. Nikki was never asked what she wanted, how she felt or how she needed help. Because of this, she felt it was better to run away to be with her friends, but again she was caught by the police and put back into the system.

In just two years, Nikki was in 15 group homes. She was always running away, trying to find a sense of normalcy and feeling more and more alone. She went into foster care with her cousin, who was so close to her that they considered one another sisters. Her cousin was murdered in Winnipeg at the age of 17, and still no one has taken responsibility for her death.

Imagine even before graduating high school being tossed from home to home, not often shown love in the way a child needs and not having stability or consistency in day-to-day life.

Nikki attempted to die by suicide many times and eventually was put into a treatment centre. There, she received counselling and therapy for the first time ever. She started to learn new ways of coping and was given tools to start working toward breaking cycles of trauma. From therapy, she was eventually put into a foster home with parents who cared for her and loved her.

While in the foster system, Nikki had three babies of her own and fought to make sure they were never taken away from her. This was not easy, but she fought and she won. She eventually finished

grade 12, went to university and got an amazing job where she fights to support Inuit every day at Tunngasugit. She now fosters high-risk teenage girls herself.

The story of Nikki is the story of thousands of Inuit and indigenous children across Canada. Nikki's strength and resilience mean her children have a bright future. That strength came from her, and from her will to become better.

Colonization is not over: it has a new name. Children are still being separated from their communities. Foster care is the new residential school system. The suicide epidemic is the new form of indigenous genocide.

I come from a community with one of the highest rates of suicide. Throughout my life, I have seen periods of extreme hopelessness in Baker Lake, where there are sometimes three or four suicides in less than two months. These were my friends, teammates and classmates.

I often wondered growing up if things were changing or just getting worse, but the intergenerational trauma of the recent past has created a terrible cycle where death has become normal. For Inuit, suicide is an epidemic. We know in Nunavut that things often are not recorded or investigated correctly. Many families do not get answers. Questionable information is withheld. Questions go unanswered and ignored. Families do not have support in any way, shape or form. Often families are left to clean up the remains of their loved ones.

• (1730)

I have heard stories of people with no heads, of the colours they turn when they hang themselves from the ceiling and of the way it smells when someone passes away. There are often times when children and youth see much of this. However, after all of these traumatic incidents, there are not many mental health resources, let alone culturally relevant mental health resources, available to these children and these families.

Just like suicide and death, losing children to foster care is becoming the norm for Inuit families. This is a direct outcome—

The Deputy Speaker: I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but we are unfortunately at the expiry of the time provided for the business of supply.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I believe if you seek it you will find unanimous consent to allow the member to finish her speech.

The Deputy Speaker: I am seeing great accord with that suggestion.

Let me go back to the hon. member for Nunavut. She has an additional four and a half minutes, if we allow the usual time for her remarks. I thank all hon. members.

The hon. member for Nunavut.

Government Orders

Ms. Mumilaaq Qaqqaq: *Matna*, Mr. Speaker, for letting me continue.

Just like suicide and death, losing children to foster care is becoming the norm for Inuit families. This is a direct outcome of basic human rights being violated. Put that on top of injustices from history.

Before the 1950s, Inuit lived the way we have lived for thousands of years: no housing crisis, no suicide epidemic. Then, the Canadian government increased its presence in the north, not to support Inuit but because Canada wanted to develop natural resources and, most importantly, demonstrate its sovereignty in the region. It wanted the land; it did not care for the people in it.

What happened? Inuit were forced into settlements and lived in what they called matchbox houses. Clearly, from this time onward Inuit have never had adequate or safe housing. Inuit sled dogs, or *qimmiq*, were slaughtered by the RCMP as a means to keep Inuit in the settlements and prevent them from traditional hunting to feed themselves. This meant that Inuit were forced to rely on the government, much as we continue to see today.

Inuit were ripped from the settlements and sent on boats to southern Canada to be treated for tuberculosis. Often there were helicopters that scouted the area to take away Inuit who were in hiding and did not want to go. At hospitals and sanatoriums in the south there were a wide variety of things that happened. Inuit were forbidden from speaking Inuktitut. They were beaten, sexually assaulted and belittled, and many children never made it home. We have also heard about experiments being done on people in these sanatoriums.

Along with this, Canada had residential schools in the north. Inuit children were forced to go to church-sponsored school for months or years at a time to be assimilated. Their hair was cut and their clothes were changed, and they were forced to do hard labour. Their language was beaten out of them often.

Of course, people today are stressed, depressed and anxious. This is not ancient history. Children who went through this horror now have children my age. We are barely surviving. Privileged Inuit like me are those who are not fighting for basic human rights every single day and who see how unfair this all is. We stand up for other Inuit.

This is why I am here. I am here in an institution that has tried to eliminate my people for the last 70 years, standing up to say that the federal government is responsible for the ongoing colonization that is happening. The residential schools and genocide waged against us have evolved into the foster care system and the suicide epidemic we see today.

Residential schools and indigenous genocide are a 21st-century problem. Acting is in the hands of the government. The Liberals can choose to support efforts toward real change, like the motion we proposed today, or they can join governments of the past in perpetuating violence against indigenous peoples. Do not tell me they cannot afford to honour the promises made during colonization about housing. Provide all Nunavummiut with decent homes. Canadian billionaires added \$78 billion to their wealth in just the last

year and we are not taxing them. This is about priorities. Do not tell me the government cannot afford to provide safe spaces for Inuit.

The inaction of successive Liberal and Conservative governments is a direct reason for Nunavut's deaths, violence and turmoil. I demand that the government treat us like human beings, fulfill its promises and give us basic human rights.

● (1735)

The Deputy Speaker: It being 5:35 p.m., pursuant to orders made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

The question is on the motion.

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

I see the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay is rising.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, we would like a recorded vote.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, pursuant to order made Monday, January 25, the recorded division stands deferred until Monday, June 7, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

The hon. Minister of Labour on a point of order.

* * *

● (1740)

[*English*]

BROADCASTING ACT

BILL C-10—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Filomena Tassi (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was not possible to reach an agreement pursuant to Standing Orders 78(1) and 78(2) with respect to the proceedings at committee stage of Bill C-10, an act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other acts.

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 allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

[Translation]

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed the following bill: Bill C-5, an act to amend the Bills of Exchange Act, the Interpretation Act and the Canada Labour Code with regard to a national day for truth and reconciliation.

[English]

It being 5:40 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

INCOME TAX ACT

The House resumed from April 12 consideration of the motion that Bill C-262, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (capture and utilization or storage of greenhouse gases), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, having had the opportunity to capture the essence of Bill C-262, this is very difficult. In fact, I would not recommend members support the bill. I am not too sure if the sponsoring member thought of the legislation, as I suspect he did, prior to the reversal of the Conservative Party of Canada's positioning on the need for a price on pollution.

The essence of the bill that is being proposed is the idea to provide a tax credit in certain situations with respect to carbon output. There is no doubt that it would put it into potential conflict with the idea of having an equitable, fair price on pollution that we currently have in place. That is why I make the suggestion to my colleague across the way that I suspect there might be some discomfort within his own caucus in regard to this bill, given that the Conservative Party, at least its leadership, has made the decision to support a price on pollution, although its plan does not necessarily achieve what it thinks it will achieve. It is nowhere near the type of plan that we have put into place, which I think is far more equitable and fairer for all Canadians.

The government has, in fact, invested significantly in the idea that we have a climate plan that has been strengthened through multiple incentives for large emitters to lower their carbon output. To cite a couple of examples, members will recall the launching of the net-zero challenge for large emitters to support Canadian industries in developing and implementing plans to transition their facilities to net-zero emissions. Members will recall that we have that target date of 2050.

We have also been making significant investments to support decarbonization through the strategic innovation funds and the net-zero accelerator fund. In this area, we are investing hundreds of mil-

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lions of dollars over a five-year period. I think we are going to see significant positive results from that program.

We take a look at those two programs, but we can also look at the over a billion dollars in the low-carbon and zero-emissions fuels fund. The idea behind that is to increase the production and use of low-carbon fuels, such as hydrogen, biocrude, renewable natural gas, diesel and ethanol. These are the types of programs that are going to help us, but there is no doubt that the price on pollution is one of those things to which all Canadians can relate.

More and more every year we seem to see Canadians wanting the government to be more proactive on the climate file. If we review the things that we have been able to put into place over the last number of years, I think we are doing a reasonably good job. Any government in the world should always look for ways to improve, as I am sure we are.

I am personally a very big fan of the commitment to plant two billion trees that the Government of Canada has made. This summer I hope to contribute personally to that plan. One of the things that we can do is plant more trees. There are other consumer-related issues, such as the single-use plastic ban and plastic bags; there are all sorts of things that are out there.

I look forward to more debate about the environment and things that we can all do in the coming months and years ahead.

• (1745)

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I see that you just arrived. It was probably so that you could listen to me speak, and I really appreciate that.

I really like my colleague from Calgary Centre. He is a gentleman with whom I work on the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, and I truly appreciate him. He always makes an effort to speak to me in French, and I value my friendship with him.

With regard to Bill C-262, let us just say that first came the compliments and now come the criticisms. That is not surprising. I am sure he will understand that my party takes issue with this type of bill. The Bloc Québécois has always spoken out against any kind of subsidy for fossil fuels.

I would like to look back a little on the past four years to help members understand that the oil and gas industry represents a bottomless pit for public funds. In the past four years, \$24 billion has been invested in oil and gas. Of that, \$17 billion went toward the purchase of the Trans Mountain pipeline.

Today, we learned that the insurance provider for the Trans Mountain pipeline is pulling out. That is another debate, but I think this once again shows that many industries no longer support fossil fuels.

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The government has invested \$24 billion in this sector in recent years. I am still seeing support for fossil fuels in Canada's strategy. I do not want to impute motives to anyone, but it seems to me that people are trying to find ways to balance the oil and gas sector and the environment. I think these ideas are irreconcilable. There is a simple principle that I will come back to later: the oil and gas sector produces greenhouse gases and is the source of the problem.

Why does the government choose to give tax benefits to an industry that is the source of the problem? Personally, I do not see how any government that is truly serious about the environment could do that. Canada has shown in recent years that it is a petro-state, and its oil industry is a bottomless pit for public money.

With respect to Bill C-262, I would like to talk about a rather simple environmental principle on which everyone agrees. I am talking about the polluter pays principle, which, from a philosophical perspective, is the principle behind the carbon tax.

My Conservative friends had an epiphany in recent months and agreed to put in place carbon pricing that is basically a type of savings account. When I was young and in primary school, I could save money and buy a bike at the end of the year. It is like the savings account that we had as kids. It is a funny idea, but, in any case, the light went on and they understood that they had to put a price on carbon.

I am under the impression that, with this bill, the Conservatives are trying to put a price on carbon while also trying not to step on the toes of their friends, the big oil companies. That is quite something.

There is a first principle, the polluter pays principle, that includes what is known as the *bonus-malus*, which means that those who increase greenhouse gas emissions are penalized and those who decrease them are compensated. The main problem is that the government is looking to implement strategies with public money that will be used to reward polluters and gain acceptance for the economic activity of polluters.

Personally, I do not see how we can possibly present this to the public in a logical and coherent manner, especially since the International Energy Agency, which is not Greenpeace, said that we should not approve any new project that involves fossil fuels. However, in Canada, we seem determined to plow ahead with supporting the oil and gas industry.

With this bill, my colleague is proposing a tax credit for the oil and gas industry, and I cannot help but think back to what I heard this week at the Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

• (1750)

The minister appeared before the committee earlier this week. Going through the votes, I noticed there was a \$560-million investment in the emissions reduction fund for 2021-22. That fund applies to the oil and gas sector only. It aims to ensure that the oil and gas sector implements carbon capture technologies.

I find this completely incongruous, and I will explain why. Earlier I said that the oil and gas sector emits greenhouse gases. It does produce emissions, but it is being rewarded with \$560 million in

funding to come up with ways to capture carbon. This is not exactly a light bulb moment.

I would now like to talk about another natural resource sector, the forestry sector, which also captures carbon. We are all well aware that the forest is a carbon sink. What has the forestry sector been given over the past four years? Mere peanuts. Barely \$70 million has been invested in Quebec's forestry sector over the past four years. The most promising industry in terms of carbon sequestration received \$70 million, 75% of which was in loans. That leaves a paltry \$20 million. That is unacceptable.

The Liberals and the Conservatives are one and the same on this issue. On one hand, every proposed strategy seeks to support a sector of the economy that is set to disappear within the next 25 years. On the other hand, we have probably the most promising type of economic activity. An analysis of the forestry industry was commissioned. According to that analysis, over the next 10 years, 16,000 jobs could potentially be created in Quebec. The forestry industry is probably the most innovative economic sector. The entire petrochemical stream can be replaced with wood chemistry. This sector has been very innovative and has tremendous potential for job creation. However, the federal government is giving it barely any support.

My colleagues know that I was ready to pull my hair out on Monday when I saw the \$560-million investment for one year. The forestry industry has not gotten that much in the past 10 years. I think it is completely unacceptable to invest \$560 million over one year.

The green recovery strategy is one more example of how Canada is a petro-state, constantly throwing public money into that bottomless pit. The government has made two announcements about this strategy. The first was about support for the electrification of transportation. Ontario will come out on top with that one, since it is currently the only province that no longer offers a rebate for buyers of electric vehicles. Since I am a team player and a good person, I will leave it at that.

The second part that makes no sense is the federal government's hydrogen strategy for Canada. The idea is to get the oil and gas industry to produce grey hydrogen. This is yet another strategy to find new opportunities for the oil industry and invest massively in it. However, there is no support for the sector that is perfectly suited to combatting climate change.

I will conclude by saying that my Conservative and Liberal friends have some soul searching to do. The climate crisis will only get worse in the coming years. We can no longer use red herrings to garner political support in the west and in the provinces that rely on the oil and gas industry. This strategy is no longer viable.

I have a lot of sympathy for Albertans who earn a living in the oil and gas industry, but we need to start thinking about tax credits that help us get out of the oil industry, not credits that legitimize our dependence on it.

• (1755)

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is a great honour, as always, to rise on behalf of the people of Timmins—James Bay to discuss tonight yet another plan from the Conservatives for tax incentive support, financing the oil sector.

One of the things that concerns me is that there is a conspiracy being run by the Conservatives that this incredible sector is being attacked by Greta Thunberg, by young radical environmentalists and by the Prime Minister. The reality is that the economic investment sector of the world is pulling out of Alberta because of the absolute refusal of the Alberta government and the federal government to get serious about climate change.

This is a truth that needs to be told. I say that because I come from a resource region. I remember being at the Stanleigh uranium mine underground just before we lost 5,000 workers, and that devastated our communities. However, there was no point telling those workers that it was the big bad government that was trying to take their jobs away. Everyone knew the market had changed, and when the market changed, the best thing we could have done was be there to support the workers in the transition.

I remember when we lost the silver and iron mines in Cobalt, and it devastated our workers. The support for the transition never comes until it is too late, and that is what the damage is. We have a long line of this. We know the market is changing. We know we need to make changes.

Many friends from my region work in Fort McMurray and Fort St. John. They fly out and they fly back. They are very concerned, because they know the environment is changing. They talk to me about their fear of the future, and they fear the economic insecurity. There is no point in lying to them, pretending there is some conspiracy to deny them their future. We need to start saying that we cannot let any region of the country fall behind, and that means we have to put some plans in place

Under the Liberals and the Conservatives, \$18 billion in subsidies went to the oil sector in 2020. Imagine what \$18 billion would have done in any other sector. Would it have created jobs? It would have created enormous jobs, if we put \$18 billion of subsidies into the arts, or into a national renovation program or into the plans that we need to meet the move to a new energy future. That \$18 billion in subsidies would be transformative.

I have met with energy workers in Edmonton who are training themselves for the energy future. Every one of them said that Stephen Harper said energy would be a superpower, but he just did not know what energy would be the superpower. The number one location in the world today to have a solar green economy is south central Alberta.

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Germany has thousands and thousands of jobs, but it has nothing on the kind of clean energy potential we have in western Canada. We need to stop lying to the workers and blaming central Canada or Greta Thunberg. The market is changing.

The Swedish bank pulled out of Alberta. Its largest pension fund pulled out of Alberta. The Société Générale of France pulled its investment. The Norwegian sovereign wealth fund pulled out because it saw no action from the Alberta government and from the oil sector on getting serious about emissions. BNP Paribas group pulled out. Blackrock, the world's largest asset manager, pulled out. The Conservatives pretend it is some kind of conspiracy.

When the HSBC pulled out, Jason Kenney said he was going to boycott HSBC, just like he was going to boycott the Bigfoot cartoon. Remember how Jason Kenney's people held press conferences denouncing the technical inaccuracies of a cartoon about Bigfoot? It made Canada look ridiculous, a laughing stock. When the New York Times reported on the investment houses that were pulling out of Alberta, Jason Kenney's people accused the New York Times of anti-Semitism. Nobody is taking that guy seriously anymore. He has become this angry international clown. He cannot just keep blaming all the big banks, all the investors, all the media and everybody for the fact that the market is changing.

• (1800)

The biggest insurance companies have laid it down; they are not going to invest. Again, I come from mining country. We cannot get a mining project off the ground unless we have investor confidence and it knows that project is good in the long term. If it does not have that confidence, it is walking. It will never be there.

AXA has pulled out. Zurich Insurance Group has pulled out. The Swiss Re Group has pulled out. ExxonMobil and Chevron have had a massive shareholder revolt. I think the Conservatives will pretend they were radical ministers from the United Church and a couple of hippy kids. However, the people who ran the shareholder revolt are the biggest capitalist investors. They are saying there is no future there. Unless companies like ExxonMobil and Chevron get serious, they are out.

Now the Dutch court has called out Shell, and the decision against Shell is the first of many.

Investors are pulling out. They are not hearing the Conservatives' vision to adapt and transition. They are hearing conspiracies and about another set of tax incentives on top of the \$18 billion. The international community knows that the more the current government puts into the oil sector, the more the international funds will pull out of Canada, and it will affect us all.

The single biggest thing is with respect to the F-150. That truck brings in more money than all the sports teams in the United States put together. It brings in more money than McDonald's. The F-150 is going full electric. We know that when Ford is willing to make its number one vehicle electric, the big macho truck on the market, the market has already changed. We are well past the economic tipping point. Canada is falling behind.

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As my colleague said earlier, we are a petro-state; we just never say it. The Liberals and Conservatives, year in and year out, continue to subsidize it and hold it up without recognizing the market has already changed. Once the F-150 goes electric, the entire market will move very fast. Where is Canada?

When I look at my Conservative friends, they are angry factory of typewriters. They stand up with their typewriters, saying they will never give them up. I do not mind them because they do not destroy the planet. The International Energy Agency, which is no friend of environmentalists, is saying the taps are off, that no more new projects should come forward in coal, even though Jason Kenney figures he can still blow the tops off the Rocky Mountains to get at it. Mr. 19th century Jason Kenney has not entered into the 20th century with oil. We are in the 21st century. The International Energy Agency has said no more, so investors will not go there.

My Conservative colleagues can denounce cellphones and digital. They can hold up the typewriter. They can say we need to invest more in them. Imagine if we put \$18 billion into typewriters. I am sure we would need to hire many people to make those typewriters, but there is no market for them. Once the market is gone, it is not coming back. The Conservatives do not understand that. They believe in big government spending. The Conservatives do not believe in the market; they believe the market has to be created for their friends.

The market has changed and we need to be truthful, because we cannot leave workers behind. We need a transition plan. Having seen it first-hand, if we do not have that in advance when it hits, it is going to be really brutal. To be fair to all the workers, my friends who work in that field, we need to be truthful. Enough with adding more tax incentives to support the industry. Let us start building the transition.

• (1805)

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to rise on behalf of the constituents of Souris—Moose Mountain.

I am happy to speak today on Bill C-262, and I would like to thank my colleague, the member for Calgary Centre, for introducing it.

Carbon capture, utilization and storage, or CCUS, is something that I personally have been championing since I was first elected as an MP in 2015. To me, it is a clear way forward when it comes to protecting the environment while also ensuring that we are supporting Canada's economy.

My hometown of Estevan in Saskatchewan is home to SaskPower's Boundary Dam, a CCUS facility. It is the world's first CCUS facility to be fully integrated with the coal-fired power plant. The development and implementation of CCUS on Unit #3 of Boundary Dam established Canada as a world leader in this emissions-reducing technology, and this bill would go a long way to expand CCUS into other regions and industries in this country.

I have been fortunate to tour the Boundary Dam facility a number of times throughout my time as an MP, and I am always thoroughly impressed by their hard work. Since the CCUS facility went online in October 2014, over four million tonnes of CO₂ have been

captured and sequestered, which is the equivalent of one million cars being taken off the road. Also, there is storage space for over 400 billion tonnes in the Alberta and Williston basins. Thanks to this incredible technology, these emissions have been captured and put to use in other industries, such as oil and gas with enhanced oil recovery.

Furthermore, the fly ash that is created as a by-product of the process is captured and sold as a necessary component for things like cement production. Modern's concrete contains about 25% fly ash, a cementitious content, reducing its emissions. We know that this technology is a proven solution to reducing global greenhouse gas emissions.

The International Energy Agency has listed CCUS as the third most important measure needed for the world to meet its Paris agreement targets. Therefore, the assertion that this is one of the best ways to reduce emissions going forward is valid and has been extensively researched. However, the issue that Canada faces now is a lack of incentive for private investment, but Bill C-262 aims to address this matter through the development of a tax credit.

As I stated earlier, Canada has always been seen as a world leader in the development and implementation of CCUS. However, that has started to shift over recent years. Our American neighbours to the south have a measure called the "45Q", which allows the sharing of tax credits associated with the cost required for the successful capture, utilization and storage of CO₂ emissions. This tax credit has been widely successful in the U.S. to the point that it has driven private investment away from Canada due to the lack of competitive policies on our end. This is unacceptable, especially considering the need to revitalize Canada's economy in every way we can following the COVID-19 pandemic. I am very pleased that my colleague has introduced the bill in an attempt to level the playing field and rectify this situation.

In its policy paper of July 2020, the Energy Future Forum stated the following with respect to Canada's involvement in CCUS. It said:

It is critical that Canada maintain and advance its leadership position in carbon capture. It must be understood as part of a broader strategy to sustain our comparative advantage as a leading energy-exporting nation and reliable, responsible resource developer. Our commitment to the ongoing reduction of emissions and the attainment of the highest levels of the environment, social and governance standards and performance, must be evidenced in our industry activities. This carbon capture policy initiative points to a serious opportunity for government and industry collaboration.

I emphasize that the bill and the discussion surrounding it are a necessary and long overdue first step towards wider-scale use of CCUS technology across multiple industries. Again, it is a first step, and while much more will need to be done to fully integrate CCUS into the fabric of Canada's emissions reduction policies, we need to start somewhere.

Unlike the Liberals who just continue to introduce ineffective measures like their carbon tax, we Conservatives understand that Canada can, once again, become a world leader in CCUS so long as we can provide the proper incentives for investment.

I would like to summarize the recommendations that were made by the Energy Future Forum in its policy paper, which I mentioned earlier.

One, the federal government and provincial governments should clearly signal that CCUS is integral in Canada's climate change policy framework.

Two, the federal tax policies should meet or exceed the U.S. measures such as the aforementioned 45Q tax credit in order to attract private investment to Canada.

• (1810)

Three, that the federal and provincial governments work together to establish stackable tax credits with respect to CCUS.

Four, that the Canada Infrastructure Bank standards reward carbon reduction strategies in the allocation of capital.

Five, that all levels of government work together to implement a strong regulatory framework.

Six, that we create financing vehicles such as a green transition bond, public-private partnerships and equity investments by federal and provincial governments in the Canada Infrastructure Bank to help attract private investment into the CCS sector.

These recommendations provide a solid basis for encouraging and increasing private sector investment into CCS technology in Canada, and it is clear now is the time to act.

The Liberals have failed to show any meaningful leadership on this issue, despite industry stakeholders calling for it. To put it bluntly, they talk the talk, but they do not walk the walk. We see this when major companies continue to choose to do business in the U.S. rather than in Canada.

We know the landscape of Canadian and energy production and emissions reduction is always changing, and this is something I see in my riding day in and day out. As the world moves away from coal-fired power, we need to ensure there are viable options for those whose industries and jobs will be transitioning as well. This includes power plant workers, miners, geologists and many more. Unfortunately, they have received little or no help from the government, despite Liberals' promises to the contrary.

The Canada coal transition initiative committed to help with the transition through measures such as pension bridging, but we have yet to see any such program be implemented. This leaves many Canadians uncertain about their futures, something that could be at least partially offset by encouraging investment into CCUS technology.

The construction of a CCUS facility alone has the potential to create hundreds of jobs, with many continuing on a more permanent basis for the management and maintenance of such facilities. Not only is this creating good, high-paying, private industry jobs

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for those directly employed in CCUS, it also bolsters the local economies where these facilities are located.

We also know, thanks to "The Shand CCS Feasibility Study", conducted by the International CCS Knowledge Centre, that CCUS is becoming more affordable. Implementing CCUS technology on the Shand Power Station in my riding, in comparison to the cost of the Boundary Dam facility, could be done at 67% less per tonne of CO₂ capture, a significant reduction thanks to the lessons learned from the building and operation of CCUS unit 3.

The cost of capture of CO₂ would be \$45 U.S. per tonne, which is far less than the \$170 per tonne the Liberals are implementing, regardless of the exchange rates. As mentioned, cement factories are some of the heaviest emitters worldwide. The CCUS by-product of fly ash could reduce their emissions up to 25%.

CCUS can also be used to reduce emissions in steel production, another major Canadian resource. It is a simple fact that opportunities for sequestration in Canada are considered some of the best in the world, and we must take full advantage of that by incentivizing investment.

This bill and this tax credit would do just this that. Given the Liberals' assertion that the environment and the economy must go hand in hand, it would be logical that they support this important first step toward large-scale investment into CCUS projects.

According to an assessment provided by industry stakeholders, and modelling by Capital Power, the deployment of six CCS plants would result in roughly \$1.4 billion in foregone tax revenue. At the same time, it would lead to approximately \$5.5 billion of private sector investment, with six megatonnes of greenhouse gas emissions being captured each year.

We know the economic impact is substantial, with projections stating that just a few CCS projects over four years would generate \$2.7 billion in GDP across Canada and support 6,100 jobs. However, we, as the opposition, are unable to do this alone. Given the importance of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions to all the parties in this House, I would hope and encourage that we come together and make this initiative a real priority.

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Canadians expect their government to do what is best for them, and Bill C-262 would help secure the future and health of our economy, while also addressing the issue of emissions reduction. I therefore call on members of the House to support this bill and help to move Canada's leadership in this technology forward.

● (1815)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to take part in the debate on a private member's bill, Bill C-262. I would like to make it clear from the outset that our government fully recognizes the importance of deepening and accelerating the actions needed to fight climate change.

In this regard, we appreciate the intent of the proposed legislation that is the subject of our debate today. By capturing carbon dioxide emissions from large industrial facilities before they are released into the atmosphere, carbon capture, use and storage technologies will play an important role in helping Canada exceed its 2030 Paris Agreement emissions reductions target. They have the potential to significantly reduce emissions from heavy industrial processes where other emission-reducing alternatives may be limited.

That is why, as part of the strengthened climate plan we announced in December, our government is proposing to develop a comprehensive CCUS strategy and explore other opportunities to help keep Canada globally competitive in this growing industry. It is important that we do so in a way that is fair for all Canadians, takes into account the views of stakeholders and is effective in achieving its objectives. It is here, in this regard, that Bill C-262 falls short. As the saying goes, the devil is in the details. I would like to take a moment to consider some of the troublesome details apparent in this bill.

The tax credit proposed in Bill C-262 would be equal to the amount of captured carbon dioxide or carbon monoxide emissions in tonnes, multiplied by the price of the excess emissions charged for a carbon dioxide equivalent under Canada's output-based pricing system. As we know, the OBPS is part of Canada's carbon pricing framework that applies to industrial emitters, with charges set at \$40 per CO₂ equivalent tonne in 2021 and \$50 per CO₂ equivalent tonne in 2022.

Unlike the carbon capture tax credits in the United States, Bill C-262 would not impose time limits on the availability of the tax credit. What does this mean? It means that, because the value of the proposed tax credit is linked to excessive emission targets, its value could increase significantly if the OBPS excess emissions charge under the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act were to increase as anticipated under our proposed plan to strengthen Canada's carbon pricing framework beyond 2022.

If the excess emissions charge were to increase by \$15 annually from \$50 per tonne in 2022 to \$170 per tonne in 2030, this would lead to a situation where the government is very heavily subsidizing, or even more than fully subsidizing, certain projects that employ CCUS. This is the point at which incentives, if not properly designed, can become perverse and encourage an unproductive gaming of the system by businesses at the taxpayers' expense.

The bill also appears to be open to accommodating the international trade of physical CO₂, as it refers not only to Canadian federal and provincial laws in this respect, but also to U.S. laws. This suggests the measure would allow for the import into Canada of physical CO₂ for storage or use in Canada without requiring the capture of that CO₂ to have been in Canada. This would clearly undermine the credit's ability to meet our government's objective of reducing Canadian emissions.

Bill C-262 also proposes that multiple types of use would be eligible for the tax credit, including storage through conversion, and use for any other purpose for which a commercial market exists. It is not clear how the use of CO₂ for any proposed commercial purpose would reduce Canadian emissions. In fact, some commercial uses could result in CO₂ being reintroduced into the atmosphere. What is more, the bill's definitions of "utilization" and "qualifying corporation" suggest the credit would be accessible to all existing and operating facilities, and not just those that are developing and expanding their CCUS capacities.

● (1820)

By providing a windfall for existing operations, which may have already received significant federal and provincial support, the bill does not fully leverage our capacity to encourage the adoption of these technologies to meet our CO₂ reduction goals.

As I said, while the bill is commendable in its objectives, it is severely flawed in its execution. It is in this regard that our government can offer a better way forward. Canada's strengthened climate plan, a healthy environment and healthy economy, proposes measures to cut energy waste, provide clean and affordable transportation to power, build Canada's clean industrial advantage and support nature-based climate solutions.

It also proposes to put a price on pollution through to 2030. The plan is supported by an initial \$15-billion investment, which will create jobs, grow the middle class and support workers in a stronger and cleaner economy. This is in addition to the Canada Infrastructure Bank's \$6 billion for clean infrastructure that was announced in the fall.

Under our plan, CCUS projects would benefit from credits that are generated under carbon pricing regimes and the clean fuel standard if projects reduce the carbon intensity for fuel suppliers. The plan also provides direct support that may be available for CCUS investments through the new net-zero accelerator, which will provide \$3 billion over five years via the strategic innovation fund. The fund is expected to face high demand as it aims to rapidly expedite decarbonization projects with large emitters, scale up clean technology, and accelerate Canada's industrial transformation across all sectors.

Certain projects could also be complemented by funding under the \$1.5 billion low-carbon and zero emissions fuels fund to increase the production in use of low-carbon fuels. As well investments by Sustainable Development Technology Canada will support advancement of pre-commercial clean technologies.

In conclusion, it is important that governments continue to work with stakeholders to determine the best approach to leveraging CCUS technology in Canada. It is also important that these efforts are advanced through the budget process, which enables the government to fully consider trade-offs, balance priorities and undertake new fiscal commitments only to the extent that they are effective, fair and affordable, and when no better alternative is identified.

As I have made clear today, it is precisely in these regards that Bill C-262 falls short. That is why the government cannot support it.

• (1825)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will not beat around the bush. The Bloc Québécois will be voting against Bill C-262. My colleague from Jonquière said as much before me.

We will vote against the bill for one very simple reason. We refuse to provide this type of subsidy for fossil fuels and non-renewable energy. That is what Bill C-262 is about. It is a new subsidy for fossil fuels disguised as a tax credit. Let us be clear. Some subsidies can be effective for fighting climate change. However, tax breaks for carbon capture and storage, which is what Bill C-262 provides, are not effective.

In this case, the captured carbon is actually being used to continue extracting oil and extend the lifespan of aging reservoirs. In addition to being ineffective in terms of protecting the environment, the proposed measure is unfair to taxpayers. Quebeckers' money should not be going to fill the coffers of Canadian oil companies. To encourage businesses to capture and store carbon, we must increase the price per tonne of carbon. It is no secret that there should be a financial cost to polluting for oil companies. Why else would they stop polluting?

If we increase the price per tonne of carbon, that upholds the polluter pays principle. That is the key to an effective environmental policy, but when it comes to the environment, Canada is behaving badly. It is on track to miss its greenhouse gas emissions reduction target, and it is failing to reduce its fossil fuel subsidies.

Private Members' Business

Economic recovery and support for jobs must not come at the expense of climate action. It is high time we invested in a real transition focused on our renewable resources, our knowledge and our regions. That is what an independent Quebec would do, and Canada would be well advised to do the same. Let me get back to Bill C-262.

It is quite clear that the purpose of this bill is to weaken the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act. It is no secret that the Conservatives oppose the carbon tax, even if they now claim the opposite.

The numbers speak volumes. The effects of climate change will cost Canada dearly. According to a new report released yesterday that was spearheaded by 20 or so researchers and funded by Environment and Climate Change Canada, in addition to multiple environmental threats, climate disruption will also have a major impact on Canadians' health, and that will result in huge costs to society.

In fact, the scientists estimate that the costs of death and lost quality of life will be \$86 billion per year by 2050 and \$250 billion per year by 2100. That is enormous. They also warn of the effects of the increasingly frequent and severe heat waves happening across the country. The report shows that this widespread increase in temperature will have "a large negative impact on productivity". The researchers calculate that it could cause the loss of 128 million work hours annually by end of century, which is the equivalent of 62,000 full-time jobs, at a cost of almost \$15 billion. Those are frightening numbers.

The climate crisis is not a myth. We must fight it and stop presenting bills like Bill C-262 that only serve to delay debate on tangible, effective solutions for reducing greenhouse gases. The worst part of all this is that we are lagging far behind.

Already, in 2019, a report produced by Environment and Climate Change Canada concluded that Canada's climate was warming twice as fast as the global average and that over the next 10 years, the whole country would be severely affected as the consequences of warming continued to intensify. It is clear that we have not a moment to lose.

The problem with moving forward with carbon capture and storage technologies as proposed in Bill C-262 is that they distract from the need to reduce sources of emissions and divert attention from the actions required to do so quickly and effectively.

Private Members' Business

The tax credit proposed in Bill C-262 is actually inconsistent with the logic of carbon pricing and the carbon tax. Setting a price on pollution will never be an incentive if the public absorbs the cost of managing emissions. The price on pollution must lead to changes in behaviour and to commitments to start working on an energy transition. Bill C-262 undermines that goal.

With Bill C-262, the Conservatives are once again proposing a solution that socializes the environmental costs of economic activity while retaining the profits and benefits in the private sector, namely the oil companies. What is appalling, not to say completely ridiculous, is that the Conservatives are trying to sell this as an ecological solution to fight climate change when they do not even recognize its existence. If they believed in it, they would bring forward credible, science-based solutions, not bills that seek to destroy the only serious, concrete tool Canada has implemented to reduce its emissions, namely carbon pricing.

• (1830)

Earlier I said that the economic recovery and support for employment must not happen at the expense of the climate, and I want to come back to that because it is a crucial point.

The Bloc Québécois believes that it is quite legitimate for the government to make public expenditures, including tax expenditures, to support employment and the economy. This obviously includes the energy sector, but is not limited to the western oil and gas industries. If Quebec already relies on the production of renewable energy for almost 99% of its needs, Canada also has potential renewable energy and can choose to end its dependency on fossil fuels.

If the government believes that the recovery is an opportunity to accelerate the energy transition, as the Bloc Québécois and Quebec do, federal investments must be made in sectors of the future. Oil is not one of them. Oil is not a renewable energy despite what certain members believe.

In the first months of the pandemic, the Bloc Québécois brainstormed about the type of economy we want for Quebec and how to launch a recovery that serves the transition to a green economy. After extensive consultation throughout Quebec, the Bloc Québécois presented a green recovery plan that includes transferring adequate financial resources to Quebec to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and at the same time prepare for an ambitious green recovery with a focus on the regions.

We are not fooled when a bill like Bill C-262 is introduced in the House. It pretends to be green, but in fact it serves those who oppose the fight against climate change and want to perpetuate Canada's dependence on fossil fuels. We are not fooled when the Liberal government promotes a green image in public, but in fact funds outdated energies to the tune of billions of dollars. I am thinking about Alberta oil. I am thinking about the Trans Mountain pipeline. I am thinking about the transfers to support the offshore oil industry in Newfoundland. These are all examples that clearly illustrate the inconsistency between the Liberals' environmentalist claims and their support for the fossil fuel industry.

The Bloc Québécois will do everything in its power to prevent even more of Quebecers' money being spent at the expense of the

planet, which is what is currently happening. Despite the Prime Minister's rhetoric about climate change and a green recovery, federal subsidies for fossil fuels reached \$1.91 billion in 2020. That is an increase of 200% compared to 2019.

The other parties may like to apply a green sheen to their policies, but our support for public-funded environmental measures is based on the intrinsic value of each of those measures. Our challenge for the recovery, in addition to proposing bills that build on the strengths of Quebec and its regions, is to remain vigilant and to oppose false green economy solutions. As for the fossil fuel subsidies, we will oppose them vigorously, every time. We will storm the barricades every time the government tries to use the pandemic to justify them.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): For his right of reply, the hon. member for Calgary Centre.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to speak to my bill at second reading in the House of Commons. I will read some quotes that are very important to this debate, which state:

Carbon capture, utilization and storage is an important tool for reducing emissions in high emitting sectors.... CCUS is the only currently available technology with the potential to generate negative emissions....

We have the right building blocks in place, including infrastructure such as the Alberta Carbon Trunk Line, and innovative companies like CarbonCure in Nova Scotia, which developed a technology to inject captured carbon into concrete, making it stronger and less polluting. Alberta and Saskatchewan have the greatest near-term potential to become global leaders in CCUS by creating new 'hubs' where carbon from high-emitting facilities can be efficiently captured, transported, stored, or used.

Canadian innovators and engineers have developed some of the leading global technologies for CCUS technologies that are in demand as more countries take action to fight climate change. The government intends to take significant action to support and accelerate the adoption of these technologies. By providing incentives to adopt CCUS technologies, the proposed measure will be an important element in Canada's plan to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. This important new element of Canada's tax system is also intended to accelerate the growth of new...jobs related to carbon capture.

Budget 2021 proposes to introduce an investment tax credit for capital invested in CCUS projects with the goal of reducing emissions by at least 15 megatonnes of CO₂ annually.

Enough said. I am happy for the deathbed conversion of my colleagues on the other side of the House that they actually acknowledge everything we have been saying on this side of the House since we introduced this bill. I recall how much they were fighting it before the budget came out. However, I am very pleased they are going to move forward with this and I really appreciated my colleague opposite tonight when he told me the little things that were wrong with the proposal that were put forward for him, that he could tweak around the edges and make it look a little different, smell a little different, seem a little different or maybe feel a little different. It is the carbon capture, utilization and storage bill that we put forward that recognizes this industry is going to contribute to the reduction in carbon in Canada and in the world going forward. We lead, and we intend to continue to lead.

Members may recall, when we first put it on the agenda, the intent of this bill was to continue to allow our energy sector in Canada to lead the world, like it does. It used to lead. It lost that lead in carbon capture, utilization and storage in 2018. How did it lose it? It lost it because the United States offered the 45Q, which allowed the split of the tax credit between those who were actually capturing the carbon and those who were storing the carbon. That is important because usually the people who can store the carbon are the hydrocarbon companies, but the people who need to capture the carbon are the other industries that are emitting carbon. This split tax credit moved investment from Canada to the United States very quickly.

Technology we developed here got moved down south in a heartbeat. We had to bring it back here. We have to have a competitive regime where we recognize the advantages that we bring to this world, that we bring to this technology and that we can continue to lead on going forward. The challenge, of course, is to provide a split tax credit, and we think we have accomplished that with the construction of this tax measure, as much as we can on the opposition side of the House. I would love it if the government tweaked it, as my colleague suggests he is going to, and make it just a little better.

Oil and gas is a very important industry in Canada. We lead the world in environmental production of power and energy, we lead the world in accountability to governments and the public, we lead the world as a rent payer and, contrary to what we have heard, this industry contributes \$24 billion a year, on average, to Canadian taxpayers for all our services. Let us lead, let us continue to lead and let us allow our Canadian industry to lead again.

• (1835)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It being 6:38 p.m., the time provided for debate has expired. The question is on the motion.

[Translation]

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

The hon. member for Calgary Centre.

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

• (1840)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to order made on Monday, January 25, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 9, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[Translation]

Pursuant to order made Tuesday, June 1, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Bill C-8, an act to amend the Citizenship Act with regard to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's call to action number 94, at third reading stage.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CITIZENSHIP ACT

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.) moved that Bill C-8, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's call to action number 94), be read the third time and passed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to order made on Tuesday, June 1, a member of each recognized party and a member of the Green Party may speak to the motion for not more than 10 minutes followed by five minutes for questions and comments.

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by acknowledging that I am addressing the House today from my riding of Vaudreuil—Soulanges, situated on land that has a shared history among the Huron-Wendat nation, the Mohawk, the Anishinabe Nation and the Six Nations. I feel it is also important and essential to acknowledge the long-standing heritage of the Métis in my community of Vaudreuil—Soulanges.

I have the privilege today of speaking to Bill C-8, an act to amend the Citizenship Act (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's call to action number 94).

[Translation]

If this bill is passed, it would change Canada's oath of citizenship to put the presence of indigenous people on this land at the heart of the solemn oath taken by newcomers when they become part of the Canadian family.

[English]

June is National Indigenous History Month. It is a time for all Canadians to learn about the history of indigenous peoples in Canada, to recognize and acknowledge past mistakes, and to move towards reconciliation.

Government Orders

However, this month our hearts are heavier than they normally are. Locating the remains of 215 children near the former Kamloops Indian Residential School is a painful reminder of a dark and shameful chapter of our country's recent history. Our hearts are with the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation, as well as with all indigenous communities across the country.

It is our collective responsibility to acknowledge the legacy of residential schools and the devastating effects they have had, and continue to have, on indigenous peoples and their communities. As Canadians, we must commit to understanding the atrocities of residential schools and what we can do to address their legacy, and continue to move towards reconciliation with indigenous peoples in Canada.

[*Translation*]

The government is committed to fighting all forms of systemic racism. We have started a dialogue with racialized communities and indigenous people to hear their stories. We recognize that these conversations must inspire laws, policies and collaborative solutions to protect indigenous languages, traditions and institutions.

[*English*]

It is in this spirit that we put forward this bill to help new Canadians at the culmination of their journey to citizenship understand the fundamental, historical truths of their new country, beginning not with Confederation, but with the presence of first nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

Bill C-8 is one part of the government's comprehensive and ongoing commitment to implement all of the recommendations and calls to action contained in the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which marked its sixth anniversary yesterday.

Bill C-8 is a direct response to call to action 94, a call to amend the oath of citizenship. While there is so much more to be done, we hope that Bill C-8 can serve as a unanimous gesture of reconciliation by virtue of an all-party agreement to implement the proposed changes to the oath of citizenship.

While the changes proposed to the oath of citizenship may only amount to a small fragment of text, that text is enormously potent and rich in meaning. If adopted, the new oath of citizenship would read as follows:

I swear (or affirm) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, Queen of Canada, Her Heirs and Successors, and that I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada, including the Constitution, which recognizes and affirms the Aboriginal and treaty rights of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, and fulfil my duties as a Canadian citizen.

This wording reflects the input received from national indigenous organizations including the Assembly of First Nations, ITK and the Métis National Council. I want to thank them sincerely on behalf of the House for their contributions.

● (1845)

[*Translation*]

Thanks to the major contributions of these organizations, we have worked together to ensure that the proposed new oath of citizenship is even more inclusive and represents the rich history of indigenous, Inuit and Métis peoples across Canada.

[*English*]

Thanks to their important contributions, the government believes that the wording put forth in the bill is inclusive of first nations, Inuit and Métis peoples' input and experiences. It is, we believe, an authentic response to call to action 94.

The wording proposed in Bill C-8 invites new Canadians to faithfully observe the laws of Canada including the Constitution, which recognizes and affirms the aboriginal and treaty rights of first nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

[*Translation*]

This is a very important change because it emphasizes the fact that ancestral rights are collective rights that are protected by the Constitution under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. These rights are based on indigenous people's historic occupation and use of the lands now known as Canada.

[*English*]

Furthermore, this reference informs newcomers that these rights predate the Constitution and are reinforced and upheld by the highest law in the land. Henceforth a new Canadian's life as a citizen begins with affirming the principle of reconciliation with Canada's most ancient residents.

While the pandemic has temporarily put a stop to in-person ceremonies, we continue to hold ceremonies virtually. It is truly moving and joyful to know that virtual ceremonies can now be witnessed by families and friends outside of Canada. This means an even wider audience learning about the history of Canada, while putting a spotlight on the important history of indigenous peoples in Canada on the global stage.

Furthermore, the participation of indigenous elders enriches these ceremonies. It is truly remarkable to see the coming together of this land's oldest and newest communities celebrating what it means to live together in equality and harmony. At the very centre of that occasion is indeed the oath of citizenship, a pledge to uphold the values for which we strive as a nation: equality, diversity and respect within an open and free society. This bill ensures that new Canadians now embrace and affirm the rights and treaties of indigenous peoples and know that they are an integral part of Canada's history and future.

While we are also working in partnership with first nations, Inuit and Métis nations on many other components of the calls to action, we are also working on call to action 93, which is a new citizenship guide and supporting educational tools that will include more information on indigenous history, something that has been called for now for quite some time.

Once completed, the revised citizenship study guide, the new citizenship test and the oath will be mutually supportive of these lessons. Furthermore, educational resources will be provided to classrooms across Canada so all students can learn these lessons. I hope all members will join us in these steps on the path to reconciliation. We call on all parties to support the historic and symbolic meaning of the new oath of citizenship.

I want to take a moment to thank all parties for agreeing to move this forward as quickly as possible and ensure that we are able to deliver on yet another call to action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations.

It is one more step toward transforming a relationship between the Crown and indigenous peoples, one of many more important steps to come. We must continue in steadfast determination to move forward in mutual respect and co-operation. This means listening to and learning from indigenous partners, communities and youth, and acting decisively on what we have heard to continue building trust and bring about healing.

[*Translation*]

I look forward to working with all members in support of this bill.

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, as the member knows, we are supportive of this bill. We only have an opportunity, as opposition, to vote on bills that the government puts in front of us. I will note that these kinds of very important changes around recognition symbols are not the full picture. In pursuing broader reconciliation, we need action that really allows us to move away from the framework of the so-called Indian Act and pursue opportunities for meaningful self-determination, development and the full realization of that vision of reconciliation and a nation-to-nation relationship. It is not going to come about just through bills like this. It is going to require really delving into the challenging issues around how we replace the Indian Act.

Can the member explain why the government has only focused on these kinds of measures and when can we expect the substantive action that many people are looking for?

• (1850)

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Madam Speaker, my colleague is 100% right. The calls to action are only a part of the work that needs to be done, albeit a very important part of the work that needs to be done, to reconcile with indigenous Canadians.

We are very proud of the work that is being done. We fully understand the importance of the calls to action and we will continue to accelerate our work with our partners to advance implementation. In fact, over 80% of the calls to action under the sole responsibility of the federal government, or shared responsibility with provincial/territorial partners, are completed or well under way. We are going to continue to move forward.

Once again, I want to thank all members in this House for agreeing to move forward so quickly on call to action 94 today.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have a question for my colleague. It is also a special request from my friend Alexis Wawanoloath and his partner Myriam Dufresne-Manassé, who have a little girl named Sacha-8zali.

In Alexis's language, Abenaki, 8zali means angel. Alexis wanted it written with an indigenous symbol, the number eight, which is

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pronounced as a nasalized “ohn”. Although this could be registered on her birth certificate, it could not be input into the federal computer system for social insurance numbers.

This is a debate about the oath of citizenship and reconciliation with indigenous peoples. Could the parliamentary secretary commit to influencing his government to make this change to our computer systems?

This would allow Alexis and Myriam to properly record their daughter's name, Sacha-8zali, in Canada's computer system.

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question and for sharing that family's story.

Unfortunately, I am unable to comment on that specific situation.

However, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my hon. colleague, as well as those of the other parties, for allowing this debate here this evening so we can move forward with Bill C-8. This will allow us to implement call to action 94, which is very important and will amend the oath of citizenship in this country.

[*English*]

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary spoke about the importance of newcomers knowing about our history. He referenced the new citizenship guidebook that has been under development for five years now. Of course, one of the important components of this history is the fact that Canada committed genocide against indigenous peoples and, in fact, continues to do so under the UN convention's definition of genocide.

Does the member agree that Canada needs to incorporate the fact that it committed genocide against indigenous peoples and continues to do so in the new Canadian citizenship study guide?

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague not only for her question but for her wonderful work on the immigration committee. I have had the pleasure of working with her for quite some time now on that committee and she is doing some really great work there.

With respect to the hon. member's question, many more consultations need to take place over the summer. As she knows, we take very seriously our consultations and our work directly with indigenous partners across the country's provinces and territories to make sure we get this right. It may take a little longer, but at the end of the day we want to make sure that we do not—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to proceed.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry.

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● (1855)

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Madam Speaker, 13 years ago next week, the chamber of the House of Commons was filled with tears and a lot of raw emotion. Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued the apology for the treatment that residential school survivors experienced at federally funded schools across the country. It marked a milestone in the healing and reconciliation process for former students.

One of those former students is Bill Sunday, a member of Akwesasne, which is in my riding of Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry. At that time, the grand chief of the council, Chief Tim Thompson, brought seven survivors from the community of Akwesasne to hear the words of the Government of Canada that day. I am thinking of Bill tonight and the number of residents of Akwesasne who, over the course of numerous generations, have faced hardship and discrimination.

What came of the apology at that time was the idea of establishing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. As alluded to in other speeches, its report came out with tangible calls to action back in 2015. To give context, that is six years ago, or 2,100 days that our federal government has had to respond to and enact the change that has been called for.

We are here today with nowhere near the pace and volume of completion and tangible progress that Canadians want us to have. A few more than a handful of calls to action have been marked as completed; others are under way. However, if we were to speak to indigenous Canadians, first nations leadership and any Canadian, they would agree that the pace of change and of enacting reconciliation has not moved in the past six years as fast as it needs to.

On Monday, our leader, the leader of the official opposition, wrote a letter to the Prime Minister, and over the course of the last couple of days, after the advancement of Bill C-5 regarding a day for truth and reconciliation, which is positive, all parties have worked together to advance that legislation. It was one of the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Our leader also wrote in that letter that the legislation we are debating here tonight should come back up, be moved forward, as it will be tonight, and eventually be passed. It will pass with support from our caucus and I believe from all of Parliament.

This is an important measure; do not get me wrong. However, and I say this respectfully, when we look at all the measures we need to do, the tangible, real, meaningful reconciliation is yet to come. There are a lot of big items that we as a Parliament and we as a country need to confront and address in a timely manner.

I want to acknowledge the discussions of another piece of legislation, Bill C-15, which has had many hours of debate here and in committee and is now over in the Senate. I had the honour and privilege of speaking to it, and with my perspective as a young Canadian; as somebody who has a first nations community, Akwesasne, in his riding; and as part of our Conservative caucus, I took a look at the details of the legislation. I want to speak about the opposition to Bill C-15, not because of a lack of support for reconciliation, but to illustrate to Canadians that our work as parliamentarians is far from done and we know that. What I took note of today, as we talked about the motion, is that the work we do here needs to be better.

Let us consider Bill C-15, and a lot of the words and descriptions in it, such as the description of free, prior and informed consent and its definition, or lack thereof. The NDP's opposition day motion today is an important one that I am proud to support. The first few parts of the motion speak to ending litigation in courts, where the government, first nations communities and residential school survivors are spending years and years and millions and millions of dollars, with more and more emotion going from there. That has been exacerbated because we are not taking the time for consultation and the details.

● (1900)

I completely support the idea of UNDRIP and the principles behind it. The details matter on that. I think it is important for Canadians, as the NDP motion said today, as Parliament will be calling on when that vote comes up in the coming days, that we see real, meaningful changes in this country, not more lawsuits, more delays, motions and millions of dollars being spent on lawyers, but rather on frontline differences to first nations communities and indigenous Canadians in every part of this country.

I want to focus some of my time tonight on the fact that we are expediting this legislation with all-party co-operation to move forward, because there are other parts of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that need to move forward now, urgently, and Canadians are saying that.

Thinking of the news that every single Canadian has had to take in over the course of the last week, of the discovery of 215 children in unmarked graves at the former Kamloops residential school, I look, from a personal perspective, at my life and my lived experience. I am 33 years old. I have an amazing, loving family that helped raise me. I am so grateful for the opportunity that I received in public education: the teachers, staff and students at Inkerman Public School, Nationview Public School and North Dundas District High School. My family and my experience in public education helped make me who I am today.

I could not imagine being a child torn away from my parents never to see them again, going to a school hundreds of kilometres away and receiving horrific treatment. We have an example that was laid bare before us last week. Children ended up buried in unmarked graves, only recognized recently. These children did not have the opportunities that so many of us were fortunate to have, surrounded by loving and caring parents in an education system and experience that were second to none. To have them deprived of that, to have that ending, is completely unacceptable.

In the letter I referenced, we talk about the work we need to do as a Parliament. We need to address this specific, dark part of our history. I was rightfully corrected after one of my social media posts where I was struggling to come up with the proper thing to say about this news. Somebody said that it is not all history, that there are still residential school survivors here today living the experience each and every day. It is not history to them. It is lived experience that they have to deal with and struggle with each and every day.

I think parliamentarians from all parties in every part of this country will hear that, yes, we need to move forward on Bill C-5. We need to move forward on this piece of legislation and on Bill C-8. We need to fund the investigation of all former residential schools in Canada where unmarked graves may exist, including where the 215 children were already discovered in Kamloops. We need to ensure that proper resources are allocated for reinterment, commemoration and the honour of any individuals discovered at any of those sites, according to the wishes of their family. We also need to develop a detailed, urgent and meaningful way of educating Canadians on the real and lived experiences of those there.

I am going to wrap up my comments tonight by bringing them back to my community in eastern Ontario. As I wrap up, I think of Leona Cook, an elder from Akwesasne. She actually lives on the American side of Akwesasne, but her story goes a long way. She was sent from Massena to western New York in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls area to a residential school. This tragedy goes even beyond borders. They took her shoes away when she went to school. Her brothers also went there, but they were placed on a different side of the campus, and she rarely, if ever, saw them.

I watched a video earlier today as I was preparing my remarks, and Leona was in it. She said, “I don't want their apology. I don't want anything from them. I would hope that they learn to treat people better than they treated us. You can't make people be somebody they don't want to be.”

We can take the lessons and the words of Leona Cook, embody them in our work and move forward on major sections of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that will matter to Canadians.

I look forward to the questions and comments and supporting the legislation before us.

• (1905)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am a bit bewildered right now. I wonder if my colleague is just as bewildered as I am.

This week, we witnessed an unspeakable tragedy. A mass grave was discovered where 215 children were buried for who knows how long. Behind this is an even bigger tragedy, that of thousands of children who have been uprooted and have had their culture stripped away for the past 150 years in Canada. Three days later, the government shows up and the only thing it can come up with is to change a few words in the Constitution of Canada.

I am finding it hard not to be cynical. I would like to read to my colleague the introduction of the final report of the Truth and Rec-

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conciliation Commission, which conveys in very strong words what happened 150 years ago in Canada:

...eliminate Aboriginal governments; ignore Aboriginal rights; terminate the Treaties; and, through a process of assimilation, cause Aboriginal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious, and racial entities in Canada. The establishment and operation of residential schools were a central element of this policy, which can best be described as “cultural genocide”.

That is quite powerful.

The government has done nothing with this report for six years. Three days after the discovery of mass graves in British Columbia, the only thing it comes up with is to recall Bill C-8 and propose changing words in the Constitution and adding the word “indigenous”. Does my colleague share my—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to allow the member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry to respond.

[*English*]

Mr. Eric Duncan: Madam Speaker, to my Bloc colleague, I think it was a summary of what I had illustrated. It has been 2,100 days since the TRC report was released, and it has been 2,100 days of dealing with Bill C-8: call to action 94. As I mentioned, and as the member alluded to, the discovery last week was a wake-up call for millions of Canadians. The families of those impacted are looking for closure and answers.

As Canadians, we are looking for urgent action. We have been calling for exactly his point: In the next couple of weeks, not months or years, let us move forward in making sure that we search every site, and provide closure for every child in this country in an unmarked grave who was mistreated at a residential school and had a terrible ending. Let us provide closure sooner rather than later. Urgency is what Canadians want. We need to do that.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would agree with the member that we need to commit all resources possible to ensure that any other potential sites like this are found immediately and that the proper process is done in conjunction with the indigenous communities in the area.

The member talks about the recommendations and implementing them all as quickly and expeditiously as possible, but one of those recommendations had to do with UNDRIP. The Conservative Party voted against that. As I listen to the member, I am trying to rationalize how he can stand here and say we absolutely must implement these recommendations and do as much as we can to see them come to fruition as soon as possible, yet the Conservative Party voted against one last week.

Could he explain why he took that position?

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Mr. Eric Duncan: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my fellow eastern Ontarian for that question from the government side. It provides an opportunity for me to again state the principles of UNDRIP. The overwhelming majority of the declaration is not an issue. However, for far too long and in far too many examples in our history, we have not seen the proper parliamentary work and consultation to get some of the details in that legislation resolved early.

We heard that at committee. First nations communities and legal experts say it is important to take the time to make sure that the legislation and the interpretations do not end up in court. What we are going to have through this process is much more litigation, many more legal fees and many more difficulties in court when those dollars could be spent on tangible improvements in the lives of indigenous people.

It takes time to get it right. The government has had six years to get it right. It did not do that, which is why we are here. More work could have been done in that six years to provide more solidity on Bill C-15 and UNDRIP.

• (1910)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I rise today in the House, feeling both sad and bitter, to speak to Bill C-8, which would amend the citizenship oath to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call to action number 94—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I apologize to the member for interrupting, but I would like to ask other members not to speak while our colleague is giving a speech.

Ms. Christine Normandin: Madam Speaker, I was saying that I felt sad and bitter about this bill, which we, the Bloc Québécois members, will soon be voting against. We were going to support it, but we are forced to oppose it. Even today, we are forced to vote against it although we did try to amend it so we could support it.

Why is the Bloc Québécois opposed to this bill, whose commendable intent should be self-evident? What happened to bring us to this point? These are questions that I feel compelled to answer, not only for my colleagues in the House, but also for indigenous peoples across the country and for the sake of history, which I call on today as my witness.

The first thing I would like to say to all first nations in Quebec and Canada and to the Métis and the Inuit peoples is that the Bloc Québécois firmly believes that call to action 94, as well as all the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, must be implemented without delay.

However, we cannot support Bill C-8 as it stands now, for two reasons. Reason one is that the bill seems to disregard the fact that the rights of indigenous peoples are not blessings to be bestowed on them by white people. On the contrary, these are inherent rights connected to their very existence as indigenous peoples. The second reason has to do with Quebec's and Canada's turbulent constitutional history.

Too little has been said about the first reason why my party did not support the bill. That reason has to do with the essence of indigenous rights. The Bloc Québécois believes that indigenous peo-

ples have rights that are inherent to their very existence. These rights were not created by a charter, a royal proclamation, an international agreement or a constitutional act. On the contrary, these documents serve only to recognize and confirm these rights.

The ancestral rights predate the arrival of the Europeans and are connected to the activities of indigenous peoples before colonization. These are *sui generis* rights, in the sense that they are inherent and not granted by the Crown. These ancestral rights were first recognized in the 1973 decision in *Calder*, and then defined in the *Van der Peet* decision in 1996.

However, the Crown recognized indigenous land rights in the Royal Proclamation of 1763. Sections 25 and 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, grant explicit constitutional recognition of ancestral rights, but do not create the rights themselves. For us, putting that much emphasis on the Canadian Constitution means ignoring the inherent nature of the rights of indigenous peoples.

The second reason is well known, but I want to reiterate it. As it now stands, the bill explicitly refers to the Constitution in the oath of citizenship. I do not think one needs a PhD in history to know how big of a disgrace Quebeckers felt the patriation of the Constitution was. Despite all the successive federalist premiers since 1982, Quebec has never signed the Constitution. Obviously, the Liberals will bring out their old argument about separatists stirring up quarrels of the past to break up our beautiful country. However, are modern-day problems not just problems that went unresolved in the past?

That is why it is worth remembering that, when the Constitution was repatriated in 1982, an event that federalist parties dearly love to celebrate, the draft included an explicit reference to the rights of indigenous peoples. However, during the infamous “night of the long knives”, the federal government and the other nine provinces that abandoned Quebec agreed not only to stab René Lévesque in the back but also to edit out recognition and affirmation of the inherent rights of indigenous peoples. Ottawa was a party to that. That too is part of the history of the Constitution, a living tree whose sap is sometimes poisonous.

As it happened, indigenous militancy and concern that Westminster might reject the proposed Constitution resulted in what is now section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, being put back in. However, constitutional malaise is still very real for Quebec. Members of other parties know that because we have told them.

• (1915)

Despite all this, we tried to amend Bill C-8 to bring it closer to the original citizenship oath of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, because we wanted to support it.

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I should point out that the oath proposed in call to action 94 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission made no reference to the Constitution. The study of the bill in committee was not able to convince us that this addition was made at the request of indigenous peoples. On two occasions, when I asked the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship if the addition of the word “Constitution” was an explicit request of first nations, he replied that it was a result of the general process. In short, he never did tell me if this came from the government or from the first nations.

When we questioned witnesses in committee, they all told us that adding a reference to the Constitution was not at all essential to them. To the Bloc Québécois this addition is not only unnecessary, since it departs from the oath proposed by the Commission, but it is insulting, disrespectful and a provocative act toward the Quebec nation. It is a show of bad faith by the Liberal government and the uncontrollable desire of the federalist parties to pursue a process of building a national identity that endlessly repeats this fable of a Canada of rights and freedoms founded on a millennium-old Constitution.

The sudden haste with which the Liberal government rushed to bring Bill C-8 back to the House this week is rather troubling. Let us not forget that this bill was stuck in limbo since February. We are now June. Last week there was the tragic discovery that pained us all. Suddenly the government woke up to study Bill C-8. Sometimes I get the impression that governments simply wait for the right time to impose their will instead of negotiating, a bit like the Prime Minister's father did so well one day in November 1981. On that, I must say that the unanimity of the federalist parties against the Bloc Québécois's proposals was striking. Sometimes when you win, you lose.

Canadians can carry on building their country in their own image, without worrying about Quebec. We ourselves continue to do so, without Canadians, as we see fit. Perhaps it is because we sense that one day our paths will finally separate.

As a final point, even though our suggestions will undoubtedly fall on deaf ears, since that is the government's way, I would still like to propose a solution for a possible path forward that could suit everyone. Why not simply introduce a new bill with language that all parties can agree on? We could then pass that legislation with a simple unanimous consent motion and send it to the other chamber in one fell swoop, as we do here from time to time.

I am making the suggestion, even though I know it will probably fall on deaf ears. At least we tried.

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened with interest and I think I can understand the frustration of the Bloc members in saying they are very concerned about the principles at play in recognizing indigenous rights but object to the language that is used for other reasons.

I want to ask why, given the concerns that were raised, the Bloc agreed with us to give unanimous consent to move the bill forward. The member is raising concerns about the pace at which the bill is moving, but there seemed to be agreement from the Bloc to do that.

Also, the language of the oath is to “faithfully observe the laws of Canada, including the Constitution”. I understand the Bloc objects to the process by which the Constitution was promulgated, but at the end of the day it is hard to deny that it is part of the laws of Canada and, as part of the law, people have an obligation to follow it. Therefore, regardless of one's view of the account of history that has been given, it seems that simply asking new Canadians to recognize that the Constitution is part of the law of this country and as a law it is to be followed does not seem to me problematic even assuming the Bloc's view.

I would love to hear some follow-up on that.

• (1920)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Madam Speaker, I will give a two-part answer, as that was a two-part question.

With respect to the first part, obstructing legislation seems to be a much more automatic response for the Liberals than it is for the Bloc Québécois.

That said, with respect to including recognition of the Constitution, we agree that it does exist and we are aware of that. My colleague rightly said that everyone follows the law. Then where is the obligation to include it in the citizenship oath, especially since first nations did not ask for that?

I mentioned at committee that by making that amendment, we would achieve a far greater goal, which is to have the unanimous consent of all parties to pass Bill C-8. I even said in February that it might have made it possible to pass the bill much more quickly. The Bloc Québécois held out this possibility, but no one seized it.

[*English*]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, the bill we are talking about has one of the important symbolic things that I believe we can do, and that is to add a reference to aboriginal rights to the citizenship oath. As someone who took my oath 44 years ago, it was a very important day in my life when I took that oath. As someone who was given the opportunity to reaffirm that oath two years ago by a citizenship judge who took me by surprise at a ceremony, I am very much in support of this bill. I want to keep the focus on aboriginal people and aboriginal rights today, so I will not take up my arguments with the Bloc about its members' obtuseness.

However, today we have the Conservatives saying they support UNDRIP, but not the wording. We also have many Conservatives saying they support conversion therapy legislation, but not the wording. Now we have a case of the Bloc members saying they support adding aboriginal rights to the citizenship oath, but not the wording.

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Is it not part of democracy to give and take on the wording, so we can get to a place where we can all agree on the principle of what we are actually dealing with?

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Madam Speaker, I would like to point out and remind the House that the narrow-mindedness was not on the part of the Bloc Québécois this time, but of the other parties that were hell-bent on including something which was not an essential condition for the first peoples of this land and which, in a way, may even have denied their inherent rights.

On the choice of words, these can sometimes carry enormous weight and, in this instance, they refer outright to the “night of the long knives”. In this context, I think the weight of the words justifies our position.

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I have a brief follow-up to my earlier question.

The member said, in her response to it, that, if the Constitution is already part of the law, then it does not need to be in the oath after all because it is already there. I think that seems to be the case, that the reference to the Constitution does not absolutely need to be there.

On the other hand, we are considering it at third reading, and it is there. It does not seem to me that, even if we reject the process by which the Constitution was promulgated, it should be a hill to die on to recognize the existence of the Constitution or its legal status as part of the oath. It just does not seem to carry the particular problem that the Bloc is saying it carries.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Madam Speaker, the last time I checked, the terms of the Meech Lake accord, which were prerequisites for Quebec to recognize the Constitution, have still not been fulfilled.

Given these circumstances, I think we can mention that we do not recognize the Constitution.

ROYAL ASSENT

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

RIDEAU HALL

THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNOR GENERAL

Thursday, June 3, 2021

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that the Right Honourable Richard Wagner, Administrator of the Government of Canada, signified royal assent by written declaration to the bills listed in the Schedule to this letter on the 3rd day of June, 2021, at 6:34 p.m.

Yours sincerely,

Ian McCowan

The schedule indicates the bills assented to were Bill S-223, An Act respecting Kindness Week, Bill S-3, An Act to amend the Off-shore Health and Safety Act, and Bill C-5, An Act to amend the Bills of Exchange Act, the Interpretation Act and the Canada Labour Code (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation).

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• (1925)

[English]

CITIZENSHIP ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-8, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's call to action number 94), be read the third time and passed.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am dismayed that, despite it being six years since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action had been tabled, the Liberal government has been exceedingly slow at implementing even the simplest of the calls to action.

According to the CBC *Beyond 94* tracker, it remains that there are still only 10 out of 94 TRC recommendations completed as of June 1, 2021. Bill C-8 is emblematic of the pace at which the Liberal government has been moving with reconciliation. The concerning rate at which the government has been addressing the calls to action leads me to question the government's timeline and commitment to fully implement all the calls to action.

During the five-year anniversary on December 15, 2020, the commissioners of the TRC report issued a joint statement to indicate that the government's process has been too slow. Former TRC commissioner Ms. Marie Wilson highlighted that revising the citizenship guidebook and updating the oath of citizenship to reflect a more inclusive history of indigenous peoples and recognition of their rights was low-hanging fruit among the TRC recommendations.

Yet, this is the third time it has been introduced. In the years that led up to it, of the official list of organizations consulted provided by IRCC, only four were indigenous organizations and the others were six organizations focusing on immigration, including a couple of Catholic organizations, demonstrating that the imprint of colonialism persists to this day.

While the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs heard from a number of witnesses that the wording could have been improved, they were ultimately in favour of passing it so that we could move on to focusing on some of the more major calls to action. Indeed, the Liberals and Conservatives voted down NDP amendments that would address the concerns raised by adding a recognition of inherent rights of first nations as well as aboriginal title rights in the citizenship oath. This is shameful.

The government cannot say it supports the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which explicitly speaks to free, prior and informed consent. Article 10 states:

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Indigenous peoples shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories. No relocation shall take place without the free, prior and informed consent of the indigenous peoples concerned and after agreement on just and fair compensation and, where possible, with the option of return.

Yet we continue to see ongoing violations of this very article. This is a clear example of the ongoing colonialism that persists today.

Let us look at what is happening with the Mi'kmaq fishers. DFO has decided that they cannot fish now even though this is a clear violation of their treaty rights to earn a moderate livelihood. UNDRIP stipulates that indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination, which is what indigenous fishers are trying to do, earn a living, feed their families and, in some cases, work their way out of poverty.

Now, as a result of the failures of the government to live up to its obligations, they are even afraid of violence from non-indigenous fishers. Their property has been burned, they have been threatened and assaulted, and the government has offered no plan to ensure their safety. This is not reconciliation. In fact, this is what systemic racism and discrimination looks like.

Why is the government not doing everything it can to protect the rights and safety of indigenous fishers? Former TRC commissioner Marie Wilson also pointed out that calls to action 53 and 56 call for the creation of a national council for reconciliation. One of its core functions would be to provide oversight and hold the government accountable to the progress on implementing other TRC calls to action.

The fact that these TRC recommendations are missing in action and have not been among the first that were implemented shows a lack of interest by the government in actually implementing these calls to action. It also does not want to be held accountable in an independent, transparent way.

On the five-year anniversary of the TRC report, Murray Sinclair was critical of the slow pace the government has been moving and said:

It is very concerning that the federal government still does not have a tangible plan for how they will work towards implementing the Calls to Action.

• (1930)

This is how the Liberals treat what they say is their most important relationship. The Liberals are abusing the goodwill of indigenous peoples. As they say with a straight face how much they respect indigenous rights, and cry crocodile tears about what indigenous people have always known in light of the findings of the mass grave of indigenous children at the Kamloops residential school site, they continue to take indigenous children to court.

The Liberals cannot claim to honour the spirits of children who died in residential schools while they continue to take indigenous kids to court. The Liberals cannot claim to take their role in reconciliation seriously when they force survivors of residential schools to wage legal battles for recognition and compensation. I am calling for real action, real justice and real reconciliation, not just more words and symbolic gestures. I am calling on the federal government to stop its legal battles against indigenous kids and survivors

of residential schools: battles that have cost millions of taxpayer dollars.

In 2020, Dr. Cindy Blackstock stated that the government had spent at least \$9 million fighting against first nations children at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. These children do not get a second childhood. As we are sitting here, the government is still fighting survivors of St. Anne's residential school. This cannot be acceptable to anyone who says they want to honour the lives of indigenous children who were ripped away from their loved ones and were subjected to untold abuse and horror. Too many died alone, too many went missing and too many are still suffering from the effects of colonization.

Make no mistake: Genocide was committed against indigenous peoples, and successive Liberal and Conservative governments have continued a genocide against first nations, Métis and Inuit across the country. These are crimes against humanity and it is time for Canada to take full responsibility. I am calling on the Liberals to end their court challenges, to work with survivors, and to ensure that all resources needed are made available to survivors and their communities.

The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal found Canada's discrimination to be "wilful and reckless" and "a worst-case scenario" resulting in unnecessary family separations for thousands of children, and serious harm and even death for other children. These are facts that the government must accept. In addition, the federal government must work with first nations to fund further investigation into the deaths and disappearances of children at residential schools.

The Harper Conservatives denied the TRC the \$1.5 million it requested to get an accurate representation of how many unmarked graves there are. The TRC heard from countless witnesses of their existence, but no national effort was made to identify them. This must be addressed.

As stated by Murray Sinclair, retired senator and chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission:

We know there are lots of sites similar to Kamloops that are going to come to light in the future. We need to begin to prepare ourselves for that. Those that are survivors and intergenerational survivors need to understand that this information is important for all of Canada to understand the magnitude of the truth of this experience.

I am also calling for full funding of the healing resources that survivors need. The federal government must accelerate its progress to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action and announce a timeline and an independent, publicly accountable mechanism for the fulfillment of the calls to action. We cannot continue to say that we support reconciliation without doing real, meaningful work.

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To close, the NDP wants to see the TRC recommendation realized. We want to see this bill come to reality, but we also want to see the new citizenship guidebook, which has been in the making for five years, and we have no information of when it will be available. We want the guidebook to also incorporate that history, and clearly outline that genocide has been committed against indigenous peoples and continues to be. Every newcomer needs to know this history and take it to heart. As indicated, this is not an aboriginal issue: It is an issue for all of Canada. It is a Canadian issue and we need to own up to it. We need to—

• (1935)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague spoke a bit about some of the issues that were raised today with the NDP's opposition motion, which the Conservatives will be supporting.

No doubt every government in Canada's history has made mistakes. The NDP has, for better or worse, never been in government, so it never had that opportunity to let its supporters down to some extent, which sometimes happens when parties are in government.

I want to ask the member about specifically the fact that some Liberal MPs recently have criticized legal advice given by the justice department. In fact, the parliamentary secretary for foreign affairs, at the Canada-China committee of which I am part, went strongly at the Public Health Agency, telling the officials that they needed to get second opinions when they were told something by the Department of Justice.

What is the member's response when we have these cases of litigation against indigenous children when at the same time we have Liberal MPs saying they cannot trust legal advice that is coming through the justice minister?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, of course, what we have seen is the failure of successive Conservative and Liberal governments in addressing the genocide that was committed against indigenous peoples, and the ongoing genocide. We need the government to act.

I am happy to hear the Conservatives will be supporting the NDP motion, but, equally important, I need every member of the House to admit that a genocide is being committed against indigenous peoples. We need to address these issues through not only the calls to action from the TRC, but also in addressing other issues such as systemic poverty that exists for indigenous people and the violence that has been perpetrated and continues to be perpetrated today.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, if the Minister of Indigenous Services were to show up in the next week or two on a reserve in northern Saskatchewan or northern Manitoba, where there is no more drinking water, where housing problems are dire, where two or three families are squeezed into unsanitary one-bedroom dwellings with no heat, where the memory of missing children and murdered women is still very much alive, what would he tell people who ask him what ac-

tions his government took after the discovery of the mass grave in British Columbia?

The minister would have no choice but to tell them that his government took action by changing three words in the oath of Canadian citizenship.

How does my colleague think those community members would react?

• (1940)

[*English*]

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, the rate at which the government has acted on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action is simply unacceptable. It is unacceptable that the government continues to take indigenous children to court. It is unacceptable that there are drinking water advisories existing in indigenous communities, where the water is not safe for people to drink. It is unacceptable for the government to continue to make excuses, as though somehow delayed action is justified. It is not justified, it is not acceptable, and we must all get on with it.

The government needs to admit a genocide has been committed and continues to this day, and it needs to stop taking indigenous children to court. It needs to take real action, take ownership and show responsibility.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, GP): Madam Speaker, it is important for me today to have the opportunity to speak to Bill C-8 from the unceded territory of the Wolastoqiyik.

What is a nation, and what does it mean to be a Canadian citizen? Bill C-8 is an act to amend the Citizenship Act. The bill would change the oath of citizenship for newcomers to Canada to include recognition and affirmation of the treaty rights of first nations, Inuit and Métis people.

As I have proudly mentioned many times in this House, before I joined federal politics I was a teacher. When I think about this bill and the oath of citizenship, I think about what it teaches us about who we are and who we want to be.

In my time at Fredericton High School as a cultural transition coordinator for indigenous youth, I helped to run a native education centre. My role was to ensure that students were welcomed, supported, empowered and that they had access to the materials and resources they needed for success, often a tall order in a large institution.

I had the pleasure of working closely with the English as a second language department for newcomer students, who were in the same wing. My goal was to facilitate learning about indigenous culture and heritage with my students, but also with the wider school population and staff. I would create bulletin boards with information; spotlight incredible indigenous leaders, actors, artists, language keepers; visit classes or host professional development seminars.

It was not long before the ESL department requested that I come in and speak with their students, who were very curious about my role. I noticed that the “welcome to Canada” curriculum that the ESL teachers had been given represented indigenous peoples with a totem pole, a teepee and an inukshuk. Beyond these superficial symbolic images, there was no substance, no discussion of rights, of the peace and friendship treaties in our territory, of the different Wabanaki nations on the east coast, no highlight of the 15 communities in New Brunswick, nine Mi’kmaq and six Wolastoqiyik.

We started to hold group potlucks with traditional foods, sometimes in our space and sometimes in theirs. Beyond the cultural exchange, I noticed the bonds that the youth were making with one another and I noticed the pride in being a part of Canada’s mosaic. We are strengthened by our diversity and it was beautiful to witness an exercise in community building. These students had more in common than they first believed. Many were subjected to prejudice, discrimination and racism. I also noticed that newcomer students began to open up more about their homelands or refugee experiences. They identified with the history of colonialism they were learning and they were excited by the indigenous cultural resurgence happening in local nations because of the hope it offered.

It is a rare opportunity to connect our desire to welcome newcomers with honesty about the sovereignty of indigenous nations. This is important work that we are undertaking.

We cannot ignore the reason why we are here tonight. It is to discuss Bill C-8 and to expedite its passage into Canadian law. However, this urgency comes from the horrific discovery of the remains of 215 children at the former Kamloops residential school. It should not have taken this latest revelation of wrongdoing to prompt action. We have known the impact of residential schools in this country for decades, at least those of us who bothered to listen. The children have pushed the truth to the surface. No one can say they did not know. Newcomers to Canada will have to come to terms with these realizations as well, out of respect to the original inhabitants of this land, the ones who are still here and the ones who never came home.

The oath in call to action 94 is as follows:

I swear (or affirm) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada, Her Heirs and Successors, and that I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada including Treaties with Indigenous Peoples, and fulfill my duties as a Canadian citizen.

Upholding this oath requires a further in-depth conversation about colonialism, the British Crown and its role in the atrocities of residential schools and ongoing oppression, about monies and Crown lands held in trust by Her Majesty the Queen on behalf of indigenous peoples.

As for the faithful observation of laws in Canada, including treaties, we have much work to do. Canadians have very little understanding of our treaty relationship. This became painfully obvious during the Mi’kmaq fishery dispute.

While we stand here today to hopefully unanimously pass Bill C-8, implementing call to action 94 from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, call to action 93 has been stalled since June 2018, when the federal government said changes to the information kit for newcomers were close to completion. Can we have an up-

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date on this? Can we have a status report on all calls to action? This is what the survivors, those who are descendants of settlers, and certainly newcomers need from the government.

The Liberal government has completed an average of only two TRC calls to action per year since 2015. At this rate, it will take until 2062 to complete all 94. My children will likely have their own children by then. These are steps in the right direction, but I would like to share the reflections of a person from my riding.

● (1945)

This is what they said: “I’m hopeful that people will finally read the recommendations. Maybe finding more human bodies will wake people up to the notion that each of these recommendations addresses a specific concern. The onus should be on our government to explain why they are not adopting specific recommendations versus our current system of applauding them when they pick and choose off the list like it is.”

I appreciate this wisdom. The calls to action represent a package of reforms that create a road map for reconciliation. We must walk that road step by step, recommendation by recommendation. Rather than applause for hand-selecting the 11th and 12th recommendations to enshrine over a six-year period, we need to be seeing status reports on the implementation, demanding more accountability from the government when it falls short, when we all fall short.

I would like to read recommendations 71 to 76 today, as they relate so directly to the lost children in Kamloops and those across the nation who remain invisible. Under “Missing Children and Burial Information”, the calls to action are as follows:

71. We call upon all chief coroners and provincial vital statistics agencies that have not provided to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada their records on the deaths of Aboriginal children in the care of residential school authorities to make these documents available to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

72. We call upon the federal government to allocate sufficient resources to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to allow it to develop and maintain the National Residential School Student Death Register established by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

73. We call upon the federal government to work with churches, Aboriginal communities, and former residential school students to establish and maintain an online registry of residential school cemeteries, including, where possible, plot maps showing the location of deceased residential school children.

74. We call upon the federal government to work with the churches and Aboriginal community leaders to inform the families of children who died at residential schools of the child’s burial location, and to respond to families’ wishes for appropriate commemoration ceremonies and markers, and reburial in home communities where requested.

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75. We call upon the federal government to work with provincial, territorial, and municipal governments, churches, Aboriginal communities, former residential school students, and current landowners to develop and implement strategies and procedures for the ongoing identification, documentation, maintenance, commemoration, and protection of residential school cemeteries or other sites at which residential school children were buried. This is to include the provision of appropriate memorial ceremonies and commemorative markers to honour the deceased children.

76. We call upon the parties engaged in the work of documenting, maintaining, commemorating, and protecting residential school cemeteries to adopt strategies in accordance with the following principles:

- i. The Aboriginal community most affected shall lead the development of such strategies.
- ii. Information shall be sought from residential school Survivors and other Knowledge Keepers in the development of such strategies.
- iii. Aboriginal protocols shall be respected before any potentially invasive technical inspection and investigation of a cemetery site.

We also need to provide the space to grieve. There was a collective sadness being felt across this country. This is the truth that comes before the reconciliation. We had to come to this point of reckoning to wake up those who were still sleeping. Now that we know, we cannot unknow. Enshrining acknowledgement of indigenous peoples into the newcomer citizenship oath asks us to never forget.

I support Bill C-8 and ask my colleagues in the Senate to agree. Let us get this done.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It is nice to see that adorable young one.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

• (1950)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am often in the same boat at home, juggling family and my work in the House of Commons. For those of us who are young parents, we all have to confront this challenge of how we talk to our children about Canada's relationship with indigenous peoples and how we explain the pride we feel in Canada and yet the shame we feel about things that were done in the name of our country and perhaps in the name of communities we are a part of.

I wonder if the member would share how she tries to engage in these conversations, in particular with the next generation, and how we should explain what happened and what we plan to do going forward.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his recognition of the tough balance between work and life sometimes. My two children are with me in the office tonight. My oldest is in grade 3 and the revelation hit him pretty hard. It hit his classmates and community members hard too. Oromocto First Nation is where he is a band member. Members put children's shoes in the shape of a heart and lit it up at night. It is difficult to drive by, and it is difficult to have those conversations with our children.

My son has had an introduction to residential schools before, because his mom is very passionate about having him be proud of his heritage and having him learn the difficult road that his ancestors had to take. This is very much a sensitive issue for me. It hits close to home, and I do all I can to have these tough conversations. There

are storybooks we can read that are appropriate for children, and if anyone would like to reach out, I have lots of recommendations that I can pass on.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Fredericton for her speech, and I would also like to say hello to her little boy, who is absolutely adorable.

My colleague is not a member of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, where the wording of the oath of citizenship was discussed. This evening, we heard from members who seem to be somewhat insensitive to how Quebec feels about this issue.

I would simply like to know whether she has a different understanding of the reason why this is an issue for the Bloc Québécois. In order to achieve unanimous consent, would she have supported an amendment from the Bloc Québécois that would simply remove the recognition of the Constitution from the wording of the oath of citizenship?

[*English*]

Mrs. Jenica Atwin: Madam Speaker, yes, my son is adorable.

I respect the nation of Quebec. I respect the sovereignty and its individualized culture, and it is important to add that to the conversation as well. This is about respecting everyone's background, heritage and culture and coming to Canada and building a nation where we truly all belong, where we feel included and represented. I am very open to working with Bloc members to assure there are amendments they are comfortable with.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I ran a non-profit organization that supported newcomers to Canada for many years, and one of the things we learned was that often indigenous communities were not something they knew a lot about. Sometimes they would come into Canada and hear from other people really discriminatory aspects of that perspective and did not understand the history. When they learned the history, it was very overwhelming sometimes because there were some stories that really related to the experience they had in their home country.

I am just wondering if the member could speak a bit about how important it is to have that acknowledgement in our citizenship oath so we encourage all members of the community who become Canadian to know the history of our country in this context.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin: Madam Speaker, I was a bit more cynical about those calls to action, but the more I thought about it, the more I think it is so important to enshrine up front when that important learning is happening about coming to a new country, coming to Canada and what that means. To talk about the original inhabitants right out of the gate leads to what could be a future of reconciliation for all. It is an important step. I do not think we can trivialize it. Bill C-8 is important and I am proud to support it.

• (1955)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It being 7:55 p.m., pursuant to order made on Tuesday, June 1, the motion is deemed adopted and Bill C-8, an act to amend the Citizenship Act regarding the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's call to action number 94, is deemed read a third time and passed on division.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed)

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, on February 26, I asked the minister a question about the B.C. regional economic development agency. I requested that a location of one of the offices of this new agency be located in my riding. In November of last year, I put forward a motion, Motion No. 53 in the House of Commons, calling for the federal government to be guided by principles for a sustainable and equitable future, when considering funding for COVID-19 relief and recovery.

Rural and remote communities across Canada are facing specific challenges that are often ignored and unrecognized by the Government of Canada. I asked the House to recognize and honour that Canada, as a nation, has a rich history of resource-dependent rural communities providing the economic prosperity many Canadians have benefited from; that this prosperity has been at the expense of, or specifically excluded, local indigenous peoples and communities; and that the future of these resource-dependent communities is at risk due to climate change, the changing resource sector, the loss of ecological diversity and integrity and, of course, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rural and remote communities have built this country and lived through multiple boom and bust cycles. This is a challenge that I want to work with the government to repair. This can only be done with fair disbursement of funds, so when the announcement came from the government about the B.C. regional economic development agency, I wrote immediately to the minister to let her know that our region is a good one to invest in. I believe it is essential for offices of government to be located in urban and rural communities. As rural and remote communities face challenges in the changing economy and environmental realities, it is imperative that there be a specific focus for these areas.

Our industries are changing, and COVID has had serious impacts. I, in my office, have spoken to many in the tourism industry who are very afraid of the future of their work. The forestry sector is still recovering from a lengthy strike; the federal government has announced a change for spot prawn fisheries that has seriously concerned the industry; public fisheries continue to want to hear more about the commitment to mark selective fishing; and communities are still waiting for the report that the Parliamentary Secretary to

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the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans promised this spring on what a more sustainable aquaculture will look like. Summer is days away. The consultations have happened with communities, industry and indigenous leadership, and we are still waiting. With recent DFO science identifying the concerns of open-net farms, it is important that this report on sustainable aquaculture comes out to clarify the next steps for our region. People want to know. We have also heard a commitment for investment in wild salmon, a key part of our region's cultural and economic health. Communities are waiting for the details to support and protect the wild salmon that are struggling so profoundly.

My motion demands that funds be applied and distributed equally by federal riding, geographic region and province or territory. That is why I am asking the minister: When will B.C. hear more about the B.C. economic development branch? Does she commit to having locations in rural and remote communities to better understand these particular needs and voices? When will she answer my letter and let my constituents know if an office will open in our region?

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am happy to respond to the question from the hon. member for North Island—Powell River regarding our new regional economic development agency for British Columbia. I appreciate her making this important request for constituents, and her emphasis on rural, because I come from a rural riding. I also appreciate her support on the support we are providing for salmon, because that affects my riding as well.

Our government understands the importance of investing in communities. We know that the regional development agencies are often the best vehicles for these investments. That sentiment has been reinforced throughout this pandemic. From the outset, the RDAs have been on the ground across Canada helping businesses weather the effects of the pandemic.

Through the \$2 billion regional relief and recovery fund, we have helped businesses stay afloat and protect jobs. The RRRF has been important in western Canada, which is already facing unique economic challenges, as the member just mentioned very nicely.

Under the very strong leadership and successful actions of the Minister of Economic Development to date, the RRRF has delivered more than \$775 million to approximately 9,000 businesses in western Canada. Thanks to this support, we have helped protect more than 40,000 jobs across western Canada, including more than 15,000 jobs in B.C.

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Our RRRF funding in B.C. has gone to all parts of the province, in part, thanks to B.C. Community Futures offices, which have delivered more than \$60 million to more than 1,400 rural B.C. businesses impacted by the pandemic.

As we build back better, our government understands that we need to continue delivering support directly to our regions and communities. In B.C. and across western Canada, we understand there are unique economic realities, which the member mentioned, and the one-size-fits-all approach no longer works.

In the 2020 fall economic statement, we announced we would be creating a new regional economic development agency for British Columbia, with new dedicated funding to help businesses and communities in British Columbia continue to grow and create good jobs across the province. In budget 2021, over and above \$1 billion for tourism, we backed up with real investments. We are going to provide this new B.C. RDA with \$553.1 million over five years, starting this year, 2021-22; and \$110.6 million ongoing. These investments will support the new agency and ensure our government is there to help businesses in B.C. grow and create good jobs for British Columbia.

As we establish this new RDA, we are continuing our commitment, ensuring it is driven by the local realities that the member mentioned. The Minister of Economic Development and the parliamentary secretary for the new B.C. agency, the member for Burnaby North—Seymour, have met with and heard from a diverse number of economic development thought leaders, including those on Vancouver Island and the surrounding coastal communities. Their guidance will ensure the new B.C. RDA is built by and for British Columbians, with a greater local presence, improved service and more locally engaged staff.

We are still in the early days of this new B.C. RDA, which means we cannot yet determine exactly how it will look or where the offices will be located. However, I can say with certainty that our government listened to the local stakeholders and when the new Pacific regional development agency opens its doors, it will allow our government to play a robust role as adviser, investor and, most important, a partner for businesses and communities across British Columbia.

● (2000)

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's response and I also appreciate that he represents a very large rural and remote riding.

I am paraphrasing him, but he just said that the regional offices were the best sources for local investment. I really want to ensure the government is hearing that. If we do not see these offices also located in rural and remote communities, we will never see that fundamental change that needs to happen in the country. Therefore, I hope the member will continue to advocate alongside me to ensure my riding has this representation.

Also, the funds for small businesses, especially the tourism sector, really need to be extended past the deadline provided by the government. Many folks in that industry are worried that they will not be able to hold through this period of time. Tourism is not going to come back this year, and that is a huge concern.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Madam Speaker, I really appreciate the member's very constructive input. I will certainly take it back with me, because I have a tourism-based riding as well and I totally understand what she is saying.

We are committed to creating a prosperous Canada, where Canadians will get well-paying jobs to support their families. That is why we are proposing this new economic development in the west, a refocused agency in the Prairies and this new agency for British Columbia that will be responsible for the special diverse economic needs so nicely outlined by the member.

The new points of service and the locations will be determined through careful consideration of the needs of those we will serve and will be announced after consultations are completed and the decisions have been made. We know they will improve how we support British Columbians as well as Canadians in the Prairie provinces and position their families, communities and businesses for success.

● (2005)

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, tonight I will talk a little about Bill C-10. We have talked about free speech and net neutrality. There have been a lot of words mentioned by the minister about foreign big tech and the Conservatives supporting them. When I look at lobbying, and I look at all of those people from big tech, the Amazons, the Netflixes, the YouTubes, they are not coming to lobby me. There is a registry that shows who gets lobbied, and they seem to spend a lot of time in the minister's office, not mine, so I am not sure where he is getting that from.

There has been some discussion about tax. Yes, if businesses are doing business in Canada, we agree there should be a tax, but we are going to be honest about that because the users are going to be paying up to 50% more because of that tax. The Biden administration is saying that, if we tax those companies like that in Canada, there are going to be tariffs, so where is that cost going to go to?

We are talking about funding this for culture, but who gets it and where does it go? The parliamentary secretary was the chair of the heritage committee when we looked at where our funding was going for cultural groups in Canada. Is it a surprise that Alberta got 50% less per capita than the rest of the country?

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Who decides where it goes? The CRTC is involved in this, but who is the Canadian Radio and Television Commission? It is made up of nine appointed commissioners, and if we look at the Yale report, which a lot of this supposed legislation in Bill C-10 is based on, it recommended that one has to live in Ottawa, the national capital area, if one is on the commission. That is interesting.

There are no minutes for the CRTC. It has no record of debates and no record of votes. Is this transparent and accountable? We know that in the private sector, algorithms have been developed for Amazon or Netflix. They have developed the algorithms, so, if people like a movie, it will suggest some more like it, or if we are buying one thing, it will suggest more we might like.

They are driven by profit and data. We know that, but now we are taking the content, which is what we object to at the CRTC. It did protect individuals, but it pulled off the protective content, so now the CRTC, these non-transparent commissioners, are going to develop algorithms that are driven not by data but by content.

Would someone have a concern about the content of an organization that is going to develop algorithms based on Canadian content? That means they are going to look at whatever they think is Canadian content and develop algorithms that say this one is more Canadian than that one. It will say we should be watching these Canadians more than those Canadians.

That creates winners and losers in our creators of Canadian content. We have 200,000 people who have created and uploaded their content. We have 25,000 people in Canada who have been very successful at making a living. Our concern is to protect individual rights, and the content should be left alone. That is freedom of speech and it should be net neutrality. That is why we are concerned about Bill C-10.

• (2010)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Bill C-10 is an absolute priority for our government and for the cultural sector. It has been 30 years since the Broadcasting Act was modernized, before Canadians turned from video stores to streaming services to access their movies and shows. Over that time, foreign web giants have stepped into that void and they made money in Canada without any requirement that they contribute a portion of those revenues to our cultural industry.

We have an uneven playing field where traditional Canadian broadcasters have regulatory obligations and the foreign web giants do not. We are levelling that playing field, while creating greater support for an important part of our economy. I am happy that the member opposite raised the issue about cultural productions in Alberta because the Canadian cultural sector employs many Canadians across our country on shows like *Heartland*, which is filmed in Alberta.

Since Bill C-10 was introduced on November 3 of last year, the proposed legislation has received more than 20 hours of debate in the House of Commons. Even during that first debate in this place, the Conservatives vowed to block the bill. There have been more than 40 hours of dedicated study at the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. Witnesses provided over 100 in-person testi-

monies; dozens of written submissions were accepted and looked at. The bill itself is the response to a 2019 report called, "Canada's communications future: Time to act", which received more than 2,000 submissions. All that is to say there has been considerable study and debate on this bill.

Having witnessed the Conservatives in power for the 10 years previous, once we formed government we ensured that all bills must be accompanied by a charter statement. The Department of Justice Canada's analysis has confirmed that Bill C-10 remains consistent with the charter's guarantee of freedom of speech, as has our supplemental analysis after amendments were made at committee. I would like to add that the original Broadcasting Act contains a section that remains unchanged, which states that it must be interpreted in a way that respects freedom of expression and journalistic and creative independence. That has been there for the past 30 years. We added a further clause, at committee, that repeats its protections specifically for social media companies. The bill is consistent with our right to freedom of expression.

I would like to go back to the amount of time that has been put into the study of this bill, which, over the past weeks, has included tremendous amounts of repetition. Every moment lost as a result of the Conservative Party of Canada's filibuster has deprived the Canadian economy of important investment in our culture and jobs. Each month, an estimated \$70 million that Bill C-10 would add to our broadcasting, audiovisual, music and media sectors and would support the 170,000 people who work in those sectors is lost. Instead of going to our artists, creators and cultural workers, and Canadian stories, we are seeing that money remaining in the pockets of foreign tech companies.

In conclusion, Bill C-10 would even the playing field. It is not fair the way the system is working now. I understand the Conservatives have opposed levelling this playing field from the very beginning. That is their choice, but Canadians want fairness and that is what Bill C-10 would deliver.

Mr. Martin Shields: Madam Speaker, not to be a repetitionist, but there is another issue that has developed this week that is really of significant importance.

COVID really destroyed the airline industry in this country, hugely, shutting it down and losing all sorts of parts of our airline industry to travel. There were 20,000 people at all different levels who lost their jobs. Every type of employee was affected. Travel agencies lost their businesses, 85% of them female.

There was a bailout negotiated by the current Liberal government, using taxpayer money for loans and money. The executives suffered from the pain of firing 20,000 and negotiated a bailout, reacted decisively and got millions and a buyout and bonuses. This is the wrong thing for the bonuses.

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• (2015)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Madam Speaker, well, at least we have avoided repetition, but today we were talking about Bill C-10.

[*Translation*]

The government understands the need to act quickly. The regulations for the broadcasting industry need to be reformed because the current version of the act is over 30 years old and because, today, Canadian content is created in a very different context than it was in 1991.

[*English*]

I am happy to speak in support of Bill C-10. I look forward to the opportunity for our creators to travel all across our country, even to Alberta, to create these wonderful stories.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise virtually tonight in adjournment proceedings to address a question I initially asked on April 15 of this year.

People who have been paying close attention to the climate agenda and our rapidly shrinking opportunity to make the difference that we need to make, as time passes and our emissions are still rising, will recall the April 22 climate summit hosted by President Joe Biden, held virtually with leaders from 40 countries.

On April 15, first I noted that our emissions kept rising right up until COVID, with recently announced reports to that effect. My second point was that a report from a news outlet called *The Breach* said a special cabinet committee had formed during COVID with representation of senior levels of government from natural resources, finance, environment and elsewhere that was actually focused on helping the oil and gas sector. My third point was that our subsidies continued to go up.

The minister's response was that we would see a new target soon. I return to the fundamental question on the not-so-new target now. Since 2015, the Liberal government has proclaimed that Canada is back and clearly understands that the climate issue is real. Has it actually grasped the science? This is my core question.

I will say again that as well-intentioned as the government might be, it does not seem to understand that we must hold to no more than a 1.5°C global average temperature increase above the global average temperature at the time of the Industrial Revolution. Blowing past this target by failing to put in place rigorous targets now will lead us to a place where we do not get a do-over. We cannot fix it later.

From the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and its special report on 1.5°C, which came out in October 2018, we know that if the world community does not move mountains in this coming decade, it will be too late.

In his book *Values*, Mark Carney said that understanding carbon budgets is very important. On page 273, he said:

If we had started in the year 2000, we could have hit 1.5°C by halving emissions every 30 years. Now, we must cut our emissions in half every 10 years. If we wait another four years, we will have to halve our emissions every single year. If we wait another eight years, our 1.5°C carbon budget will be exhausted.

The Prime Minister attended the Biden summit. He announced a new target and proclaimed that it was ambitious. It is not. It does not meet the demands of science, and neither does Bill C-12, which we are currently debating in the environment committee. They have good intentions, great press coverage and good public relations, but they fail to do what is necessary.

Years ago, I marched with my daughter in the streets of New York in the lead-up to the COP before the Paris agreement. I saw a sign as we marched that said, "It's time to stop debating what is possible and start doing what is necessary".

We have to cancel the TMX pipeline. We cannot afford \$17 billion on a pipeline that blows our carbon budget. The choices are stark. The government is failing.

• (2020)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we understand that Canada must do its part to reduce emissions and work with other global leaders to tackle climate change, create growth and improve the well-being of all people. That is why we have developed a comprehensive plan and made the largest commitment to climate action in Canadian history to move Canada and the rest of the international community toward our shared goal.

We also understand that the previous emission reduction commitments made by the signatories to the Paris Agreement are not enough to hold global warming below 1.5°C. There has been a global call for increased ambition and climate action, and we have been listening.

That is why at the Leaders Summit on Climate, on April 22, 2021, Canada announced an enhanced emissions reduction target of 40% to 45% below 2005 levels by 2030. Members are probably wondering how we intend to meet this target. As I mentioned, we already have a comprehensive plan in place, and we have been working to find real solutions to tackle the climate crisis since 2015. Our recently announced strengthened climate plan, a healthy environment and a healthy economy, builds on our first climate plan, the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change, and includes over 60 new measures and \$15 billion in investments to advance our ambitious climate goals and strengthen our clean economy.

The government has since expanded on these investments and committed an additional \$15 billion to public transit and active transportation projects, and \$17.6 billion to new green recovery measures in budget 2021. The investments made in budget 2021, along with other action, including strengthened alignment with the United States to further cut pollution from transportation and methane emissions, mean that Canada is now positioned to reduce emissions significantly.

All this to say, we are making progress. However, we recognize that more needs to be done to reach the new target. Canada is just starting along the innovation curves associated with some of the most promising decarbonization technologies, such as industrial electrification; carbon capture, use and storage; and hydrogen.

Investments in clean technology and innovation, such as those detailed in Canada's climate plan, help to accelerate the development of next generation technologies. For example, new investments in Canada's net-zero accelerator will incentivize Canadian businesses and industry to develop net-zero technologies and build our clean industrial advantage.

Moving forward, the Government of Canada will continue to work with provinces, territories, indigenous peoples, civil society, industry, national indigenous organizations and the U.S. administration to advance shared priorities that will further lower emissions. In these partnerships, the government believes that Canada can go further and faster together.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. friend, the parliamentary secretary, but her history is wrong. What always amazes me is the history the hon. member mentions. The strongest climate plan in Canadian history is not the one we have now; it is

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the one we had under Paul Martin in 2005. It would have gotten us to a Kyoto target well below 1990 levels. We are now 21% above 1990 levels.

Now when we look at what we need to do, we are behind the eight ball. We have the worst record in the G7. We have the weakest climate target. Even after the Prime Minister improved it, it is still the weakest climate target in the industrialized world.

When we look at what we need to do to hold to 1.5°C to meet our Paris target, it is not about doing better or doing more; it is about getting it right. It is not going to be easy. It will take a whole-of-government approach. It requires us to take on the climate challenge as the fight of our generation, as it truly is. All of government must mobilize, and that is where we are failing.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Madam Speaker, G20 leaders committed to rationalize and phase out, over the medium term, inefficient fossil fuel subsidies while providing targeted support for the poorest. Our government has already taken actions to phase out or rationalize eight tax measures supporting the fossil fuel sector.

We will continue to review measures that could be considered inefficient fossil fuel subsidies with a view to reforming them as necessary. We are doing the hard work.

[*Translation*]

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

(The House adjourned at 8:25 p.m.)

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