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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

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The House met at 10 a.m.

every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

Prayer

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1000)

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS NO. 16—PROCEEDINGS ON BILL C-11

Hon. Mona Fortier (for the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

That, notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, shall be disposed of as follows:

(a) during consideration of the bill by the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage,

(i) the committee shall have the first priority for the use of House resources for committee meetings,

(ii) amendments to the bill, including from independent members, shall be submitted to the clerk of the committee by 11:59 p.m. on June 13, 2022, and distributed to committee members in both official languages by 9:00 a.m. on June 14, 2022,

(iii) the committee shall proceed to clause-by-clause consideration of the bill no later than 11:59 a.m. on June 14, 2022,

(iv) suggested amendments filed by independent members pursuant to subparagraph (a)(ii) shall be deemed to have been proposed during the clause-by-clause consideration of the bill,

(v) if the committee has not completed its clause-by-clause consideration of the bill by 9:00 p.m. on June 14, 2022, all remaining amendments submitted to the committee shall be deemed moved, and the Chair shall put the question, forthwith and successively without further debate, on all remaining clauses and amendments submitted to the committee, as well as each and every question necessary to dispose of the clause-by-clause consideration of the bill,

(vi) a member of the committee may report the bill to the House by depositing it with the Clerk of the House, who shall notify the House leaders of the recognized parties and independent members;

(b) not more than one sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration of the bill at report stage, and that, 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders that day, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment; and

(c) on the day the bill is considered at the third reading stage, the ordinary hour of daily adjournment shall be midnight, and that, 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders that day, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and in turn

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am truly disappointed to have to be speaking to a programming motion today. I am disappointed because I truly believe in the committee process. I believe that House committees do really important work. I believe they are the heart of how bills get improved, the place where members from all parties give detailed advice to the government on studies and do detailed studies of legislation.

In the first four years when I was an MP, I had the true pleasure of chairing the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. We had really tough bills that we tackled, ones that involved issues like medically assisted dying, recognizing gender identity and gender expression in the Canadian Human Rights Act, and the most significant reforms to the Divorce Act and the Criminal Code in decades. We heard from witnesses for many hours and we studied amendments, sometimes hundreds of amendments, and yet, in each and every case, nobody ever tried to stop the process.

The committee agreed on how many witnesses we would hear from, and once that ended, clause-by-clause would start. Each amendment was properly discussed, dealt with and voted on, and we moved on and returned the bill to the House. This applied to bills where there was a philosophical difference between the different members of the committee from different parties, such as medically assisted dying. It also applied to bills where the members of the committee from all other parties disagreed with the government on the bill, such as genetic discrimination, which was recently upheld by the Supreme Court. Committee members worked together. I see my friend from Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, and he was part of that committee and knows how well we worked together. We treated each other with respect, and the committee respected the process. Everyone debated, a vote happened and the majority will was respected.

In the case of Bill C-11, this is not what is happening at committee. In fact, this bill is meeting a fate similar to that of its predecessor, Bill C-10. Having been a member of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, in both cases, I know we have been treated to some members using the committee rules in a way to stop us from getting to clause-by-clause to try to improve the bill.

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At committee, members have the right to speak to motions as long as they want, provided they do not stray too far from the topic. As a result, we have been blocked from ever voting on a motion to move to clause-by-clause, even though it is the clear wish of the majority of the members of the committee to do so. Based on what I have seen at committee, it is abundantly clear to me that there is no desire on the part of some committee members to ever allow clause-by-clause to happen on the bill. The members propose motions, amendments and subamendments, but never allow any of them to actually come to a vote. This is truly unfortunate, because if the goal is to improve legislation and propose and support amendments to improve the bill, we need to discuss and debate and vote on those amendments. We need to see those amendments. That is the way things are done constructively.

Those members using the filibuster to stop the committee from reaching clause-by-clause are certainly following the rules. Therefore, much as I would prefer that we not have to do this, other members have the right to follow other House rules to move us to clause-by-clause, because if we do not receive instructions from the House, we will never get there ourselves. Let me be clear: If any members think the bill needs to be improved, they should want us to get to clause-by-clause so that they can propose amendments, the country can hear those amendments and we can vote on those amendments. Let us try to get there.

As a result, the motion before us would provide the committee with priority for House resources so that we can sit outside of our standard hours. It proposes that amendments need to be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on June 13, which is a full 10 days after the original date that was proposed for those amendments to be submitted and is eminently reasonable. All members of the committee are certainly already in a position where they have their amendments prepared, or can have their amendments prepared by Monday.

The motion then proposes that the committee proceed to clause-by-clause deliberations no later than June 14, in the morning, and provides at least nine hours for the committee to consider amendments before the amendments are deemed moved and submitted. The reason for this time limit is, once again, to prevent filibustering of each amendment. The goal would be to actually have a constructive discussion and vote on each amendment, and not spend nine hours filibustering the first amendment we discuss. Sections (b) and (c) of the motion then discuss how the bill would be treated at report stage and third reading.

If we want the bill to get to clause-by-clause consideration by the committee and not to be unreasonably filibustered, I feel we have no alternative but to do this. Therefore, I support this motion.

Now let me speak to the importance of this bill to many Canadians.

Bill C-11 addresses an important imbalance by requiring online audio and video broadcasting services to contribute to the achievement of important cultural policy objectives in the same way that traditional broadcasters always have. As early as the 1990s, concerns were raised about the potential for online streaming to disrupt the broadcast sector. An early decision was made not to place requirements on online streaming services then, given the relatively limited impact of those services at the time. We should remember

that broadcasting regulation only applies where it has a material impact on the broadcasting sector.

• (1005)

Today, the rationale to exempt online players simply no longer stands. The world of broadcasting has changed. We all know this. We regularly turn to online streaming services such as Netflix, Spotify, Crave, CBC Gem and Club Illico to access our music and television, in addition to more traditional services like radio and cable.

Times have changed. It has taken us over 20 years, but online streaming services are now the method through which a growing majority of Canadians access their content. There has been a drastic shift in Canada's broadcasting sector, which has directly impacted the level of support for Canadian programming and talent. Jobs are threatened. Continuing to regulate online and traditional broadcasters differently is not fair, and it is not sustainable. It is putting the support system for Canadian stories and music at risk.

• (1010)

[*Translation*]

To explain how modernizing the act will create sustainable funding for our cultural industries, it is important to look at how transformative digital disruption has been for broadcasting in Canada.

Let us recall how things were at the beginning of Canadian broadcasting. Radio stations and TV channels, as well as cable and satellite distribution companies, had to be Canadian owned and licensed. They were allowed, and still are, of course, to show foreign programs or carry American channels. In return for participating in Canada's broadcasting system and accessing our domestic market, they were required to fund, acquire or broadcast Canadian programs. They were also required to make programs accessible to Canadians and contribute to the creation of Canadian programming, including original programming in French.

Over time, broadcasters' demand for Canadian programs increased. The system was working as intended, and domestic creative industries flourished. Thousands of Canadians found careers in broadcasting as journalists, producers, actors, writers, directors, singers, makeup artists, set designers, showrunners and so much more. There was upskilling in Canada's cultural industries and investment in production clusters. We became known for our creative and technical talent.

[*English*]

Broadcasting plays a key role in supporting Canada's creative industries and evolving cultural identity. The Canadian broadcasting, film and video, and music and sound recording sectors are also important economic drivers. They contribute about \$14 billion to Canada's GDP and accounted for over 160,000 jobs in 2019.

The online streaming act would build on the economic and social benefits of the Broadcasting Act. It is about ensuring the continued viability of the Canadian broadcasting system. It is also about securing our cultural sovereignty. Canada is home to continuous innovation and emerging talent. It is imperative that we support our creators and creative industries, and this requires that all broadcasters in Canada compete on an equal footing. We must bring the online streaming services into the system.

As an artifact of outdated legislation, online broadcasters are not required to support Canadian music and storytelling or any other important broadcasting objective. As the revenues of traditional radio and television broadcasters stagnate and decline, so too will the level of support for Canadian music and stories, and for the creative professionals behind them.

This is not right. The implications for our broadcasting system, which is the bulwark of Canadian cultural expression, are grave. Canadian broadcasters have responded by cutting costs, and that has had a real impact on their service to Canadians, on their contribution to Canadian culture and on good middle-class jobs. As Canadians, we would be the poorer for not seeing homegrown talent supported and more diversity on screen and in song. Previous generations enjoyed Canadian programs knowing that others across the country were sharing a similar experience, and they are important for our culture and our cultural industries.

We are not alone. Countries across the world are making moves to protect and promote their cultural sovereignty. Unlike others, we share our borders with a dominating force in the realm of content creation.

What matters most, what matters now, is that Canadian voices, perspectives and stories remain relevant, heard and groundbreaking. The online streaming act is needed to achieve greater diversity in the broadcasting system and ensure the long-term viability of our broadcasting sector.

[*Translation*]

The online streaming act is not meant to create winners and losers or promote one platform rather than another. The goal is to enable the creative sector to keep evolving. Regardless of how Canadians access their content, they should be able to see themselves in stories and songs that reflect their experience and their communities.

The Broadcasting Act of 1991 got us to this point. Bill C-11 will move us forward. We cannot bury our heads in the sand and hope that our Canadian stories and unique perspectives will be shared without the protection and supports provided by the online streaming act. That will not work.

● (1015)

[*English*]

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, normally I quite enjoy my interactions with the member opposite, but I have to say that I am quite disturbed and quite disgusted by this measure.

We started with the fact that the heritage committee would get first dibs on all House resources, and we are studying some very

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important things in various committees today. The one I share with the member opposite, the operations committee, is studying the largest procurement in the government's history, which will be over \$200 billion. We have had that committee cancelled because of a lack of resources. We are studying, right now, in another committee the invocation of the Emergencies Act. It is the very first time this has been inflicted on the Canadian people, and we have seen members opposite caught out on misinformation about the invocation of the act. However, these are all going to be pushed aside so that the government can censor this Parliament and censor opposition on a censorship bill.

I am wondering this. How can the member possibly stand in the House and tell Canadians, and tell the House, that this censoring of Parliament is more important than the study on shipbuilding, more important than the study on the invocation of the Emergencies Act and all of these other items?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Speaker, first, let me correct the hon. member: This bill has nothing to do with censorship. Freedom of speech is protected in this country under section 2, and it is very clear that freedom of speech is protected under this bill.

Second, this bill would not be necessary except for the fact that members of the hon. member's party have continued to filibuster the committee, preventing us from ever getting to a vote on any of the many motions, amendments and subamendments the Conservatives are making. In meeting after meeting, and now I have seen it on Bill C-10 and Bill C-11, their end goal is for the committee not to be able to get to clause-by-clause. I think this frustration is shared not only by the Liberal members of the committee, but also by the NDP and Bloc members of the committee.

In the end, we are doing something that is asking the House to instruct the committee to do its job and get to clause-by-clause, so it is actually very democratic and parliamentary.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank and congratulate my colleague. He is a member of Parliament representing a riding in Quebec, which has a single official language, French. The riding he represents is also in Canada, which has two official languages, French and English. He gave about 10% of his speech in French, so I want to congratulate him, truly.

I am wondering whether my colleague is not a little embarrassed. We have been talking about Bill C-11 for two years now, if we include its predecessor, Bill C-10. We in the Bloc Québécois were ready and worked very hard to move this bill forward. The hon. member for Drummond worked very hard and was even congratulated by the Minister of Canadian Heritage for his work in committee on this bill.

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Before the election, the Bloc Québécois was even ready and willing to vote in favour of time allocation on Bill C-10, which it never does. We normally oppose time allocation, because we want democracy to work and we do not want to shut down debate. We were ready, but then an election came along, and Bill C-10 was postponed indefinitely. Now we have Bill C-11 before us.

The government has hurriedly cobbled together a motion that sort of paves the way for us to maybe pass this bill.

Is my colleague not a little embarrassed that after all those debates the Liberals prorogued Parliament a year and a half ago and called an election? Now they are throwing this motion on the table two weeks before the end of the session and telling us that we must adopt this motion or Bill C-11 will not be passed. For artists, that is shameful.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Speaker, I will begin by stating that I am not the least bit embarrassed to speak my mother tongue in the House of Commons. As an MP, I have the right, as do all the other MPs, to speak both of Canada's official languages. There is an anglophone community in Quebec, even if the hon. member does not like it. I will always protect the rights of francophone minorities outside Quebec, Quebec francophones and Quebec anglophones.

Also, no, I am not at all embarrassed, and I would advise my colleague to speak to the member for Drummond, who did very good work at the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage and in the House. I believe that he, too, is very frustrated with what is happening at committee.

• (1020)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my committee colleague. What he said is true: For weeks and weeks, the Conservatives have been obstructing everything. They basically broke the committee.

To me, the saddest part of this whole story happened on Wednesday when the Conservatives blocked us from holding two meetings next week to talk about serious allegations of sexual assault involving Hockey Canada.

[*English*]

I wanted to ask my colleague this. We were given the serious allegations around Hockey Canada, and the motion that I brought forward for Monday and Wednesday hearings, and the Conservatives were refusing even to have those hearings into what are serious allegations. Does it mean, according to my colleague, that the Conservatives have really broken the committee and that is why this motion is so important?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me thank the member for New Westminster—Burnaby for his always constructive work at committee. It is always a pleasure to work with him.

Second, I want to say that I carefully avoided in my speech even referring to what political party or what people were not allowing us to move forward. I never mentioned a word about the Conservatives once in my speech.

The end result here is that the member for New Westminster—Burnaby has, on multiple occasions, proposed motions, amend-

ments and subamendments to have us move to the Hockey Canada study at next Monday's meeting and next Wednesday's meeting. The reason we never were able to actually get there was because Conservative members filibustered those discussions. I am sure they want to hear from Hockey Canada. I am sure that all of us want to hear from Hockey Canada. We all agree what an important study that is, but the Conservative members on the committee do not want to get to the clause-by-clause consideration on Bill C-11. Because we had said that we would hear them in parallel, the Conservative members did not want to get to a vote on that.

It is frustrating, because I know that we all want to get to the Hockey Canada study as well.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is frustrating is the mischaracterization. The original motion on Hockey Canada actually came from the Conservative Party, just to make sure the record is straight.

As a person who has managed to sit in a couple of these meetings recently, I found the presentation by the member interesting because he spoke mostly about getting to clause-by-clause. What he did not talk about was the fact that the committee is in charge of its own destiny. Most committees will adjust their speaking and hearing schedules of witnesses as the testimony comes. This committee refuses to do so. The reality is that there are a lot more Canadians who want to speak on this bill. It is a part of the democratic process to hear from Canadians, so that during clause-by-clause consideration there will be better amendments. Perhaps that is something the government does not understand, because this is a very flawed bill.

I would like to ask the member this. In his speaking notes, he referred to content creators being able to access various funds to improve and support their quality like traditional broadcasters. Where exactly in the bill does it describe how a content creator is able to do that?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the hon. member is going to let me speak to the question of witnesses.

Originally, three of the four parties at the committee thought that a certain number of hours would be sufficient to hear from witnesses. The Conservative members then proposed 20 hours, which was more than the other parties thought needed to be given to witnesses, given that many of these witnesses had already been there for Bill C-10. However, the rest of the members of the committee agreed to accede to the request from the Conservatives and provide 20 hours to hear from witnesses. At that point, the members from the other parties felt that we had heard from a sufficient number of witnesses and the Conservative members disagreed. The majority of the committee believed we had heard from a sufficient number of witnesses. As a result, instead of just coming to a vote and deciding by majority whether we had heard from a sufficient number of witnesses, there was a filibuster of each and every motion to try to move to clause-by-clause on the vote.

If the hon. member had been there at the first meeting, he would know that was actually the history of the committee.

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[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert reminded us that there was a time allocation motion on the former Bill C-10. We supported that motion insofar as it was a bit more “step by step”. We were trying to break the impasse at committee to be able to continue deliberating, including in the House or on other aspects of the bill.

However, the motion before us today deadlocks the entire debate when the situation is much less urgent. This is not the eve of an election, unless my colleague knows something we do not.

I understand the urgency of resolving the issue, especially when we think of the money traditional media is losing. However, I would like to understand how we ended up with this sledgehammer of a motion when that was not even the case last time for Bill C-10.

● (1025)

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Saint-Jean, who always speaks so eloquently in the House.

I think that what it boils down to is that this decision was made after we saw what was happening in committee. I truly believe that, were it not for this motion, the committee would not be able to do the clause-by-clause consideration of the bill because it is always being blocked in everything it tries to do whenever it comes time to vote on anything.

Unfortunately, the House had to insist that the committee proceed to clause-by-clause consideration of this bill, and that is why it has come to this.

[*English*]

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to open by sharing a quote, which states:

We need to discuss why the government does not listen at committee stage to anything anyone says. It does not accept any amendments from anyone at all, and then it complains that the opposition refuses to allow public consultation.

The quote goes on to say:

We are absolutely not opposed, but we think we should listen to experts and to people who tell the minister what the government should be doing with the bill, but nobody listens in this government.

Do members know who said that? It was the member for Vancouver Centre, the current chair of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. What she said in 2011, we agree with. The current government does not listen. The government does not accept amendments. The government does not accept the testimony and advice of digital-first creators and experts on communications and on the Internet. The government does not listen.

We have heard a lot from the opposition parties that we have had 20 hours of witnesses. The fact is that this committee did not begin studying this bill until May 24: That was 17 days ago. Today, we have Motion No. 16. In the House lately, we are all used to time allocation and closure motions, but this is not just a time allocation motion. This is not just a closure motion. This is a guillotine motion on steroids. This is a motion that not only forces this bill through committee stage and clause-by-clause, but also through the final stages in the House itself. It provides for only one day at report

stage, one single day, and there is no guarantee that day has any more than an hour or an hour and a half of debate in the House.

Report stage, as it currently stands, would likely fall on next Friday, meaning that the total time the House would have to debate it, at its very maximum, would be about 150 minutes. There would be 150 minutes to discuss report stage amendments to the largest and most comprehensive updates to the Broadcasting Act in more than 30 years. The government thinks that two and a half hours in the House is sufficient to do that.

As Her Majesty's loyal opposition, we have a duty to play our role: to criticize when warranted, to make amendments and to approve when necessary. That is what we, as Her Majesty's loyal opposition, want to do. We have been clear throughout the process and the debate on this bill and its predecessor bill in the previous Parliament, Bill C-10, that we believe the Broadcasting Act needs to be updated.

The Broadcasting Act dates to 1991. It is a time when VCRs were king, when we had to borrow VHS tapes from the grocery store or the corner store and when the member for South Shore—St. Margarets claims he had hair. I will look for photographic evidence of that. I will point out, because this is relevant, the member was a senior staff member in that government of the day when this legislation first came through. If we consult Hansard from that time and review the comments and commentary by the minister at the time, Minister Masse, we will see that in that time and at that place, the legislation to update the Broadcasting Act and the lead-up to 1991, when it took effect, was done with the broad-based support and consultation not only of members of the House, but also of Canadians. It recognized the challenges that were being faced at that time by broadcasters, by Canadians and by individuals who wanted to see Canadian content creations from across our country.

● (1030)

[*Translation*]

We want to see the major exhibitions and creations of Quebec creators, and we want them to succeed here and around the world.

[*English*]

We want to see that success, and that is why we are not opposed to necessary updates to the Broadcasting Act. In fact, in our last election platform in 2021, during that unnecessary election that gave us a repeat minority Parliament, we committed to updating the Broadcasting Act, but we committed to doing so in a way that ensured digital first creators were able to succeed and that did not unfairly regulate user-generated content. Now, here we are today with Motion No. 16, which is forcing this bill through Parliament.

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I wish I could say I was angry. I wish I could say I was mad. I am not angry, and I am not mad, but I am disappointed. I am disappointed the government would use such an arbitrary and draconian measure as Motion No. 16.

My friend from Edmonton West pointed this out, but it is worth reaffirming what this motion would actually do when it comes to committee resources. Motion No. 16 states “the committee shall have the first priority for the use of House resources for committee meetings”. Members in the House know the hard work interpreters do each and every day. I know sometimes I have difficulty understanding myself in one language, let alone having that translated and interpreted to a second language. The interpreters in this place and in committee do exceptional work interpreting into English and French each and every day, and they deserve our respect.

Over the past two years, the strain and workplace injuries the interpreters in this place have experienced are unacceptable. It is entirely unacceptable. The two official languages of this place, the two official languages of this country, must be respected. It is the interpreters who enable that. It is the interpreters who allow that to happen. However, each and every day we see challenges with resources. We see challenges with the Translation Bureau being able to provide us with sufficient numbers of people who can interpret at committee.

Under this motion, under Motion No. 16, only one committee shall have priority for committee resources. Only one committee shall be able to have its meetings occur no matter what, which is the Canadian heritage committee, so the government can force through its flawed pieces of legislation. No other committee can have that priority.

My friend from South Shore—St. Margarets, on the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, would not have priority for committee meetings, and meetings keep being cancelled. My friend from Elgin—Middlesex—London, who chairs the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, would not have priority for House resources. Her committee meetings would be cancelled if the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage needed those resources.

My friend from Edmonton West on the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates has already noted his committees have been cancelled, when they are looking at multi-billion dollar procurement. Those meetings could again be cancelled so the government can push through its repeat legislation, Bill C-11, which was formerly Bill C-10.

If it were only that matter alone, I would say it was sufficient to vote down this flawed motion, but it gets worse. Not only does this motion have a negative impact on each and every other committee, but it also rushes through what ought to be a deliberative process. Subparagraph (ii) states, “amendments to the bill, including from independent members, shall be submitted to the clerk of the committee by 11:59 p.m. on June 13, 2022, and distributed to committee members in both official languages by 9:00 a.m. on June 14, 2022”.

• (1035)

I am sure we are all probably thinking, well, that is Monday, and today is Friday. How does the government expect this motion to

take effect by Monday and have amendments due by Monday night? Not only is this a guillotine motion, but this is a guillotine motion that will be guillotined. By the end of business today, a minister of the Crown will stand in their place and state that a minister of the Crown will introduce closure. A minister of the Crown will stand in this place and state that agreement could not be reached and closure will be necessary on Monday.

On Monday, the first order of business, when orders of the day are called, will be a closure motion on a closure motion on steroids, which means that debate will not be further adjourned and that, at 8:00 p.m. on Monday evening, the bells will ring. The Speaker will call in the members, the bells will ring, and at 8:30 p.m. on Monday night, the House will pronounce its judgment on Motion No. 16.

At midnight, under the terms of this motion, amendments would be due, which would be three and a half hours after this motion passes. Amendments on the first update to the Broadcasting Act in 31 years, a complicated and complex matter, would be due in three and half hours.

The government likes to talk about work-life balance, but we, as politicians, are used to this. We are elected. We are well compensated. We are ready and able to work hard, but let us talk about the administration staff of this place. Let us talk about the clerks of our committee, who are now being told that at midnight on Monday night they have to be ready, able and available to accept amendments from each recognized party and from any independent member. This is at 11:59 p.m. on Monday night, and then they have to ensure that each of those amendments are then distributed by 9:00 a.m. the next morning to members of the committee. That is nine hours and one minute, through the dead of night, for the committee clerk and the committee staff to make that happen.

Members, the employees of the House and the employees of Parliament deserve better. They should not be forced into that situation.

It gets worse. After receiving those amendments at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, June 14, and this is from the motion, “the committee shall proceed to clause-by-clause consideration of the bill no later than 11:59 a.m. on June 14, 2022”.

Committee members will receive the amendments from all parties and from independent members at 9:00 a.m., and then two hours and 59 minutes later, they will proceed to clause by clause. We will be forced, as parliamentarians and as members of the committee, to pronounce judgment on potentially dozens of amendments that we will have seen for the first time only hours before.

An hon. member: That is shameful abuse.

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, it is shameful abuse.

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We as parliamentarians owe it to our constituents, our stakeholders and Canadians from coast to coast to do our due diligence, evaluate amendments, debate amendments and ensure the amendments being proposed achieve what is in the best interests of Canadian creators, Canadian viewers and Canadian consumers.

Could members do that, with dozens of amendments and dozens of clauses, in two hours and 59 minutes? It is not acceptable. It is unreasonable, and it is not possible.

I will tell us what could happen. What could happen is the same thing that happened with Bill C-10, where the Liberals tried to force through amendments that do not improve the bill but in fact worsened the bill. That is what happened with Bill C-10. The Liberals, out of the blue, moved an amendment that took away the exception for user-generated content.

• (1040)

As an aside, we see in this bill, and I will talk about it a little later, an exception to the exception for user-generated content, so the Liberals have clearly not quite learned their lesson when it comes to user-generated content and the importance of protecting it.

Here is another issue: We have the unique situation where there are members of the House who are not represented at committee. I am speaking about independent members, members from unaffiliated parties, such as members from the Green Party, who do not have the opportunity, or I would say the privilege, to sit on committees.

In traditional times, those members are able to come to committee, any committee reviewing pieces of legislation, and submit amendments and move those amendments during the clause by clause.

This programming motion, this guillotine motion on steroids, in subparagraph (iv) says, “suggested amendments filed by independent members pursuant to subparagraph (a)(ii) shall be deemed to have been proposed during the clause-by-clause consideration of the bill”.

It says “deemed to have been proposed”. The member for Kitchener Centre and the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands will not even have the opportunity to appear before committee and move their amendments to this piece of legislation, which is the largest update to the Broadcasting Act in over three decades.

This is like a bad novel. It keeps getting worse and worse. Obviously, it is a bad novel written in a foreign country because Canadians only produce great novels, but this is a bad novel because it keeps getting worse as we go. Subparagraph (v) states:

if the committee has not completed its clause-by-clause consideration of the bill by 9:00 p.m. on June 14, 2022, all remaining amendments submitted to the committee shall be deemed moved, and the Chair shall put the question, forthwith and successively without further debate, on all remaining clauses and amendments submitted to the committee, as well as each and every question necessary to dispose of the clause-by-clause consideration of the bill

That means no debate. Not just limited debate, but not a word of debate on a clause-by-clause or amendments at clause-by-clause. Our job, as parliamentarians and as elected officials, is to debate legislation. It is to debate legislation on behalf of our constituents and on behalf of Canadians.

Under this motion, Motion No. 16, each and every question necessary will be put without debate. It means that we cannot even suggest minor amendments to proposals. We cannot suggest to the Chair that perhaps an amendment may be out of order based on various reasons, including the parent act rule. That would not be possible because this proposal does not provide for it.

This proposal states that there shall be no debate, no debate on the largest update to the Broadcasting Act since 1991. No debate on a piece of legislation that could affect each and every Canadian who listens to music online, watches videos online or creates content that is posted online. There will be no debate on clause-by-clause or amendments after 9:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 14, 2022.

Mr. Rick Perkins: What are they afraid of?

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, my friend from South Shore—St. Margarets asks what they are afraid of. The problem is that they are afraid of Canadians. They are afraid of the viewpoints and considerations of Canadians. They are afraid of hearing more testimony from stakeholders.

In the last couple of days alone, we have had requests from dozens of stakeholders, organizations, individuals and businesses that would be directly affected by this bill. We have yet to hear from APTN, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, an amazing organization. We have not heard from them at committee on this matter.

• (1045)

I find subparagraph (a)(vi) of this motion intriguing. I find it intriguing because when committee reports and legislation are reported back to the House, who are they normally reported by? I see my friend from Elgin—Middlesex—London, who is a committee chair. When the the Standing Committee on the Status of Women reports back to the House, it is the chair of the committee who does so. The chair of a standing committee reports bills, legislation and reports to the House. Sometimes the vice-chair will have a supplementary or dissenting report, and in rare cases, a vice-chair will report a bill back if the chair of the committee is unavailable. That is the typical traditional process: The chair or the vice-chair of a committee reports a bill back. However, Motion No. 16 expresses non-confidence in the chair of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. It states:

a member of the committee may report the bill to the House by depositing it with the Clerk of the House, who shall notify the House leaders of the recognized parties and independent members

The motion by the government shows non-confidence in the chair of the committee's ability to report the bill to the House.

Government Orders

Not only does the government not have confidence in the chair of its own committee, its own member, but it is not even following the traditional process for submitting reports to the House. Following question period today we will have Routine Proceedings. The rubric of Routine Proceedings includes the tabling of reports from committees. That is the process for tabling a report. Motion No. 16 does not do that. It just says that any member can take the report and give it to the Clerk rather than following the usual practice of the House. I look forward to hearing the justification from Liberal members of the committee as to why they have lost confidence in the member for Vancouver Centre to fulfill her duties as chair of the committee.

That is not the end of the motion. Motion No. 16 would be bad enough if it forced this bill through committee stage and clause-by-clause. However, there is more.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: There can't be more.

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, the member for Northumberland—Peterborough South says there cannot be more, but there is more, unfortunately.

The government has tools available to it in the House to force through legislation. On motions it can use what is called closure, and on pieces of legislation it can use time allocation. That is the traditional process. If Bill C-11 were to be reported back to the House and the government felt that it was not proceeding as fast as it would like, it could move time allocation. However, it did not. At least with time allocation there is an opportunity to put questions to the minister for a period of 30 minutes. It is not a lot and it is not sufficient, but at least there is a process. Motion No. 16 pre-emptively time allocates this piece of legislation before clause-by-clause happens, before the process even begins.

I want to quote paragraph (b) of the motion. It states:

not more than one sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration of the bill at report stage, and that, 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders that day, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment

• (1050)

That means one day for Bill C-11 at report stage.

Canadians listening at home may not quite grasp the severity of this provision. In the House, there are certain days of the week when government orders are debated for a lengthy period of time, for multiple hours. Sometimes when the government moves time allocation, it will say five hours. This is still, in my opinion, not enough time for an important piece of legislation, but five hours is more than what is foreseen for this piece of legislation.

If Bill C-11 is called before the House at report stage on a Wednesday afternoon or on a Friday, there will be not more than two and a half hours of debate in the House on each and every report stage amendment that may be brought forward. There is no discussion to extend hours. There is no discussion of additional time for Canadians to hear from their elected representatives.

I know that in my caucus, my Conservative colleagues want to discuss this bill. Many of them have eagerly volunteered to sit in on

deliberations at the Canadian heritage committee because they have an interest in this piece of legislation. However, they have not had a chance to speak to it in the House of Commons. Why? It is because at second reading the government moved time allocation and they did not have a chance to speak.

My friend from Cumberland—Colchester is here today listening intently because he wanted to speak and did not have the chance. It is the same for my friend from Beauce. He has not had a chance to speak to this piece of legislation, and neither has my friend from Calgary Signal Hill. Each of them has been denied the opportunity to speak to this bill, and now they will be pre-emptively denied the opportunity to speak to the bill because of the limited time available for it.

That is not all. The final paragraph of this motion time allocates the bill at third reading. Paragraph (c) of Motion No. 16 states:

on the day the bill is considered at the third reading stage, the ordinary hour of daily adjournment shall be midnight, and that, 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders that day, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

That means one day of debate for the third and final reading of this piece of legislation.

I will remind members of the House that this bill only got to committee and began the committee process on May 24. Now, less than four weeks later, the government wishes to see this bill arrive at third reading and pass without meaningful debate in this place and without meaningful debate during clause-by-clause in committee.

Earlier this week, the Minister of Canadian Heritage appeared before the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. I was in the chair for that meeting, and as members know, the chair does not actively participate in the debate. However, I listened intently to the Minister of Canadian Heritage in his opening comments. He made the comment that when the committee was finished its process, there would be more debate in the House of Commons at report stage, at third reading and then in the Senate. Then, just three days later, on notice on the Order Paper was this guillotine motion, which does not fulfill the minister's commitment to allowing more debate on this bill.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage and I get along very well, so I take him at his word that he was committed to more debate. Unfortunately, the government House leader's failure to manage the legislative agenda of this place means that our colleagues, members of the House, will not have the opportunity to fulfill their duty as parliamentarians, to fulfill their duty to the people they represent.

• (1055)

It is interesting that with the current government, what was old is new again, because in the previous Parliament there was a similar motion. It was Motion No. 10, and it also dealt with a bill, Bill C-10, the predecessor to this bill. It forced Bill C-10 through committee, forced it through the House of Commons and forced it into the Senate.

Had the government actually been committed to passing that piece of legislation, it could have, but something else intervened: the political interests of the Prime Minister. We saw the political ambitions and self-interest of the Prime Minister in his attempt to try to win a majority government during a pandemic, when he and every Liberal member on that side had committed to not calling an election during a pandemic.

They saw an opportunity to try to get their majority, and they did not. However, what happened is that every piece of legislation that was before the House or the Senate died on the Order Paper, including the previous Bill C-10. To hear Liberal members and ministers talk about having to expedite legislation through the House and through committee because it has to get through is simply horse feathers. It is horse feathers because they had an opportunity to do so but killed their own legislation by forcing an unnecessary election, which included the dissolution of Parliament.

However, the Liberals do not learn their lesson. These undemocratic processes keep coming back time and time again, and we have seen this with different pieces of legislation. I know I have heard Liberal MPs talk about the other matters we need to get to. Our Conservative Party put forward a proposal at the heritage committee to prioritize a review of Hockey Canada. We put forward a motion to prioritize the review of the disgusting situation we have learned about from four years ago. That should be our priority at committee. That is what we as parliamentarians should be looking at.

I see that I have one minute before question period, and as I assume I will have time to resume my comments after question period, I will leave with a few interim closing comments.

Canadians expect us to do better. Canadians expect us to review legislation. They expect opposition MPs to improve flawed legislation, and that is what we as Conservative members of Parliament will do. Regardless of the outcome of this motion, we will do what we can to protect Canadians, to support our creators and to ensure that Canadian creators are able to succeed at home and around the globe.

I look forward to resuming after question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1100)

[English]

WILLIAM DAVIS MINERS' MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to commemorate William Davis Miners' Memorial Day, which is observed every year on June 11 in mining communities across Nova Scotia.

In the spring of 1925, coal miners in Cape Breton went on strike to protest poor working conditions and wages. In response to that strike, the community's access to food, water and electricity was cut off by the company of the day. On June 11, hundreds of brave coal miners took action to restore those essential needs to the community. Unfortunately, 37-year-old William Davis was shot and killed,

making the ultimate sacrifice so that those in the community could have a better life.

On Davis Day, mining communities take time to remember William Davis and those who have been lost to mining accidents in mines such as Westray, Springhill, Inverness, No. 26 Colliery in Glace Bay, people like my grandfather, Billy Kelloway, who was killed in No. 20 Colliery in Glace Bay.

In my riding of Cape Breton—Canso and across Nova Scotia, this day serves as a reminder of the determination, the sacrifice, the bravery, the leadership and the resiliency of miners and their families everywhere.

* * *

[Translation]

LOTBINIÈRE RELAY FOR LIFE

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was very proud to agree to be the honorary chair for the Canadian Cancer Society Relay for Life in Lotbinière, which will take place on June 11, 2022, in Saint-Apollinaire.

At Relay for Life events, which first began in 1999, participants of all ages gather and take turns walking around a track or path to symbolize the perseverance of those affected by cancer and to send them a message of hope.

The money collected goes toward supporting innovative research projects on all types of cancer, providing the largest support network to help people better manage life with cancer, shaping public health policies, and providing trusted cancer information for all Canadians.

I invite all members to come walk with me at the Lotbinière Relay for Life and to support this noble cause that is very dear to my heart.

* * *

[English]

BEECHVILLE WALKETTES

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend a wonderful group in my riding, the Beechville Walkettes, for their commitment to supporting the health and wellness of seniors and of all residents in the community.

This group was started by Beechville resident Paula Blackmore to lead regular neighbourhood walks and encourage folks to get some exercise, socialize across generations, tell jokes and check up on their neighbours. In this way, they are countering social isolation and supporting their older friends and neighbours to age in place with a greater sense of security and support.

Our government recognizes the value of helping seniors age well at home, and that is why I was so happy on Wednesday when I heard the Minister of Seniors launch the age well at home initiative to support the community organizations that provide the services seniors need in order to enjoy their golden years at home.

Statements by Members

I encourage all organizations to consider applying for this program, and I want to thank everyone who is working to ensure that our seniors feel safe, valued and supported in our communities.

* * *

[Translation]

ALFRED-PELLAN

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this parliamentary session is coming to a close, and I want to take this opportunity to highlight all the progress made for my constituents in Alfred-Pellan.

In addition to business here in the House, including 165 interventions, 136 votes and eight bills passed, I am pleased with the concrete results we have achieved in Alfred-Pellan, in the form of dozens of thousands of dollars for seniors through the new horizons program, 332 jobs for young people and for 87 businesses and organizations, more than \$1.2 million for Canada summer jobs, and more than \$11.3 million to build affordable housing, not to mention the neighbourhood parties, community cleanups, walks in support of medical research, support for essential and health care workers, support for our SMEs, and support for our local farmers and producers. There is a long list, but as we are running out of time, I look forward to spending the summer with my constituents in Alfred-Pellan.

Mr. Speaker, I want to wish you and all of my colleagues in the House a good summer.

* * *

[English]

OPIOIDS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, across Canada, many are losing loved ones to toxic drug overdoses. Last month, I met with service providers from across my riding, and we discussed a health-based approach to substance abuse and Bill C-216 from the member for Courtenay—Alberni, which was sadly voted down by many Liberals and the Conservatives.

Feedback was clear: Rural and remote communities have very specific challenges. There is a lack of access to basic health care services, compounded by a lack of access to supports for families and for people struggling with substance abuse. There is a lack of affordable housing and often no supportive housing, putting stabilized people at risk of returning to the streets, where it is impossible for them to stay clean. There is a lack of support for families struggling to support their loved ones who suffer from addiction, and the stigma silences and stops addicts and their loved ones from getting access to the help they need.

I want to thank the many organizations that came to speak with me on that day, and I am so grateful for their dedication to saving the lives of Canadians.

• (1105)

BAPS SWAMINARAYAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the inauguration of the BAPS Swaminarayan Research Institute on the premises of BAPS Hindu Mandir in Toronto last weekend. The June 4 inauguration marks the centenary celebrations of His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj, creator of this famous Hindu mandir.

Under the spiritual leadership of His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj and guided by his message of *vasudheva kutumbakam*, meaning “the entire world is my family”, this research institute is dedicated to advancing quality research, learning and expression of the Hindu heritage, its philosophies and denominations and its affiliated languages, cultures, and rich collection of literature.

As the institute pursues excellence in research, I am hopeful that we will see a flourishing of the values of peace, love and harmony that are central to Hindu practice and tradition. We are proud of the achievements of the Hindu community here in Canada and of the success that has enabled them to grow their work through the creation of this institute as it begins its work.

* * *

ATTACK ON THE GOLDEN TEMPLE

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today marks the end of the 10 days of terror endured by the Sikh community from June 1 to June 10, 1984. I still remember as a young child seeing the pain and grief of my parents as they learned of the Indian government's invasion of the holy site of the Darbar Sahib, known as the Golden Temple.

As thousands of people gathered to pray, the military hit with heavy artillery, machine guns and tanks. Many innocent lives were lost. The Sikh Reference Library was burned down and the Darbar Sahib complex was destroyed.

The events that occurred in June of 1984 led to further unrest in government-sanctioned mosques, which resulted in thousands of men and women and children being tortured, raped and murdered based on their identity, leaving a scar on the hearts of Sikhs everywhere.

Today, I remember the victims and families who suffered this trauma and I stand with the Sikh community in seeking justice, truth and reconciliation.

* * *

LONDON HOME BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the members of the London Home Builders' Association. I recently attended their president's industry gala dinner and heard perspectives on what is needed to address housing affordability and supply.

The evening also honoured leaders who have made significant contributions to the local and national industry. I am speaking of Peder Madsen of CCR Building and Remodelling, the incoming president; Sue Wastell of Wastell Homes, president for 2021; Dave Stimac of Ironstone Building Company, president for 2020; Toby Stolee of Sifton Properties, president for 2019; and Jared Zaifman, named CEO in 2021. I certainly also want to honour the contributions of Lois Langdon, who retired as CEO after 25 years of service.

A home is more than just a structure: It is a place where Canadians raise their families and forge unforgettable memories. That is because of home builders. Let us get more quality and affordable homes built quickly and let us see all levels of government and professional associations like the London Home Builders' Association work together to that end. I look forward to working with them.

* * *

EVENTS IN KELOWNA—LAKE COUNTRY

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in Kelowna—Lake Country, June is a busy month filled with recreational activities, heritage, arts, culture and celebrations. It is Italian Heritage Month, Indigenous History Month, Pride Month, and Filipino Heritage Month. The Lake Country Creekside Theatre and the many organizations in Kelowna's cultural district have shows, exhibits and performances for everyone to enjoy. The Kelowna Wine Country half marathon includes a scenic run with a beverage and music festival. There are also many sports and recreation activities, including cheering for our very own Kelowna Falcons.

We then lead into Canada Day and the celebrations that are finally back this year. The Rotary Club of Lake Country starts the day off at Swalwell Park with a pancake breakfast. Folkfest at Prospera Place includes the giant cake cutting, and I will have a tent set up to hand out Canada flag items and kids' colouring sheets.

I wish locals and visitors to our beautiful area well, whether volunteering, watching or participating in activities or celebrations, and I hope to see everyone at one of our many community events this summer.

* * *

● (1110)

TRANS AND DIVERSE-GENDER HEALTH CARE

Ms. Jenna Sudds (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I recently met with Nicki Lyons-MacFarlane, chair of the Imprint Youth Association in Fredericton. They shared with me how the pandemic has put a strain on gender-affirming care, and wait-lists to access trans health care services are growing.

Sadly, for many trans and diverse-gender Canadians, the pandemic has made it difficult to safely access gender-affirming clothing and items as well, especially in rural communities and for those living in unsupportive households.

Trans health care is a health equity issue. Trans and gender-diverse Canadians need to know that our health care system will serve their needs, advance equality and see them for who they are.

Statements by Members

As anti-trans sentiments and legislation have proliferated around the world in recent months, it is important for Canada to remain an ally to the trans community to ensure they feel safe, heard and empowered.

* * *

2022 COLD LAKE AIR SHOW

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Cold Lake Air Show is a not-to-be-missed event of the summer. It brings together the best of civilian aviation, a spectacular show of the Royal Canadian Air Force and of course our warm northeastern Alberta hospitality.

Over the weekend, people will have the chance to watch the Canadian Forces Snowbirds dance across the sky and the Canadian Armed Forces SkyHawks parachute team perform daring parachute performances. In addition, there will be the CF-18 Demonstration Team, the U.S. Air Force F-22 Raptor Demonstration Team and so much more. If someone would rather see aircraft up close and personal, they need not worry, because there will be static displays of some of the coolest planes and helicopters.

This family-friendly, fun-filled weekend is so much more than just aerial shows and flyovers. There will be bouncy castles, live music, a classic car show, beer gardens and food trucks, just to name a few of the other entertainment options.

I would like to officially welcome each and every one of the members to come and join us on July 16 and 17 for the 2022 Cold Lake Air Show.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am going to read an e-mail from one of my constituents.

It says,

Hello, Dr. Ellis... I am writing to you about being a senior and being cold and hungry...and do not know where to turn.

I have gotten myself into a problem using credit to pay for groceries...because there is not enough money, after paying bills with old age and the supplement, to feed myself. Yesterday it was declined in the grocery store and I am hungry. My mortgage is low, but my power bill is high as is the cable/phone, which one has to have, especially in the case of emergency.

I also have a line of credit and another credit card and put payments on every month, but that leaves me in overdraft, after paying bills on the first.... I am not understanding how seniors can live these days with the cost of everything and it is not only me, that is hungry and cold.

Statements by Members

I could try to find work, but then my income supplement would cease, sooooo, how would that equate...hmmm...I still have a mortgage... but am living in a trailer, which I could sell...but where would I go????? It is insane after working my whole life, to be in a position of not being able to feed myself or keep warm...I have no answer....Thank you for listening....Catherine.

Sadly, the current Liberal government refuses to address the cost-of-living crisis facing all Canadians.

* * *

TERRY FOX HUMANITARIAN AWARD RECIPIENT

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Cassandra Gillen on being one of the young recipients of this year's Terry Fox Humanitarian Award.

Cassandra's passion for social action began at the tender age of five when her adolescent cousin fell ill. Cassandra asked for money instead of gifts for her birthday so she could donate to the Montreal Children's Hospital.

Today, Cassandra's volunteerism is extensive. She is a Special Olympics coach, co-leader of two Girl Guides units, a member of the organization's National Youth Council and Provincial Quebec Council and a member of the City of Pointe-Claire Youth Advisory Board.

Cassandra's humanitarian spirit extends beyond our borders. She has raised money to help build a school in India, physically helped build a school in Ecuador, raised money to pay for a clean water system in India and provided meals to schoolchildren in Haiti.

I am proud to represent in this House a recipient of this prestigious honour that carries the name of one of our greatest national heroes.

* * *

● (1115)

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, June is National Indigenous History Month, and Canadians must have the courage to put truth before reconciliation as we confront our past.

Canada was just three years old when it waged its first war in the west at the Red River Métis settlement, a peaceful trading and farming village. Then again, in 1885, the government would launch a second war farther in the west at Batoche, resulting in the largest mass execution of indigenous leaders in Canada's history, including those of Louis Riel and Wandering Spirit.

During this time, and as a means to clear the plains, the government would install its most insidious policy: that of the residential schools. A policy from this place, it intended to "kill the Indian in the child", as stated by then prime minister Sir John A. Macdonald.

These attacks on our children never stopped. From the sixties scoop to today's child and family services and the lack of clean water and housing, let us not repeat the past.

[Translation]

VÉRONIQUE HIVON

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today is Véronique Hivon's last day in the Quebec National Assembly. Ms. Hivon is the member for Joliette.

Véronique is, to me, the quintessential politician. She supports independence because she loves Quebecers. She works across party lines to bring her ideas to fruition. She is engaged and she works hard, always in pursuit of the common good.

That is how she is in Joliette too. She is always there, everywhere, always listening. Véronique raises up everyone around her. It is no surprise that her riding office and her Parti Québécois executive are top-notch.

I learned a lot from Véronique. We started out as active Parti Québécois members, and we served as elected representatives together. For all those reasons, I want to thank her. I thank her for everything she has done for the people of Joliette and all Quebecers. I thank her for inspiring us, for showing us that there is a high road in politics, and for seeking the common good over and above personal or party interest.

In the immortal words of René Lévesque, see you next time, Véronique.

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[English]

VACCINE MANDATES

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not often that colleagues will hear me give praise to the normally silent voices within the Liberal caucus. However, after reading The Hill Times' piece this morning by Abbas Rana, which says a "massive majority of the Liberal caucus wants the Prime Minister to drop federal COVID mandates", I wanted to sincerely thank those who spoke out against the Prime Minister's Office in an effort to do the right thing.

It is the right thing. I am certain that many Liberal MPs have also heard of the severe hardship the Prime Minister's spite over science and divisive politics on this has created among many of their constituents. We all have. There are citizens who have been unable to care for ailing parents in another part of Canada and grandparents who were unable to visit new members of the family. Being unable to say goodbye to a loved one is cruel.

We know the Prime Minister has refused in the past to listen to his caucus and, worse, seldom consults with them. On this matter, let us be united. This is about the citizens we represent. I commend those Liberal MPs who are putting those people ahead of the Prime Minister's divisive political agenda. There are times when we must unite instead of divide, and I would like to sincerely thank those Liberal MPs who support ending the mandates.

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[Translation]

HAITI

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to draw the attention of the House to the humanitarian crisis in Haiti. Political instability and violence are exacerbating the humanitarian situation. That has had a significant impact on the Haitian community in my riding.

Canada has committed \$70 million for projects in Haiti that will improve health services for Haitians, address food insecurity and build security capacity as well as infrastructure. Canada will continue to support the Haitian people in their efforts to work towards a more democratic, secure and inclusive future.

I want to thank the Haitian community for its contribution to Canada and its care for the citizens of Haiti.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

HEALTH

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today's headline says it all: "Massive majority of Liberal caucus wants the Prime Minister to drop federal COVID mandates."

The report says that the Liberal member for Yukon, a doctor and former medical officer of health, has given multiple presentations at Liberal caucus meetings on why the mandates need to be dropped. The member is a real doctor, not a spin doctor, but has the Prime Minister listened to him? No.

Finally, the incoherence of a policy that is punishing and limiting the rights of Canadians is being realized by Liberal MPs.

The Prime Minister will not listen to Canadians, but will he listen to his caucus?

• (1120)

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when are the Conservatives going to realize that COVID-19 is not over? The Conservatives are just in denial about the reality of this pandemic. We have seen, numerous times, Conservatives trying to immediately remove all federal COVID-19 restrictions.

While we are in a much better place today than we were previously, this pandemic is not over and we must be prepared for any potential future scenarios.

Oral Questions

Our government will continue to assess the evolving situation at home and globally, will monitor data and will adjust border measures as required.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is becoming clearer by the day that these mandates and restrictions have nothing to do with science or evidence-based decision-making. They are all about control.

They are about the Prime Minister controlling Canadians travelling to see their families, controlling businesses recovering from COVID and controlling Liberal MPs by forcing them to be bit actors in his COVID theatre. People can watch them, when the cameras come on them, and how quickly they put on their masks. There is no coherent reason for these mandates to continue, other than control.

Will the Prime Minister admit that he has lost the plot and that this is all about controlling Canadians?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, vaccines remain an important tool in stopping the spread of COVID-19 and variants, but the Conservatives just cannot seem to make up their minds about vaccinations.

For example, the member for Yorkton—Melville claims that the government has a secret agenda, after refusing to get vaccinated, and that there is some sort of conspiracy theory.

Another Conservative, the member for Niagara West, wants to ban all mRNA vaccines. Those are the same ones that have saved millions of lives worldwide.

This type of rhetoric is divisive and it is harmful. All members of the House should stop trying to spread disinformation. We all have an obligation to share good information and ensure that our constituents have what they need in order to go and get vaccinated.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberal government continues to ram through legislation that has criminals jumping for joy. Criminals who steal people's wallets at gunpoint, shoot up the neighbourhood, traffic in weapons or use a gun in their other criminal activities are one step closer to reduced sentences.

Liberals claim it is to address overrepresentation of Black and indigenous people in the corrections system, but they ignore that these same communities are the ones most often victimized by gun crime.

How is it that the government lacks so much compassion for victims and people at risk of violent crime?

Oral Questions

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is moving forward to make the criminal justice system safer for communities, make it better for victims and make it much more fair and just. What we are doing with Bill C-5 is attacking overrepresentation in the criminal justice system of Black and indigenous people by taking those offenders who do not pose a risk to public security and making conditional sentence orders available to more crimes and by reducing around 20 minimum mandatory penalties. We are also raising the sentences for serious—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. whip for the official opposition has the floor.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I hear from my constituents that their faith in the justice system is absolutely shaken. Rural communities repeatedly targeted by repeat offenders want serious action. Instead, the government is going to let the people who are beating, robbing and shooting at them stay out of jail for these and even more serious offences. This will make things worse.

The government's justice reforms fail to address overrepresentation of minority groups in the prison system and they also fail to enhance public safety. Why does the government not do something useful instead of just virtue signalling all the time?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth on what the hon. member is saying. Bill C-21 attacks violent crime, attacks gang crime, attacks trafficking in arms and raises the maximum penalties available for certain sentences. If he is talking about repeat offenders, those offenders do not have access to minimum mandatory penalties. In fact, they go the other way. Public safety is not going to be negatively affected. In fact, it is going to be enhanced by allowing for serious offences to be treated seriously and for more flexibility at—

• (1125)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. opposition House leader.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since the Liberals like importing American policies so much, in the 1990s the United States experimented with a tax on boats very similar to the one in this year's Liberal budget, but Congress ended up removing it just two years later because it was killing jobs and destroying the industry. It was so bad that the government ended up losing more money from the industry collapse than it generated from revenue. It was a net loss for the Treasury.

Will the Liberals admit that there is absolutely no point in having this tax that will cost jobs and kill a sector of our economy that Canadian families enjoy, or is that their plan?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it comes as no surprise that this question is coming from the Conservative Party. It voted against increasing taxes for the 1% and decreasing taxes for the middle class.

With respect to jobs that the member raises, Statistics Canada released a report today indicating that May saw 40,000 new jobs created in this country. These are full-time jobs that are well-paying. Since last year, we have seen an increase in wages of nearly 4%. Canadians are taking home bigger paycheques thanks to the policies that our Liberal government put in place.

* * *

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois was skeptical when the government announced that it would offer Aeroplan points to help people displaced by the war in Ukraine come to Canada. We now know we had good reason to be skeptical, and that is really frustrating.

The government promised to help 10,000 people with this ridiculous idea at least two months ago. Two long months later, all the government has to show for its efforts is 500 plane tickets. That is 500 of the 10,000 tickets promised.

Why did the government break its promise to Ukrainians displaced by the war?

[*English*]

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with great respect to my hon. colleague, nothing could be further from the truth. As of today, there are more than 30,000 Ukrainians who are being provided with safe haven here in Canada. Yes, the federal government has offered charter to nearly 1,000 Ukrainians.

I want to thank both Air Canada and The Shapiro Foundation for their extraordinarily generous donations, which are going to start bringing Ukrainians from Europe to Canada as soon as this week. They are going to start with 500, but they have secured enough in donations to provide cost-free transportation for at least 10,000 Ukrainians who are in need of safe refuge. This is something we should be very proud of.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Ukrainians fleeing the war heard the government tell them they would be welcomed with open arms. Some 127,000 of them applied for emergency travel.

What has the Government of Canada done for these people, 107 days into the war? It chartered three flights, offered 500 plane tickets and says it is happy with that. They cannot be serious.

Will the government arrange a real airlift, or is it actually saying that Canada only welcomes people displaced by war who have money?

[English]

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again with respect to my colleague, I would point out that there are more than 30,000 Ukrainians who have already arrived in Canada. We have not seen this pace of arrivals of people who are fleeing war and persecution in any other initiative that could be comparable in the history of Canada.

It is extraordinary to see so many people who have been provided with safe haven so quickly, but it is not enough that we work to get people here. We have to support them when they land. We have arranged to have airport reception services through the Red Cross. We have arranged to give access to settlement services with 550 organizations across Canada. We have established income supports. We have established temporary accommodation supports. We are continuing to do what we can to make sure people get here and succeed after they arrive, as well.

* * *

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, affordability issues are top of mind for all Canadians. Liberals like to compare their track record with those of other countries, but when it comes to telecommunications, it is an interesting story. Canadians are paying among the highest prices for services in all the world, and they could actually get worse with the Rogers-Shaw takeover. Canadians will pay the price while Edward Rogers and family will benefit from the takeover and another billionaire's family will also benefit. It is past time to act.

Will the government side with families or with billionaires who want to consolidate power, reduce competition, increase prices for Canadians during the summer and spend their time on yachts while Canadians are picking money out of their pocketbooks for an essential service?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, affordability, affordability, affordability: That is what is driving our government policy, and my colleague knows that very well.

My position has been made very clear. I have said I would not allow the wholesale transfer of licences from Shaw to Rogers. The matter is now under review by the Competition Bureau, and it is going to be looked at by the CRTC. I can assure the member that every step of the way we will make sure that Canadians continue to enjoy the affordability that they deserve, but at the same time that we foster competition across the nation.

* * *

• (1130)

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a year ago, the government held a national action summit on Islamophobia, and stakeholders provided clear recommendations.

Oral Questions

I want to thank the local and national Muslim organizations, including the Youth Coalition Combating Islamophobia from London, whose members have been fighting in memory of lost loved ones. However, they are still waiting for the government to do its job and actually address the root causes of Islamophobia by bringing in legislation to address online hate, radicalization and violence.

Devastated communities like mine are doing the hard work, while the government provides only words and no action. Why?

Mr. Paul Chiang (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Diversity and Inclusion), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has seen an alarming increase in racism and hate crime targeting Muslim Canadians. Islamophobia in our country is a real and troubling fact.

Our government has taken concrete steps to address Islamophobia. This includes marking January 29 as National Day of Remembrance and Action against Islamophobia, and holding a national summit on Islamophobia this past summer.

We will continue to support community organizations and work closely with the Muslim community to end Islamophobia once and for all.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my constituents have never seen grocery prices so high, thanks to made-in-Canada inflation. One response to my recent grocery survey read, “I’m a 79-year-old widow on pension. My food and rent have gone sky-high.” As well, a recent online Castanet poll found almost 80% of respondents saying that rising prices forced them to cut back on what they buy. The Liberals cannot keep blaming everyone else for food inflation.

Is the government going to do anything to help cut the rising price of food, and if not, why?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are a number of measures that our government put in place that will help Canadians this year. Canadian families will be receiving up to \$7,000 this year in the Canada child benefit, and cheques will start to come out in July. Over three million Canadian workers will benefit from the Canada workers program.

What we heard from the other side, from the Conservatives, were two policy proposals this week. One was to give a tax break to big oil and gas, and the second was to give a break to Russia and drop the sanctions against Russia. There is no solid, credible economic policy coming from the Conservative Party, and it is disappointing.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just to correct the record, we are asking for assistance to consumers. I just want to get that on the record.

Oral Questions

Statistics Canada reported that 75% of Canadians are being impacted negatively by the ever-increasing cost of living. Food costs are up. Housing costs are up. Fuel is up. When the government had the opportunity to provide relief from the pumps, it turned it down.

Where is the help from the government for Canadians who are struggling with the dramatic increase in the cost of living today?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are proposing to give a tax break to oil and gas companies, not to Canadians.

We are providing direct payments to Canadians. Canadians who have trouble finding affordable housing would be getting a direct payment from our government. Canadians who are working at minimum wage would be getting a direct payment from our government. We are helping Canadians directly, and we will continue to do that.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, sky-high inflation, now at a 31-year high, is having a disproportionate impact on Canadians. The Prime Minister does not have to buy groceries or fill his own tank. However, Canadians on lower incomes are spending a disproportionately higher percentage of their incomes on necessities like bread, milk and sundries. Gas prices in North Okanagan—Shuswap are at \$2.13 a litre. Some cannot afford to drive to work.

We know the Prime Minister does not think about monetary policy for Canadians, but do any of the other speNDP-Liberals think about it?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite cites a PBO report. The PBO report also confirms that inflation is a global phenomenon caused by the war in Ukraine and by bottlenecks in supply chains from the pandemic.

What we have done is put forward a number of measures in the budget that would help Canadians directly. What the Conservatives have done is delay the implementation of the budget, delay funding going straight to Canadians in order to help them with the cost-of-living increase, and it is shameful.

• (1135)

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister keeps saying that the government took on debt during the pandemic so that Canadians would not have to. It turns out that it just did not work. Now the Bank of Canada reports that Canadians' biggest vulnerability is higher household indebtedness. In fact, interest rates are on the rise, and people are at risk of losing their homes.

This is a very important question. Will the minister finally admit that the Liberal government's irresponsible spending led to this cost-of-living crisis? Is that not right?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a report just came out this week indicating that Canadians and investors have an extremely high confidence in the Bank of Canada and all of our financial institutions. That is certainly not

thanks to the member for Carleton's comments or the Conservatives' comments impugning the independence of the Bank of Canada.

We will do everything to ensure that our Canadian economy continues to grow. Experts are forecasting that the economy here in Canada will grow at a higher rate than the rest of the G7 countries, both this year and next year. Our Stats Canada numbers from this morning indicate that unemployment is at its lowest levels historically in this country. We will continue to be focused on our economy and on Canadians.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at \$2.36 a litre, the price of gasoline in B.C.'s Lower Mainland is the highest in North America. We hear the Minister of Finance say that the price of gasoline is beyond her control, yet we know that it is the government's policy to actually drive up the cost of gasoline.

When will the government come clean and acknowledge that its policies are hurting ordinary Canadians and fuelling our cost-of-living crisis?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, the only proposal from the Conservative Party is to cut taxes on the oil and gas companies themselves, with no guarantee that those tax cuts will be passed on to consumers.

What we are doing is providing direct support to Canadians so they can meet the increased cost of living that they are seeing as a result of the war in Ukraine. We will continue to be focused on Canadians themselves and not big oil.

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AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, input costs for farmers have soared. Fertilizer costs have nearly tripled and fuel costs have doubled, all while we face a food security crisis, yet Liberals intentionally hurt farmers' ability to increase production. A punitive fertilizer reduction policy, not based on fact or science, and a carbon tax increase are hindering investment in climate-resilient techniques that farmers were making long before Liberal ministers were Greenpeace activists.

Has the Minister of Agriculture misunderstood that she is supposed to fight for farmers instead of against?

[Translation]

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, I want to reassure my colleague. Our government is the one that has supported producers the most.

[English]

We had a historic budget for the agricultural department last year of more than \$4 billion. It did not happen with the previous government, I can assure the member, because it had cut the budget of the business risk management programs and many other programs, while we have increased the budget for the business risk management programs. We are at a \$1.5-billion investment in agri-environmental programming.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Quebec has taken the rare step of sending all parties a list of amendments that it is calling for respecting Bill C-13 on official languages. All it is asking for is for them to be rational.

It is asking the parties to note that the French language is in the minority in Canada because of the predominance of English and that francophones and anglophones therefore have different needs. That seems obvious to me.

Will the government amend Bill C-13 so it corresponds to reality?

Mr. Marc Serré (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are the first federal government to recognize the decline of French across the country, including in Quebec.

We know that more needs to be done to protect and promote the French language, which is a goal we share with the Government of Quebec. Our government will continue to take responsibility for passing legislation within its own jurisdiction to support the vitality of French in our communities.

The members of the committee will also have the responsibility of studying the amendments presented by the Government of Quebec and stakeholders from across the country.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that really is not a clear answer.

The Prime Minister had a moment of clarity in 2016. He said, “Quebec has to be French in order for Canada to be bilingual”. This is in line with the amendments to Bill C-13 that Quebec wants.

Quebec is asking the federal government to commit to respecting Quebec's language planning model set out in the Charter of the French Language.

Will the government incorporate Quebec's demands into Bill C-13 to affirm Quebec's distinctiveness and ensure respect for the Charter of the French Language?

● (1140)

Mr. Marc Serré (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-13 is currently being examined by the Standing Committee on Official Languages. As I said earlier, we once again thank the Government of Quebec for its contribution to the legislative process.

Oral Questions

Members of Parliament will be responsible for considering the amendments brought forward by national organizations and all parliamentary stakeholders. I am optimistic. We will find a way to move Bill C-13 forward so that it can be passed as soon as possible.

I therefore ask all the parties to stop playing political games and to work to ensure that Bill C-13 is passed as quickly as possible. It is important for communities across the country.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are experiencing economic challenges that they have not seen since Pierre Elliott Trudeau was Prime Minister. They are struggling through a cost-of-living crisis. Inflation is at 6.8%. Supply chain disruptions have Canadians waiting for months for essential items. Gas prices are over \$2 a litre. A struggling stock market has Canadians' retirement savings disappearing.

Are we experiencing a return to Trudeaonomics or is this “just inflation”?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite cites a few statistics, and I will do the same. This morning, Statistics Canada confirmed that wages increased for Canadian workers at the highest rate since 1981, by nearly 4%. Canadians are taking home more money in order to meet the cost-of-living crisis they are facing, and our government is supporting vulnerable Canadians. With respect to seniors, for example, we increased our supports for seniors, which has helped lift over 450,000 seniors out of poverty. We are helping 900,000 seniors right now with our increased supports—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Rocky Ridge.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when questioned about inflation, the government just shrugs its shoulders and says it is part of a global phenomenon. It is true that some other countries that have been running huge deficits are experiencing inflation, but Canada is the only one deliberately making things worse by increasing taxes on consumers.

Dropping the carbon tax and GST on fuel would immediately reduce consumer prices, just as prices dropped in Alberta when the provincial government cut its fuel tax. Why will the government not drop these taxes?

Oral Questions

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is the NDP that is proposing to increase taxes on oil and gas companies, and it is the Conservative Party that is proposing to cut taxes on oil and gas companies. We are focused on Canadians. We are focused on supporting vulnerable Canadians—

An hon. member: You're a liar.

The Deputy Speaker: As much as I enjoy a go between the two parties, when we are calling somebody a liar or what have you, it is unparliamentary. If we could retract that, then we can move on with question period.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, we are focused on supporting Canadians directly. That is why this year Canadian families will receive up to \$7,000 in the Canada child benefit. That is why our new Canada workers program will support over three million workers with an increased top-up. We also have direct payments going to Canadians who are having trouble finding affordable housing. We are there to support Canadians directly.

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians need the government to listen. Mark works in rural areas in my riding and needs to get to work. Because of distance and terrain, he cannot take a bike and there are no buses or trains. He needs to drive a pickup truck. Mark pays \$139 for only half a tank of gas.

Why is the NDP-Liberal government not cancelling the carbon tax increase and suspending the GST on gas to give Mark and all other Canadians a break on fuel?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week, the Conservatives proposed a number of economic policies. One of them was to cancel our price on pollution. A price on pollution, as we know, is the most effective way to tackle climate change. The other was to give oil and gas companies a break by dropping the GST.

The GST works in this country in the following way: The government taxes the oil and gas companies, and the oil and gas companies pass that tax on to consumers. If we drop the GST on oil and gas companies, there is absolutely no guarantee that Canadian consumers will see any benefit at the pumps. It is a tax reduction on oil and gas companies, pure and simple.

• (1145)

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Edmonton's food bank is facing record demand. At the same time, it is facing a 30% increase in operating costs due to runaway Liberal gas inflation. These are resources taken directly away from the people they are trying to help. Edmonton charities need help. The Liberals can help immediately by reducing gas taxes and suspending the carbon tax.

Will the Liberals commit to helping those in need, or do they think perhaps the food bank should feed the needy with dishonest Liberal talking points?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr.

Speaker, we have been there for Canadians throughout the pandemic. We have regularly increased our supports to food banks, and we have helped lift over 400,000 children out of poverty. Our programs are supporting vulnerable Canadians every day. This year alone, we have ensured that the Canada child benefit will increase by up to \$7,000 for a Canadian family. This is direct support to Canadians, when Canadians need it.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Evangeline Cayanan is a well-known community leader and activist in Edmonton. She is also an undocumented worker. She has given so much of herself to better our community in Edmonton, yet she and her Canadian-born six-year-old daughter are now facing imminent deportation. This is especially traumatizing for her daughter, who has health issues. This is a story of just one in a worrying trend of cruel deportations.

Will the minister stop this deportation and help Vangie and her daughter stay in Canada, their home?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our immigration system needs to have a compassionate approach. The hon. member knows we are not at liberty to discuss the specific details of individual case files on the floor of the House of Commons. I am happy to continue the conversation we began together about this specific case file. We are aware of it, but we are going to continue to look at the details and ensure the rules were applied fairly, and also with a compassionate lens.

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HEALTH

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada is experiencing a mental health crisis. Every day it is costing lives. The Liberals have promised time and again to address this crisis, but they have broken their promises. In their election platform, the Liberals promised \$4.5 billion to expand mental health services, but there is no sign of this in the budget. They promised to fully fund a three-digit suicide prevention hotline and a suicide prevention strategy, which were initiatives that received unanimous support right here, yet again, no funding was given to these commitments in the budget.

When will the Liberals follow through on their promises to help people who are struggling?

Oral Questions

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his ongoing advocacy.

Our government has made historic investments in mental health through \$5 billion in bilateral agreements with the provinces and territories, which now provides \$600 million on an annual basis until 2027. We are engaging with the provinces and territories to inform the development of the new mental health transfer. We will need the help of all parties and a comprehensive evidence-based plan, including sharing data on indicators and outcomes.

We remain fully committed to the additional \$4.5 billion over five years to support the mental health of Canadians.

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CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, northern and indigenous communities see and experience the harsh consequences of climate change at nearly three times the rate of the rest of Canada. From housing, airports and community services to melting permafrost, coastal erosion and thinning sea ice, these changes negatively impact traditional ways of living. Since 2015, our government has worked together with northern and indigenous partners to help fight climate change.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Northern Affairs please update the House on our government's work with northern and indigenous communities to fight climate change and improve quality of life?

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for all of his hard work on curbing climate change.

Through Northern Affairs, our government has made historic investments of more than \$167 million to fund renewable energy, monitor climate change on the land and address the impacts of sea ice change, permafrost melting, flooding and wildfires. We recently announced \$300 million to ensure rural, remote and indigenous communities can move off diesel and be powered by clean and reliable energy by 2030.

We will keep making those investments and partnering with territories and indigenous governments to do the right thing.

* * *

● (1150)

HEALTH

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River recently said, “I would suggest that the vaccine requirements for being on planes and at workplaces at the moment, I don’t think the benefits of that mandate warrant the cost.” He is also a medical doctor and a member of our health committee. In fact, it has been reported that a “massive majority” of the Liberal caucus wants to see an end to the mandates.

I know the Prime Minister will not listen to Conservatives, but will he take the advice of one of the doctors in his caucus and end these vindictive mandates?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House our government will continue to make sure we are putting the health of Canadians first, because nobody wants another wave or more lockdowns due to COVID-19.

Let us talk about what some of the Conservatives are saying about vaccination.

The member for Yorkton—Melville claims that the government has a secret agenda and some kind of conspiracy, as she refuses to get vaccinated. Another Conservative, the member for Niagara West, wants to ban all mRNA vaccines, the same ones that have saved millions of lives worldwide.

This type of rhetoric is divisive and misleading, and all members of this House should stop trying to spread misinformation. We all have an obligation to stand up for Canadians and ensure they can continue to be safe—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what Canadians just witnessed was spin-doctoring and political science, not medical science.

It has been reported that a massive majority of the Liberal caucus want to see an end to these mandates. This week the member for Milton asked my colleague, a medical doctor who ran a COVID-19 ward in Nova Scotia, to stop asking and talking about mandates. On this side of the House, the Conservatives will not be intimidated by the members opposite. When will we see an end to these vindictive vaccine mandates?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, back in 2020, the Conservatives claimed we would not have enough vaccines for all Canadians. Let me be clear that Canada has a sufficient supply and will ensure that all eligible Canadians are protected for primary series and boosters, as well as for pediatrics and other therapeutics.

In the face of omicron and other unfortunate variants, Canada will be able to onboard more sufficient supply of both pediatrics and boosters to the provinces and territories to expedite simultaneous vaccine campaigns. This is not political science; this is the science of supporting our neighbours.

Oral Questions

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have had enough of the Liberals' unscientific vaccine mandates, so too reportedly have the vast majority of back-bench Liberal MPs, including medical doctors. One of these medical doctors, the Liberal member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River has even gone on the public record calling for their immediate end. When will the Liberals finally listen to experts within their own caucus, the medical doctors, and end the mandates?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in order to keep Canadians safe, our government has put in place emergency border measures, which have been very effective in reducing the risk of importation and transmission of COVID-19. While COVID-19 cases in Canada have peaked, other countries are having a resurgence of cases and we need to remain vigilant. That is why we have extended Canada's existing border measures until June 30, 2022.

However, I would indicate to the member opposite that they have changed over the period of time, since November of 2021, they have been in place. As we have said all along, Canada's border measures will remain flexible and adaptable, guided by science and prudence.

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CANADA BORDER SERVICES AGENCY

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my office continues to receive, on a daily basis, emails and letters from my constituents expressing their frustration with the ongoing reduced hours at land border crossings. Back in April, I asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety when the hours would go back to normal. Not only did she not provide an answer to that question, she also fully admitted that she was not even listening when I asked it.

When will the minister take this issue seriously and commit to returning border crossing hours back to normal, or are the Liberals waiting for the House to recess to avoid giving us credit and hearing, "We told you so"?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working closely with the CBSA to reopen land ports as quickly as possible. We know it impacts Canadians, especially those exporting commercial goods, which is why we have opened 39 land ports. We continue to open all ports that were temporarily closed from COVID.

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● (1155)

[Translation]

PASSPORTS

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, after two years without being able to travel, people are furious about passport wait times, and rightly so. The federal government has allowed the backlog to get out of control, and it has a duty to fix its own mistake.

On Tuesday, the Bloc Québécois demanded that passport offices open on weekends and that there be no extra fee for people travelling within 48 hours.

Tomorrow is Saturday. Will people be able to go to any passport office and leave with their passport in hand, without paying any extra fees? If not, what is the government waiting for to act?

[English]

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his advocacy for his constituents.

We know that Canadians are travelling again. There has been a significant increase in the demand—

The Deputy Speaker: Unfortunately, there is a bad sound interfering.

Let us go to the government House leader instead.

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know there is an unprecedented demand. In fact, for over two years, Canadians were not renewing their passports, and we now have all of those passports being renewed at the same time. Globally, we are seeing long periods of time for these to be processed. In Canada, obviously we are adding additional resources to meet these demands as quickly as possible to make sure people can get their passports in a timely way.

* * *

[Translation]

VETERANS

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Ottawa continues to let our veterans down, as the Auditor General confirmed in a report released last week. Francophones wait two to three months longer to access services. That is 21% longer.

The Auditor General said, "I'm left with the conclusion that the government failed to meet a promise that it made to our veterans: that it would take care of them if they were injured in service".

When will the government keep its word to francophones?

[English]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's concern. We realize that more needs to be done for francophone veterans. That is why we have established a dedicated francophone unit to improve the situation. We invested \$340 million to make sure we are able to improve the wait times.

Oral Questions

In fact, we have improved all wait times, including for franco-phone veterans, but I realize there is more to do. I can assure the House and my hon. colleague that we are making sure that happens.

* * *

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal-NDP philosophy towards crime is hurting Canadians. Bill C-5 will do nothing to deter crime and will only encourage it.

Does the Prime Minister not realize that the Black and indigenous populations are overrepresented among victims of violent crime?

Crime has only gone up over the past seven years under this government. When will the minister wake up and abolish Bill C-5?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-5 is designed specifically to address the issue of Black and indigenous overrepresentation in our criminal justice system, by giving judges the flexibility to impose a sentence that is proportional to the crime.

We will support victims. We are supporting victims. Serious offences will always have serious consequences. We need to address this overrepresentation, and that is exactly what we are doing.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government desperately needs to wake up. Canadians are being penalized with heavy fines and quarantines for not filling out the ArriveCAN app properly.

Most of them are vaccinated. This is completely ridiculous. The 14-day quarantine for vaccinated Canadians who do not have the app is longer than the quarantine for those who contract COVID-19. Since this government claims to follow science, will the minister finally get rid of the ArriveCAN app?

[English]

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, ArriveCAN continues to be an essential and intuitive tool to protect Canadians as we reopen borders and fire up the economy. Through the app, we have streamlined the reopening process and travel is up 707% from peak pandemic as a result. ArriveCAN takes only a few minutes for vaccinated travellers to complete, and over 99% of air and marine travellers and 94% of land travellers have been compliant and allowed for increased efficiency.

• (1200)

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is nonsense. The passport saga continues. The government keeps using the same arguments, but the problems have not gone away.

My constituents cannot reach Service Canada by phone. Lineups wind around the block. Urgent passport applications can no longer

be processed. Some Canadians have even been told to drive three and a half hours to another riding to try to renew their passport.

Is the government's plan to sit on its hands until June 23 and then disappear on vacation?

[English]

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after two years, unfortunately, there were passports that were not being renewed, which means that two years' worth of passports had to be processed in mere months. Of course, we did not know exactly when those volumes were going to hit. That is why we have seen worldwide delays in passports, with jurisdictions in every part of the world struggling to keep up with demand.

Obviously, we have increased resources in staff and hours, and we are cutting through that volume. We are pleased to say that we are making good progress. We want to ensure that Canadians will get their passports as soon as possible.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the national shipbuilding strategy contributes millions of dollars a year to the Canadian economy. It creates and maintains thousands of jobs across the country. Earlier this week, Quebec's Davie shipyard took one more step toward becoming Canada's third official shipyard under the NSS.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement tell us how the Davie shipyard contributes to shipbuilding in Canada and what this contract means for Quebec's workers and economy?

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Châteauguay—Lacolle.

Our government will begin negotiations with the Davie shipyard toward an umbrella agreement to become the third strategic shipbuilding partner under the NSS.

Once the negotiations are complete, the Davie shipyard will build one of two polar icebreakers and six program icebreakers for the Canadian Coast Guard. This is terrific news for the economy of Quebec and the national capital.

Oral Questions

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberal defence budget is so nebulous they would not even let the committee vote on it. A former official said that there is a \$15-billion difference between what is earmarked for defence and what is actually shown.

Is the funding just being shown as defence spending so that our NATO contributions do not look so bad, and have the funds, the missing billions, gone to the same place as “lapsed” defence spending, into some green slush fund?

Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are assuring Canadian security in contributing to global security. That is why our government has not only been increasing spending by 70% between 2017 and 2026, following a decade of Conservative cuts—

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The interpretation does not seem to be working.

[English]

I am hoping the translation pops up. However, the parliamentary secretary's sound is still a little off, so I will go to the government House leader.

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we saw, by the Conservatives, cuts to critical support for defence year after year. Instead, we have taken an approach of investing in our defence services, investing in our soldiers, and making sure, after we saw cuts for veterans and the shutting of veterans office, that we were there for veterans as well.

We will continue to invest in defence and ensure that Canada is making appropriate contributions in global security.

* * *

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is the breadbasket of the world and leads the country in the production of wheat, canola and many other crops. That takes fertilizer, lots of fertilizer. Recently, the government announced its plan to make Canadian farmers ration fertilizer by 30%, causing the price of groceries to skyrocket and leaving many Canadians going hungry.

Why is this government punishing Canadians who simply want to eat?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are proud that Canada is a very important contributor to food security in the world.

The idea behind reducing the emissions caused by fertilizer does not mean reducing fertilizer. Actually, our producers are engaging significantly in the 4R practices, which are best practices. They are applying the fertilizer the right way to reduce emissions and reduce their costs at the same time.

● (1205)

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in April, in response to questions regarding a possible goat farm in Joyceville, the parliamentary secretary stated: “Correctional Service Canada does not intend to do any goat milk production.” In May, she told the House: “they were not moving forward with goats.”

However, on June 2, CSC stated that, while it clearly had no plans for dairy operations, it would “reassess at a later date.”

Why will the government not just admit that it is not going to take the goat farm option off the table?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate that there are no goats planned for Correctional Services Canada at this time. There are no contracts for goat farming.

I would ask the hon. member why—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. parliamentary secretary has 10 seconds or so.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, but I have been asked about this so many times that I am losing track of what I said.

Currently, Correctional Services is not planning on goat farming, but I would reiterate and ask the hon. member this: Has he actually visited the prison farms? Has he thought about the fact that when his party was in government, it closed the prison farms and removed fresh food and dairy from the prisons? Maybe we should start—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Sudbury.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our two official languages are part of our country's history and they are at the heart of our identity as Canadians. The Minister of Official Languages recently launched consultations for the next official languages action plan.

Would the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Official Languages tell us what our government is doing to make sure that Canadians in minority communities across the country are heard and to make sure we have the best game plan to protect our two official languages across Canada?

Mr. Marc Serré (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Sudbury for her engagement and dedication to the francophone community and her community.

We launched Canada-wide consultations on the action plan. We will consult communities across Canada to find out about their priorities and their vision for official language minority communities. Under our existing plan, we have also made unprecedented investments in official language minority communities from coast to coast.

I am looking forward to working on the next phase with the action plan, which will play an important role in Canadians' lives.

* * *

[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Ukrainian refugees who have settled in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith and across Canada are struggling with resettlement costs. In our communities, people like Yvette have been working tirelessly and spending money out of their own pockets to help Ukrainian families seeking safety. Ukrainians arriving in Canada, who have lost everything, are unable to access key supports.

Why will the government not do the right thing and grant Ukrainian and other refugees permanent status so they have the supports they need?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asks a very important question. We developed, in an emergency situation, a brand new model of temporary protection, because we heard of the vast numbers of people who wanted to come but also want to go back home when it is safe to do so.

It is really important, though, that there be additional supports that are atypical for people who come as visitors to Canada, because these are people in need of safe haven. We have established income supports and supports for temporary accommodations. We have fully funded settlement services to ensure that people who are coming as part of this safe program are able to benefit from those services.

We are going to continue to do what we can, not just to get people here but to make sure they are supported after they land.

Routine Proceedings

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1210)

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, 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 three petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I present, in both official languages, the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs in relation to Bill C-14, an act to amend the Constitution Act, 1867 (electoral representation).

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House without amendments. I would like to thank all members involved and their teams, the clerk, the legislative clerk and the analysts for making this happen so quickly.

* * *

PANDEMIC DAY ACT

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.) moved that Bill S-209, An Act respecting Pandemic Observance Day, be read the first time.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present this bill in the House of Commons, introduced by Senator Marie-Françoise Mégie, as a way to commemorate the efforts Canadians made to get through the pandemic. Bill S-209 seeks to designate March 11 as pandemic observance day.

I want to take the opportunity to thank Senator Mégie for coming up with this important bill, which addresses a turning point in the life of Canadians. I want to thank the hon. member for Etobicoke North for seconding this bill in the House.

As a physician, I know how essential it was to act swiftly to save lives. Many frontline workers risked their own lives to save others, and the people of Canada showed great resilience and compassion to help bend the transmission curve. The pandemic brought very contrasting aspects to life. We lost friends and family, but we also witnessed human solidarity at its very best.

It is vital to commemorate these events and keep them in the collective memory for years to come. Let us remember how our world changed forever and how, once again, human resilience succeeded.

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

*Routine Proceedings***INSTRUCTION TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
CANADIAN HERITAGE**

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC) moved:

That it be an instruction to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage that, during its consideration of Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, the committee be granted the power to travel throughout Canada to hear testimony from interested parties and that the necessary staff do accompany the committee, provided that the travel does not exceed 10 sitting days.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke for seconding what I believe to be a very important motion.

As members are aware, Motion No. 16 was presented today. It is basically a draconian way of dealing with issues and matters of the House by the government. It is a way of stifling debate. It is a way of silencing the voices of millions of Canadians who sent their elected representatives here to Ottawa.

Bill C-11 has been universally panned, for lack of a better word, by content creators and others who are concerned about censorship on the Internet and concerned about content creation. We heard this morning the member for Perth—Wellington give a very good description of some of the concerns with this bill.

Effectively, what Motion No. 16 has done is basically taken the work out of the hands of the committee on this extremely important bill. The government is ramming it through, with the help of its NDP partners, in order to get it passed through Parliament without addressing many of the concerns that are being brought up by those who, as I said earlier, are expressing significant concerns about issues related to censorship.

I have been hearing from my constituents on this. Over the last two or three days, Canadians have become increasingly engaged on this issue. They are finding out what is going on.

Similar to a previous iteration of this bill, Bill C-10, Canadians are concerned. In fact, I would suggest they are more concerned about what is going with Bill C-11 and the impact it is going to have on their ability to see what is on the Internet and produce what is on the Internet. There are concerns, as we heard, as to the power the bill gives the government and the censorship role it gives to the government. It contributes, in my opinion, even more to what we see as a decline in democracy here in Canada, whereby millions of voices, including the Speaker's voice, is silenced as a result of draconian measures.

What this motion would do is allow the committee to travel across the country to hear from those who it has not heard from before. This motion is important because the Conservative opposition has said we are not going to agree to committee travel. The motion highlights the importance of hearing from those in Canada who are extremely concerned about this bill and the censorship it can create. It would allow the committee to do its work, function properly and hear the voices that are being silenced in this place. "Parliament" comes from *parler*, or "to speak", yet we are being silenced on this bill.

There is another interesting part to this. I have been watching closely the deliberations at the heritage committee and have been

speaking to our shadow minister of heritage about the level of dysfunction that has been created as a result of the chair of the committee not coming to Ottawa and being on Zoom. It speaks to the overall dysfunction of this place. Hybrid Parliament is having such a tremendous impact on the ability of the committees to do their work, and there are health implications for the people who work here, namely the interpreters.

In my opinion, it is time for hybrid Parliament to end. We need to get back to normal. That forms the basis of every argument we have been making in this place.

I am moving this motion in the hopes that we can allow the committee to have its deliberations and speak to Canadians who are concerned about government censorship and the impact this bill will have. We need the support of Parliament to allow the committee to do its job.

• (1215)

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am a little perplexed about the motion that has just been moved and need a bit of clarification. The member acknowledged himself that the Conservatives have been opposing committee travel. Now, all of a sudden, for a study on Bill C-11 that they have spent an extended amount of time on, with over 20 hours' worth of witnesses, they would like to see travel.

Can the member please explain this 180° turn?

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, of course I can. There are committees of this Parliament that want to travel all around the world. They have moved motions to travel to places such as Brussels and other parts of the world that do not have the same restrictions as those the Liberal government is imposing on its own citizens. The hypocrisy is palpable.

We are still allowed to travel domestically in Canada, and we think the committee can do it safely. The Liberal Party is imposing restrictions on Canadians for travel abroad, especially on those who are unvaccinated, and is putting parliamentarians at risk in other countries. We do not believe there is a risk, especially to travel here in Canada.

As I mentioned at the onset, this is work that needs to be done. The voices being silenced are from those who are critical of this bill. We need the committee to travel to listen to those voices.

Maybe the Liberals should end the mandates. Then maybe we could get on with normal life here in Canada, stop restricting Canadians from seeing their families and stop businesses from being affected by the resurgence of issues. Businesses want to succeed, not for the Liberals to get in the way.

Routine Proceedings

• (1220)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have some questions for my hon. colleague because he said he has been following the deliberations of the heritage committee. He knows that the committee had the equivalent of over five weeks's worth of witnesses, that the committee was going to call additional witnesses but the Conservatives blocked that with a filibuster and that all other parties and all other members of the committee have filed their amendments. For a couple of weeks we tried to move forward, but the Conservatives refused, and the amendments were all filed last week.

The Conservatives also blocked having hearings for the very serious allegations that have come up regarding Hockey Canada. These are very serious allegations of sexual assault, and the Conservatives blocked those hearings, which would have been held next Monday and Wednesday, from being voted on. It is a very curious and very destructive strategy the Conservatives have adopted at committee in refusing to do their work and put in amendments, and in refusing and blocking witnesses.

With all of that as a background, my question to my colleague is this. We have heard Conservative MPs say that somehow Bill C-11 is linked to the government following people on cellphones and to censorship, none of which is in the bill at all. Why did Conservative MPs not read the bill before we had the consideration we have had over the course of the last few weeks?

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, maybe the member is hoping for a cabinet seat so he can have the Liberal talking points, which he has clearly used since the supply and coalition agreement was enacted. The member has sold his soul to the Liberals, so I do not take anything he has to say, frankly, with any sense of credibility at all because—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice): We have a point of order by the member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, the official opposition House leader should know that the vicious personal insults he is throwing on the floor of the House of Commons are not in order. I would also question the relevance of his response.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, the truth hurts.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is great to see you in the chair.

I have a very quick question for the official opposition House leader. Does he believe that, because the chair of the heritage committee will not come to Ottawa, perhaps the heritage committee should go to the chair?

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, we have been seeing that all along, and it is a great point the hon. member brings up. We have seen the dysfunction of virtual Parliament. I mentioned that as I was speaking about the motion. We have seen the impacts that it has had on the translation bureau, for example. If the chair will not come to Ottawa, then, yes, maybe we need to take the committee out to Vancouver or other places to eliminate and stop the dysfunction.

I think this speaks to the broader picture. The broader picture here is that the Liberals are misusing hybrid Parliament. We saw it today in question period. How many parliamentary secretaries, who should be here in the seat of power, in the seat of Parliament, are—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice): The member for Brampton North has a point of order.

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, I was wondering if you can help guide me. The members of the official opposition keep pointing out the presence of members, whether they are present in the House or not, and I think they should be stopped from doing so.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, we all attended question period, and observing what happened during question period is not indirectly doing what one cannot do directly. The deputy whip for the government is certainly looking to interrupt the opposition House leader, but she has not articulated anything that is contrary to the rules of this place.

• (1225)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice): It is standard practice not to comment about those who are in the House or attending virtually, so I would encourage members to continue following the ruling that has already been made.

We will now go back to the House leader of the official opposition.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I believe I stand in a live television studio, and those who were watching us today know who was here and who was not. Certainly, I am not going to point out who was here and who was not, but people who were here can certainly see that for themselves.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, congratulations on what I believe is your first ruling in the House.

There has been a lot of emphasis on the fact that under the superclosure motion, there is not enough time to hear witnesses in committee. I would be curious to know how much time my colleague thinks is enough. We know that many TikTokers and YouTubers have come to testify, some even twice.

How much would be enough in the Conservatives' eyes? I did not hear that answer.

[*English*]

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I respectfully suggest that it would be enough to hear from both sides of the argument, those who are in favour of the bill and those who are opposed. Perhaps, as a result of those interactions, we could allow consequential amendments that would fix the bill. We have heard that there are some serious problems with this bill, not the least of which is proposed section 4.2.

There are four substantive things we are concerned about. I am also concerned about the amendments we are hearing about from those who are looking at this bill and saying it needs to be fixed. It is not just those who understand these sorts of things, these censorship issues, but content creators too, so we need some substantive time to consider not just the bill itself, but amendments to the bill as well.

Routine Proceedings

By the way, Mr. Speaker, you are doing a great job up there.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice): I thank the member.

The hon. Minister of National Revenue has a point of order.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier: Mr. Speaker, I am tabling the government's responses to Questions Nos. 500 to 506.

[*English*]

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question for the opposition House leader pertains to the committee's work. I had the honour of being in a couple of committee meetings and proposed a few amendments. One of those amendments goes to the discussion we are talking about. It was to have the minister appear before committee. However, the Liberal majority challenged the ruling of the chair, who called it in order. In response to that, even though I had the floor, the chair forgot that I had the floor and said that she must have blacked out, which is one of the challenges of this virtual Parliament.

In terms of the functioning of the committee, could the opposition House leader comment on the ineffectiveness of committee chairs participating in that manner?

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, we are seeing a strong level of dysfunction going on among all committees because of the hybrid and virtual aspect of this Parliament and the decision to continue it. We are seeing that committees are being cancelled. We are seeing situations like the one the hon. member talked about. This has to stop. It is having a sincere and profound impact on our democracy, and it is contributing to a decline in it.

• (1230)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice): The hon. President of the Treasury Board is rising on a point of order.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ONLINE STREAMING ACT

NOTICE OF CLOSURE MOTION

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I give notice that, with respect to consideration of Government Business No. 16, at the next sitting of the House, a Minister of the Crown shall move, pursuant to Standing Order 57, that debate not be further adjourned.

[*English*]

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I just want the record to reflect that the member for Ottawa—Vanier just introduced a guillotine motion on a guillotine motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice): I do not believe that is a point of order. The hon. member for Brampton North.

* * *

INSTRUCTION TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CANADIAN HERITAGE

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by addressing the opposition member's concern about wanting to spend time on amendments to Bill C-11. I think that is a valid concern, and I believe that the committee has had ample time. What we in the government benches, and what I as a member, would like to see is that we get to the amendment stage, that we get to clause-by-clause and that amendments are put forward, and that we are able to discuss those amendments and then vote on them. That is the crux of the issue that we are looking at right now.

As has been mentioned here before as well, the committee and the members at the committee had agreed to 20 hours of witnesses. The members of the committee agreed to this: It was not the House or the government. It was the members of the committee. They have, since then, seen over 20 hours of witnesses.

I believe, from the debate that we hear from the Conservatives, that they have ample reasons to bring amendments forward. That is their right. We would like to see those amendments. We would like to discuss them and vote on those amendments. The previous motion, and now the opposition's motion, just do not seem to make sense. It seems like these are more delay tactics, rather than getting to the amendment stage, which we would desperately like to see.

There was also the issue of Hockey Canada brought up, and that the Conservative members on the committee would like to get to that issue, as well.

I would like to clarify that the members on the committee I have spoken to have said that there was an offer made to study that in parallel, and an offer to even sit on non-sitting days and get that important work done, but there was a filibuster by the Conservative members on the committee and nothing got done. The issue of Hockey Canada was not dealt with, nor was the issue of Bill C-11 thoroughly dealt with, so I really would request that the members reconsider this motion and really get to the stage that is important for all Canadians and especially our artists and content creators.

Another thing I would like to touch upon is the constant referral to the bill limiting freedom of expression or freedom of speech, or somehow being anti-democratic. It is absolutely not that. For decades, our system here has guaranteed creation for Canadian content creators when it comes to TV and radio: all of those platforms that we grew up with.

This is nothing new. We have always had legislation in place that made sure the CRTC was there to oversee our content, our networks and our cable providers. This is now just an extension of that.

Routine Proceedings

There has not been an update to this legislation for a long time, and we know that today not many of our constituents, and probably not many of us in the House, are watching content in the traditional way we grew up watching it. We are watching it on streaming devices; therefore, it is crucial that we make sure that our laws are applied equally to radio and television, as they should be, and to streaming networks such as YouTube, Crave, Netflix and so many different networks that are out there that we are consuming content from.

I think it is really important that we make sure that these networks contribute to Canadian content, and make sure that bilingualism is respected in the country, as well as our indigenous communities and heritage. Without having these types of regulations to begin with, we would have missed out on incredible content that we have grown up watching.

Kim's Convenience is a more recent show that I know many of my friends appreciate very much. It has allowed Canadians to experience the diversity that we have here in Canada, and to share true Canadian stories that we can relate to.

• (1235)

That is a story, in particular, that I can relate to because of the immigrant struggle that my parents faced: having a small business while keeping their culture, staying connected to their roots and raising a young child within the Canadian context. It is a brilliant show, as is *Schitt's Creek*. Many members have probably appreciated the story that it has brought of inclusion and acceptance. Those stories are really important. They are the stories we want to be able to share with Canadians and make sure these platforms do their part in sharing those stories.

That is the crux of what this legislation is about. It is not about muzzling people or making sure their content does not get out. It is about commercial content. I want to be very clear that commercial content is different from user content. For instance, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, just the other day, put a video on Twitter talking about how Bill C-11 is a scary piece of legislation that is somehow going to remove the very video that he put on Twitter to talk about this legislation. Of course, that video is still there and even after this legislation is passed, it will still be there because this legislation has made an exception and carved out freedoms for those who are creating user content. On any social media platforms such as YouTube or Facebook, which many members of Parliament use, those types of posts and content will not be affected.

This bill would make sure that the CRTC and any of its advice does not muzzle freedom of speech or impose any restrictions on the people who—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice): I apologize for interrupting the member for Brampton North. There are members having various conversations who may want to ask questions of the member. I would encourage those having conversations to take them outside and if they have questions, they should save them for questions and comments.

The member for Brampton North has 12 minutes left.

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, I have spoken about some of the great benefits that the bill brings. As the debate continues today,

I want to hear from the members opposite as to what the issues are that they have with the bill exactly, because I believe there has been confusion around this issue. We have tried to make it clear. I do not know how much clearer we need to make it that this applies to commercial content and does not apply to user content.

In determining whether content is commercial, it has been set out in this piece of legislation that the regulator needs to evaluate it based on three elements: First, if the content is monetized. I know this would be of some concern because there is user content that can be monetized, but there are other elements and factors that they also have to weigh in connection with that. Second, they need to weigh whether the content exists on another non-social media platform. A non-social media platform would be something such as Netflix that we basically do not interact with. We are just consuming the content that is on there. If there is a show that YouTube is streaming as either paid content or unpaid content, and at the same time Netflix is also streaming it, that is a distinction to be made because that will get us closer to the definition of commercial content.

The third thing the regulator would be looking at is whether the content has a unique international standard code. The example would be a song that is uploaded to YouTube with an international standard music number. We know that many people are now consuming their music not from the radio or CDs, or from downloaded music or records for that matter. They are consuming it from these streaming platforms, but this is commercially produced music and content.

It is only fair that if the radio stations that are playing this content today, and have been all along, are playing by a certain set of rules, then those streaming platforms such as Spotify, Apple Music and YouTube Music also have the same rules applied to them. That is fair, and I think all members in the House should agree that one set of laws in Canada should not be different for one group of people and different for another. We should make sure that the laws are the same.

When I was first elected to the House, my father was a taxi driver. I remember many people from the taxi community. Many live in my riding. For some reason, I have a large number of constituents who are taxi drivers. They came to me and said that Uber did not have to pay HST, yet taxi drivers that provide the same service had to pay HST on their fares. I thought this was not fair. Why was one service provider, which provides exactly the same service, operating under one set of rules? Another service provider was promoting itself as being a digital company and providing the service slightly differently. However, it was not teletransporting people. Quite frankly, it was doing the exact same thing. It was picking up riders in cars and dropping them off at another location.

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I brought this point up, and our Minister of Finance took that very seriously and said our laws and regulations should apply equally. I would say that Bill C-11 is a very similar situation. He quickly resolved that issue, and now Uber drivers also have to pay HST on their fares. That was justice served to the ride-share and taxi community. That is what we are trying to do in this bill by making sure that our regulations are applied across the board, equally and fairly.

● (1240)

Once again, I am not saying that any piece of legislation is completely perfect. There could be some gaps or some holes. We want to make sure we get the support of the Conservative Party, the Bloc, the NDP and the Green Party to make sure we fill those gaps and those holes. We want to see the amazing amendments they will hopefully bring forward if we ever get to that point.

However, what we are so tired of is the constant delay. It is not democracy. The members are saying that this is democracy, but delay and cutting off the ability to discuss in a way that is productive and constructive is different from saying, “We are not going to let this legislation see the light of day.” That is what I would argue the opposition has been trying to do.

There are many stakeholders who are eager to see this legislation pass. They feel their content has not been given the prominence it deserves. They have not been able to get the support they once did when their content was regularly watched on television. Now all these new content creators, and even the old, are not getting the financial support they used to get. We want to be able to continue telling those amazing stories that we were once able to on these new streaming platforms, because that is where people are consuming.

I want to further contrast the spreading of misinformation that has been going on on social media and Twitter. Members need to be responsible. They need to properly read and understand this piece of legislation before guiding their constituents, before responding to correspondence from their offices, and before putting stuff up on their social media. They should be giving Canadians the proper information.

This bill has nothing to do with what Canadians say on social media. Obviously, the members opposite are free to say whatever they like on their social media platforms, but I would just request that they be responsible members and make sure that the information they give Canadians about what is in this piece of legislation is accurate.

If the Conservatives really want to go and record themselves saying whatever they would like about this piece of legislation or on my speech in the House today, they are free to go and do so, and even once this piece of legislation is passed, they would still be free to do so. That is the clarity that Canadians really need to understand.

I do not want to see a repeat of what happened the last time around, when Conservatives sided with web giants instead of with Canadian artists and creators. I constantly hear from the opposition benches that they are here to be the voices of the people of Canada and the voices of their constituents. Unfortunately, I am afraid that

what is happening is they are benefiting these huge, multi-billion dollar corporations, these huge web giants that do not have the same challenges that our local cable stations do. We want to bring fairness to the system.

Furthermore, I would also like to say that clause 12 of the online streaming legislation explicitly states that any regulation the CRTC imposes on platforms through the Broadcasting Act cannot infringe on Canadians' freedom of expression on social media. Clause 12 should cause Canadians to give a sigh of relief, because I know a lot of the confusing messaging they have been receiving has led them to believe that this could somehow infringe on their freedom of speech.

I can assure Canadians that this piece of legislation is not made to do that. It is made to make sure that our artists in Canada and our content creators have the ability to express the stories that they would like to share with Canadians and the world about our wonderful country and about the experiences our people have in Canada.

● (1245)

I know that many members in the House support this piece of legislation, so I think it is quite unfair to hold it up any longer. We have seen it in the previous Parliament. We want to make sure that all members have the right to amend this piece of legislation, not just in this place but also in the other place as well.

Let us vote and get this show on the road. Let us make sure that the senators in the other place also have equal opportunity to put input into this piece of legislation. Let us get this work done for Canadians, for our artists and for our creators.

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is great to see you in the Chair. You are doing a fine job.

The member just asked that we vote and get this done. My question to her is this. Why is she currently filibustering this motion? The House leader of the opposition moved this motion, spoke for about four minutes and hoped that we could have a vote on it. What the government members are now doing is filibustering the motion to prevent the House of Commons from voting on it. The House leader spoke for only four minutes and now the government members are filibustering the motion.

I am not surprised, because the member was the chair of PROC when the Liberal members spent 100 days filibustering that committee to prevent the Prime Minister from having to testify, trying to save him rather than getting the work done for Canadians.

● (1250)

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, I am appalled by the allegation of the member opposite. I have not even had the opportunity in the past to really delve into this piece of legislation. I want to make sure there is debate in this House. I know the members would not want to muzzle me and are open to our freely expressing ourselves in this place.

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The member opposite has also done for hours on end what he is accusing me of doing in this moment. Plus, it is not the job of the House to let committees know what they should or should not be doing. The committee decided it was going to have 20 hours of witnesses and has done so. The committee wants to move on, and I think it should resolve the issue it is facing.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the excellent job you are doing as the acting Speaker.

I want to ask my colleague the following question. I gather what the Conservatives are trying to say is this: Why speak about what the Conservatives have done at committee to destroy it? Why not have a vote instead? That is kind of a bizarre approach to the debate we should be having.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice): The member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, the deputy government whip, just said that it is not the job of the House to tell committees what to do, so the question is this: Is she withdrawing Motion No. 11?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice): That is not a point of order; rather, we are getting into debate.

We will return to questions and comments.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby was in the middle of a question.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, that was not even remotely a point of order.

The question I want to ask my hon. colleague is this. We had five weeks of hearings at the heritage committee. The Conservatives blocked any further witnesses. In fact, they blocked many of the witnesses as they were trying to appear. I will address that in my speech in a moment.

All the other parties have already submitted amendments. We tried for a couple of weeks to get the Conservatives to do their work. They refused. Last Friday, all the other parties tabled their amendments. The Conservatives have refused even to have hearings into the serious allegations of sexual assault with respect to Hockey Canada. I moved a motion on—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice): The hon. member for Perth—Wellington is rising on another point of order.

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, the NDP House leader knows full well that it was the Conservatives who originally moved the motion to hear from Hockey Canada. The record must reflect that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice): We are seeing several points of order that are clearly matters of debate. I would encourage members to reserve points of order for true points of order.

We will return to the member for New Westminster—Burnaby, who can please proceed to his question.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I moved that on Monday and Wednesday we would have hearings with Hockey Canada. Conservatives refused to have the vote on that question, which would have

allowed for the hearings on Hockey Canada. The facts are very clear.

I wanted to ask my colleague what she thinks about this Conservative behaviour that we have seen over the last few weeks.

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the further insight I am getting into what has happened at committee. I know I have heard from some of my colleagues as to the delays that have occurred there, and I agree that the issue of Hockey Canada is important, but there is an order to be maintained in committees as well.

The committee, from what I have been hearing and from what the member has just said, has wanted to look into the Hockey Canada issue, but because there has been consistent filibuster and avoidance not only of getting this bill through committee, but also of getting on to setting meetings and hearing from witnesses on Hockey Canada, that is the issue they have been having at committee.

• (1255)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I will add my voice to those who are commending the admirable job you are doing in the chair. I thank you for what you are doing.

My question is for the hon. deputy whip. We are seeing a lot of delays. I personally think there has been too much political interference in committees. I want to raise a different issue, but it relates to this question of how much committees are really governing their own destinies.

As the member will know, I have objected for years to what has become the common practice of the Prime Minister's Office, dictating to every committee the terms of motions that must be passed at the beginning, after every election, requiring people in my position, as a member of a party that has fewer than 12 MPs, and other members' position, as at some points as many as 12 in the last Parliament were independent members, to provide amendments on legislation in committee that are deemed to have been moved. We are not allowed to vote on them; we are not allowed to participate in debate, yet the fiction on which these motions are justified is that the committee is the master of its own destiny, and it is just a coincidence that every single committee comes up with identically worded motions that are passed at the beginning of every session of Parliament following an election.

I wonder if the member would reflect on whether, if we want to maintain the fiction, it is at all appropriate to have these multiple motions passed at every committee that significantly increase my personal workload, which the hon. member may know is already a fairly significant one.

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, I would definitely agree and recognize that the member's workload is great, and that she probably carries a heavier burden than most members in this House. That is something I have definitely admired since my first day here. How she is able to keep track of what is happening in every committee and of every motion that is moved in the House is remarkable, and I appreciate her hard work.

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The motion that has been put forward today by the government is in order to make sure we can hear the amendments the opposition would like to propose when it comes to this piece of legislation. We do not want them not to amend the piece; we want them to be free to bring forth those constructive suggestions.

The motion that has just been moved by the opposition would take the committee on travel and other things, when all along the Conservatives have been denying committees the ability to complete their work. These are committees that chose to do this themselves, not through the House, but through votes within their own committees. They wished to travel to study a certain issue, but the Conservatives have opposed that, so it is beyond me why this motion is being put forth now. All I can say is that I believe it is to delay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice): There is a point of order from the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate it, and thank you for knowing my riding.

Having heard the government deputy whip's remarks with respect to this motion, I would seek the unanimous consent of the House to move to Orders of the Day.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice): All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice): Continuing with questions and comments, we will go to the hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncass (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech by my colleague from Brampton North. She made almost no reference to the motion we are currently debating, the request by the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage to conduct consultations away from Parliament Hill.

I am trying to understand my colleague's viewpoint. This Conservative Party motion does not really reflect what it wants for the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. Why does the Conservative Party believe that the heritage committee can travel but the foreign affairs committee cannot?

• (1300)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice): The hon. member for Brampton North has one minute to respond.

[*English*]

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, that is a great question posed by the member opposite. Unfortunately, I do not think I am in a position best suited to answer it, as it is perplexing to me as well. It is perplexing because foreign affairs has to do with international relations with other countries. All members who are working in the House are vaccinated, and members would be willing to participate in this type of travel.

It is beyond me why the Conservatives would oppose travel for one committee and then force a vote in the House on that very issue in another committee. It seems to me that this is just another tactic from their tool box, which they are trying to use to delay Bill C-11.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am almost without words to see what the Conservatives have done concerning Bill C-11. I am saddened by what we have seen. The deterioration and the disintegration of the Conservative Party over the last few months is something that I think has saddened all of us.

I would remind members that, back in the month of December, and I will pay tribute to the former leader, the member for Durham, the Conservative caucus, led by moderates, was able to actually work with all parties. We had the—

The Deputy Speaker: We have a point of order from the hon. member for Edmonton Manning.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Mr. Speaker, I do not think the speech the member is delivering is really relevant to the discussion of the day. I would like to see a real conversation happen rather than speaking about the former leader of the Conservative Party.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the member for the intervention, but there has been 40 seconds of the speech, so we will let the member get to his point. The member has 20 minutes to speak.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I have a lot to say, so I am going to take every single second of that time.

Yes, the Conservatives are sensitive to what happened. The ban on conversion therapy was passed at all stages in the House of Commons. Then we saw the result: The more extremist wing of the Conservative Party took over. We saw a number of Conservative MPs, through the course of the following month, even endorse the so-called “freedom convoy” with its vandalism, violence and stated goal to overthrow democracy, yet we had more extremist Conservative MPs endorsing that concept. It is very disturbing—

The Deputy Speaker: We have another point of order from the hon. member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley.

Mr. Marty Morantz: Mr. Speaker, I fail to see the relevance of talking about the convoy, or the many other things the member is talking about, to the matter at hand. I would ask that you rule on relevance.

The Deputy Speaker: I want to thank the member for the intervention. I would suggest that we should keep relevance in mind when we provide any speech in the House of Commons.

I recognize the member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, of course, all of this is relevant to the behaviour of the Conservatives in the heritage committee, but I will continue because it is important to have these timelines to explain why we have come to the debate today.

Subsequent to that, we saw the Conservatives become the second block party in the House of Commons. We have the Bloc Québécois, and now we have the block-everything party. Subsequent to the “freedom convoy”, every single piece of legislation has been blocked in the House of Commons. No matter what good it would do for people and no matter what things it would change, the Conservatives have blocked everything.

This, of course, brings us to the heritage committee. I will pay tribute to the member for Perth—Wellington, who is the moderate within the Conservative caucus. Despite the fact that he had the more extremist members represented in the committee not allowing him to do this good work, we did, in the end, agree to the equivalent of five weeks of hearings at the heritage committee around Bill C-11. It made sense. The Conservatives raised at the end of it that perhaps we could hear from further witnesses. There were a couple of witnesses I thought it would be wise to hear from, yet the Conservatives blocked, through filibuster, hearing from the witnesses whom they said they wanted to hear from.

They also blocked at the heritage committee, unbelievably, the ability of the CRTC chair to come and answer questions from members of Parliament. We all had questions, and we had this surreal committee hearing where Conservatives were filibustering as the chair of the CRTC and members of the CRTC were outside the room. While we were all wishing to ask questions of the CRTC, the Conservatives were trying to block that. Eventually, we were able to break that filibuster.

There was another filibuster that stopped the Minister of Canadian Heritage from coming to answer questions on Bill C-11. We had to break that filibuster as well. It has just been an exercise in chaos at the heritage committee, provoked by the Conservatives and their block-everything philosophy.

It is fair to say that, when five weeks of hearings is not sufficient and when there is no attempt by the Conservatives to actually work out a schedule, because it is important in this place that we work out a schedule, the dysfunction that the Conservatives were bringing to the heritage committee then extended to the issue of amendments. The vast majority of witnesses whom we heard from over that five-week equivalent time period were witnesses who were endorsing Bill C-11, but many of the witnesses had clear improvements that they wanted to see to the legislation. Members of all of the other parties understood that.

We tried for two weeks to have an amendment deadline, which makes sense. We want to make sure that, in the administration of the House, timelines are respected. Conservatives categorically refused to set a deadline. Last Friday, all the other members of Parliament from the other parties on the Canadian heritage committee submitted their amendments. We had received texts. We had received a series of interventions and memoirs. We had also heard from witnesses for the equivalent of five weeks, so we knew. The three other parties, the parties that are taking a more adult—

• (1305)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Speaker, on point of order, this member, at the beginning, said he was at a loss for words, then he said he

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had a lot to say. Now he is filibustering, so I am not sure we know what it is—

The Deputy Speaker: I think we are getting into debate there.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for again pointing out that it is absolutely not a point of order. Obviously, Conservatives are made uncomfortable by the stated facts that every other member of the heritage committee submitted their amendments a week ago, yet Conservatives still refuse to submit their amendments and still refuse to do the parliamentary work that we are paid to do.

The sad conclusion to what has been a debacle, which I certainly have not experienced since the days of the Harper government, was this week when I brought forward an amendment that would have allowed for Hockey Canada and for the Minister of Sport to come forward next Monday and next Wednesday to testify on the horrific allegations of sexual assault concerning Hockey Canada. Conservatives say they want to do that, but they refused to hold the vote that would allow us to have those important hearings on Monday and Wednesday. The contradiction between what Conservatives say and what they do is an unbelievable gap.

This is what brings us to the discussion on Motion No. 16 today. When we have a committee that has been deliberately broken by the Conservatives, since they have been radicalized over the last few months, we have a responsibility, as parliamentarians, to—

The Deputy Speaker: I believe we have point of order from the member for Calgary Centre.

Mr. Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, I would say that the member for New Westminster—Burnaby referring to me and my colleagues as radicals in the House of Commons is very unparliamentary. I would like you to rule on that immediately, please.

• (1310)

The Deputy Speaker: In the context of what we are talking about today, I do say that calling somebody a radical is probably a little on the edge, so I would ask the member to find a better word to use.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I would say that these are radical actions certainly. I do not impugn any member, and I certainly think there were disruptive actions over the last few weeks. They have definitely been disruptive actions. Most witnesses come forward to say that improvements need to be brought to the bill, but Conservatives systematically refused to have any consideration for the bill itself. They refused even to hear from the Minister of Canadian Heritage when he was outside the room, and they refused to hear from the chair of the CRTC when he and his staff were outside the room. This kind of conduct is simply not acceptable.

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We are engaged by Canadians to examine legislation and to improve legislation. That is part and parcel of our job in the House of Commons. The Conservatives have lamentably failed that over the last few weeks. We were able to get an agreement, which was tragically the last agreement other parties around the table at the heritage committee were able to obtain. The idea of the equivalent of five weeks of hearings is something that made sense. We heard from the major witnesses that we had all submitted. It made sense then to take what they had addressed, the kinds of suggestions that they put forward and from there, get to work on improving that legislation.

As I mentioned, the NDP filed their amendments more than a week ago, yet the Conservatives are a little like someone with a dog that ate their homework. They are refusing those amendments for a bill we believe can be improved. Where does that leave us?

I do need to put in this context the very clear disinformation that we are hearing from some Conservative members. The member for Provencher asked me in one of the evening debates on Bill C-11 about his concern that the government would be following us on cellphones and the connection to Bill C-11.

Mr. Speaker, I know you read the bill assiduously, but there is no reference at all to this. It is a wacko comment to say that somehow Bill C-11 is connected to governments following people on cellphones. It is just an unbelievable piece of disinformation.

We heard repeatedly today from Conservatives talking about censorship. Again, this has absolutely no relevance at all to the bill. As legislators, we are responsible for reading through the legislation. We are responsible for comments that have something to do with the actual legislation that is before us.

It is disappointing to me to see the Conservatives' attempts to block every piece of legislation we have seen over the last few months, even important pieces of legislation that would make a difference in people's lives, and I will reference a couple of them in a moment. This is now being replicated at the committee level where we have Conservatives simply refusing to allow the due diligence that is our responsibility for each piece of legislation.

That is the fundamental issue here. Conservatives basically tried to break the committee. We have three other parties in the democratic system, and the issue of representation is very important. Three of the four parties let us move forward and actually tabled their amendments and did the work. I have a great staff team. We put together those amendments and submitted them. It would then make sense for us to get to consideration of these amendments, but the Conservatives clearly indicated that they have no interest at all.

This happens even when they purport to support something. We can take the issue of Hockey Canada and the horrific allegations of sexual assault around Hockey Canada. The Conservatives said they wanted to study this, so I put forward an amendment for meeting next Monday and next Wednesday at our regularly scheduled times, and Conservatives refused to allow a vote on that. That is serious. They cannot say one thing, do completely the opposite, and expect to have credibility.

• (1315)

The Conservatives said they were concerned about Hockey Canada. The NDP shares those concerns. Members from all parties share those concerns. Why would the Conservatives be the party that blocks the vote that would allow us to actually have those hearings next Monday and Wednesday? There is nothing on the committee business yet for next Monday, when we could be hearing from Hockey Canada or from the Minister of Sport. However, because of the irresponsible Conservative actions, we will be listening to another Conservative filibuster—

The Deputy Speaker: I believe we have another point of order.

The member for South Shore—St. Margarets.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Speaker, the member is complaining about filibustering by filibustering. Will he get to the point?

The Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, thank you for pointing out, yet again, that this is not a point of order. I can understand Conservatives' sensitivity about their deplorable actions, both in the House of Commons and in committee. I can imagine Conservatives being defensive about the incredible hypocrisy of trying to say that they are for something and then doing the exact opposite.

What Conservatives owe Canadians is to stand up and say they have not been doing what they were elected to do. We are supposed to be working to improve legislation, to bring amendments and to listen to witnesses. When the vast majority of witnesses before the committee say they are in favour of Bill C-11, and when the vast majority of witnesses also say that there are some improvements that could be made, then we have a responsibility as legislators both to hear that testimony and to put it into action and actually get to the point where we are improving the legislation.

That is the unbelievable contradiction of what we have seen transpire in the House of Commons over the last few months. There are members of the Conservative caucus whom I deeply respect, and the member for Perth—Wellington is one of them. However, the actions of the Conservative caucus as a whole have been profoundly detrimental to the work we have to do to make sure that legislation is ultimately passed, but also to improve that legislation.

What has the NDP done over that same period? We have pushed the government, and it is a minority situation, so every party has that ability, to put in place, for the first time, national dental care. That would be starting soon for children 12 and under, for the many families—

The Deputy Speaker: I believe there is another point of order.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Speaker, there is no relevance. He is talking about dental care, not the issue of Bill C-11.

The Deputy Speaker: This is from *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, 2017:

Although the House now has rules to limit the length of speeches, at one time there were few limits and debate often strayed beyond the subject in question. In 1882, J.G. Bourinot, then Clerk of the House, felt the need to add this comment to his overview of parliamentary practice:

A just regard to the privileges and dignity of Parliament demands that its time should not be wasted in idle and fruitless discussion; and consequently every member, who addresses the house, should endeavour to confine himself as closely as possible to the question under consideration.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, absolutely, I am contrasting Conservative behaviour at the heritage committee with what the NDP has sought and obtained: dental care, affordable housing, all of those things that make a difference in people's lives.

The Conservatives at the heritage committee heard the vast majority of witnesses say that Bill C-11 is good but could be better, suggesting specific amendments that could improve the legislation. Why are Conservatives simply refusing to even submit amendments? Every other party, every other member of Parliament around that table has tried to submit amendments. We tried to set deadlines weeks ago, but ultimately we just sent them in. We did our work. We did our homework. We worked late. We made sure we had amendments that could be put forward to the heritage committee for consideration to achieve those improvements.

I think I have maybe a minute left.

● (1320)

The Deputy Speaker: The member has four minutes and 34 seconds left.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, as I said, I have a lot to say, so I appreciate that additional time.

There are areas within the bill that can definitely be improved. There is no doubt about that. We have the ability to ensure that we are actually improving that bill.

We have had the debate today, and there have been a number of comments. I referenced earlier the issue around Bill C-11 and Conservative MPs who obviously have not read the bill, who have not opened it or even turned to page one, saying that it had something to do with the government following people on cellphones or the government censoring people's opinions. Obviously, that is not accurate and not true.

At the same time, at the committee level, we have had a number of inaccuracies, and I call it disinformation, that have come up through the course of the day. First is the issue of amendments. As I mentioned earlier, all of the other parties submitted amendments last week. We had been calling for amendments for a couple of weeks before then.

We flag that for a number of reasons. First, there is the time that is required for translation and the time that is required to prepare the amendments. We have to work with legislative staff. All of us around the table, with the singular exception of the Conservatives, did that work to make sure that those amendments are put in place, that they are in order, and that they are conceived in an effective way to make sure they do what they purport to do. As we know,

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that often involves a back-and-forth. It often involves working with the legislative clerks, and then submitting it for official translation.

[*Translation*]

That way we have a translation that is accurate, but sometimes corrections are needed. Last week I corrected some amendments that had been submitted in English. I felt that the translation was inaccurate, so we tweaked the translations to ensure that the two versions matched. We had been talking about it for weeks, saying that the amendments really needed to be submitted. The Conservatives refused all attempts to give the clerks and translators enough time to do their work.

The member for Perth—Wellington said a few minutes ago that we have to think about the translators and the clerks. Fortunately, their task will be much less onerous, because the committee members, with the exception of the Conservatives, have already submitted their amendments. Three-quarters of the amendments have already been translated, fortunately. This means that the work is already done. In a way, we have made the Conservatives' work easier.

Second, the member for Perth—Wellington just said that members should be able to vote on the proposed elements. Once again, the Conservatives filibustered the motion moved today. It amounts to the same thing. Each amendment will be voted on by the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. This means that members will be called upon to decide the fate of each amendment.

Third, although we are going to have a nine-hour day of debate on these amendments, we also need to vote at some point. The vote is important. We might be working until one or two in the morning, but that is not a problem for me. We are supposed to be here to work. That is why we decided to condense five weeks of hearings into a shorter period. We held the equivalent of five weeks of hearings in a shorter period, but we had time—

● (1325)

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: I hate to cut the member off, but the time has expired.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis for questions and comments.

[*English*]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in my question I would like to speak to the issue of relevance. While I am sure it is unintentional and I would not want to impugn anyone, the opposition has been constantly and assiduously conflating the subject matter of this bill with the idea of the government spying on its citizens.

Private Members' Business

We are in a kind of anxious age because of the galloping nature of technology, and of course the Internet and everything around digital communication have added to that kind of anxiety.

I would like to hear the member's comments on how taking conspiratorial narratives and injecting them into this debate does not do anyone any good. In fact, it just feeds the general discomfiture of the age.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, with Trumpism in the United States we have seen the idea that one can just invent whatever truth one wants and throw it out there and that somehow it is acceptable. I would agree with the member that it is not acceptable.

For the member for Provencher to compare Bill C-11 to governments following people on cellphones is simply unbelievable, yet not a single Conservative MP said that it was wrong and that he should not be saying that.

In the same way that the Conservatives throw out this idea of censorship without any due regard for the bill itself, which they have not read or do not care to read, this does a disservice to democracy. The behaviour of the Conservatives over the last few weeks at the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage in a similar way has done a disservice. Our job is to take legislation and ultimately vote yes or no. That is true, but it is also our job to work to improve it. That has not been an objective of the Conservative Party in the last few months.

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first I want to correct the record and confirm that the Conservative Party, as of last Friday, has submitted a number of amendments to the committee clerk for the purposes of this legislation, but we are not done. We have not finalized all of our amendments because we have not finalized the review of this piece of legislation.

We have made very clear publicly, and did so in a release, the challenges and concerns we have with this piece of legislation, including section 4.2, the definition of discoverability, the redefinition of Canadian content and the thresholds that these institutions ought to meet.

The question I want to ask to the NDP House leader is very simple. Much of this interpretation will be left to the CRTC, based on the policy directive of the minister. The minister has said that he will not release it until after this piece of legislation receives royal assent. Would the member not agree that it would be better for transparency and for the benefit of all of us in the House who are debating and voting on this legislation if the minister would simply, as the government did with Bill C-10, release the draft policy directive to the CRTC so that we can see it, review it and make a judgment on it before we vote on Bill C-11?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for the member for Perth—Wellington. I think he was trying to be helpful. I think he was undermined by the rest of the representation on the heritage committee, but I know his heart is in the right place. I am very pleased to stand corrected and confirm that the Conservatives have actually submitted amendments. That shows that they find the time frames are reasonable, as we have been debating over the last few weeks. I am pleased to stand corrected on that.

I also know from experience that the minister is very accessible. I know that if the member for Perth—Wellington could sit down with the minister, it would be an opportunity for them to exchange thoughts on the policy directive. I think that is an important piece—

● (1330)

The Deputy Speaker: I hate to cut off the member. When we get back to this, he will have five minutes and 25 seconds remaining in questions and comments.

It being 1:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

RETIREMENT INCOME

The House resumed from March 29 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, to begin, I would like to commend my colleague from Etobicoke North, whose motion we are studying today and who chairs the new Standing Committee on Science and Research. I am the vice-chair of that committee, so I have had the opportunity to work with her over the past few months, and I can say that, while we may not always agree, our interactions have always been very cordial, which is a credit to her.

To come back to the matter at hand, I first want to say that I will be voting in favour of the motion. The Bloc Québécois has long made the living conditions of seniors one of its primary concerns. We deeply believe that every senior deserves a dignified retirement free from financial worry. This is one of our top priorities, and I am proud to say that our actions are a testament to this. I would like to mention a few of the things we have done.

Last year, the Bloc Québécois got a motion passed calling on the House to increase old age security. It bears mentioning that that happened without Liberal support.

On June 2, the Bloc Québécois finalized a petition calling on the government to increase OAS by \$110 per month for people 65 and up. I presented a similar petition calling for an OAS raise in the last Parliament. Following a huge campaign involving seniors' groups in my riding and Quebecers in general, we gathered over 20,000 signatures. I would like to sincerely thank everyone who contributed to that success.

During the 43rd Parliament, my Bloc colleague, the member for Manicouagan, introduced a bill to protect pension funds and group insurance by giving them higher priority in the creditors' list when companies go bankrupt. The bill had the support of all four political parties, but it died on the Order Paper when the election was called. Not to be deterred, we reintroduced it in this Parliament.

I could go on and on, but I will get to the heart of my argument. The important thing to remember is that the Bloc Québécois has been on the front lines of every battle to improve the living conditions of seniors, and we will continue to carry the burden on behalf of those who are too often under-represented in the public debate.

We are therefore not opposed to the federal government undertaking studies on the financial situation of seniors and finding ways to improve it, as suggested in the motion. It is entirely pertinent and legitimate to try to come up with new tools that could be used to help seniors make the most of their financial assets and achieve the best possible standard of living.

However, it is essential that these studies, if undertaken, not be used as an excuse for delaying the urgent action that is desperately needed, given the current situation. Particularly in the last year, seniors' quality of life has deteriorated rapidly throughout Quebec and Canada. The runaway inflation we are experiencing, which shows no sign of abating, has caused prices to skyrocket on things like housing, gas and food, and this trend will eventually extend to all goods and services.

Retired workers in particular are more vulnerable and at risk because they have left the workforce and have no way to increase their income. It is no coincidence that many food banks have reported more retirees using their services. In-depth studies might be useful and constructive, but we already have access to a number of measures that could be implemented immediately and provide guaranteed results, without having to reinvent the wheel.

As the Bloc Québécois has said many times, the top priority is a significant increase to OAS for all seniors 65 and older. It could not be clearer. The government recently increased OAS by 10%, but only for seniors 75 and older. Why is the government ignoring the thousands of seniors aged 65 to 74?

• (1335)

Despite what the Liberals may think, it is false to claim that financial insecurity only hits at age 75. FADOQ, the largest group of people aged 50 and over in the country, shares that view and was offended by this age-based discrimination, which set a dangerous precedent by creating two categories of seniors.

Another measure that would be worth implementing immediately is related to the annual indexation of OAS and GIS. At present, these two benefits are indexed based on the previous year's consumer price index. That means the indexation rate for 2022 is based on the consumer price index for 2021. This corresponds to a 2.7% indexation rate.

In January 2022, however, inflation reached 5.1% in Canada, and it has only continued to increase. Unfortunately for those whose only sources of income are OAS and GIS, they must pay this year's prices for gas, groceries and medications, not last year's.

The result of this shift is that seniors' purchasing power is undermined because the cost of the goods and services they use is going up faster than their pensions. We therefore have to consider whether there is another indexing method that could be applied to OAS and GIS, one that would not erode seniors' purchasing power.

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The answer is yes. Many pension advocacy groups suggest basing the indexation of pensions on trends in wages, because they increase faster than the consumer price index. Another calculation method that was developed by the United Kingdom involves increasing benefits yearly to match price increases, wage growth or 2.5%, whichever is highest.

There is no doubt that a study on aging and the financial health of seniors should consider this issue and possibly explore other mechanisms in order to determine which one would best preserve seniors' purchasing power year after year.

Finally, another issue that requires immediate attention is how to retain experienced workers. Since 2014, the active population in Quebec has been shrinking every day as workers retire and are not replaced by the smaller new cohort. Population aging is well under way and will accelerate sharply over the next decade.

That is especially true in my region, the Lower St. Lawrence, which has one of the fastest-aging populations in Quebec. Currently, one in four people in the Lower St. Lawrence region is over 65, and that ratio will increase to one in three within 10 years.

This decrease in the number of workers is also causing a labour shortage that continues to be a headache for employers. At the same time, one in four seniors believes that staying employed is important for staying active, cultivating a sense of usefulness and aging in a healthy way. Why then are most of them leaving the labour market?

It is not out of a lack of interest, but because of disincentives to stay. Pensioners who stay in the labour market have their pensions clawed back when they start earning employment income. We need to address this problem and bring in measures to encourage experienced workers who are willing and able to keep working.

A new tax credit for experienced workers, similar to the one Quebec is offering to help workers aged 60 and over, is worth exploring. An increase to the amount of employment or self-employment income that is exempt from the GIS calculation is also a promising option, as it would allow seniors to earn more annually without having money clawed back from their GIS cheque.

In conclusion, I could never see myself condemning the federal government for doing too much for seniors. The Bloc Québécois will be supporting the Liberal motion, but I would remind our colleagues on the other side of the House that sometimes, it is better to leave well enough alone.

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I am certain that the member for Etobicoke North has seniors' well-being at heart. I therefore invite this member of the Liberal Party to stand in solidarity with the Bloc Québécois by supporting our proposals to substantially increase the purchasing power of seniors in our communities. Seniors need allies in the government party.

The government should start by increasing OAS for all seniors at age 65, to allow those who are being hit hard by inflation to breathe a little easier. Only then can we undertake further studies.

• (1340)

[English]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the concerns expressed in the motion before us. It is important that seniors live with dignity, that they are not overwhelmed with safety, health or financial concerns, and that they do not worry about how they will live if their savings run out. However, I believe that there are a lot of studies sitting on shelves in this place that have never been acted on. In fact, there is already a very current seniors study from HUMA that has not yet made its way to the House. That study was done just a year ago, before the Liberals' unnecessary election. I hope that at some point soon the report will make its way to this chamber to be acted on. Too many studies done by committees, by the PBO, by NGOs or even by accredited research institutes are not acted on by the government.

As my colleague for North Island—Powell River said, “several years ago there was a substantive study on a national seniors strategy, yet there is still no national framework in this country to address the large population of people who are aging”. There is also no federal plan to address how we are going to manage the aging of our population, and no plan on how we are going to work with provinces and territories in a meaningful way to make sure that none of the seniors across the country is left behind.

I point to health care. Provinces and territories are practically begging the government to increase health care transfers to deal with the tsunami of health care needs of our aging population. It is clear that the government has no plans for seniors in this country. At the same time, members in the House can see, in their very own communities, that many seniors are struggling. Their struggles are not because the government is missing another study. It is because the government has not responded to the studies that have already been done on this topic.

An example of one that was not acted on was published by the Broadbent Institute in 2016, six years ago. It is entitled “An Analysis of the Economic Circumstances of Canadian Seniors”. It reads:

The analysis thus far has presented sound evidence that current policies, programs, and approaches to ensuring the economic security of Canada's seniors are falling short. In addition to worrisome levels of poverty, the data show totally inadequate retirement savings of Canadians without workplace pensions. This highlights both the need for expanding the CPP/QPP and the shortcomings of voluntary savings vehicles like TFSAs, RRSPs, group RPPs, and the more recent Pooled Registered Pension Plans.

If only the government had acted on the findings of this study six years ago, seniors would be in a better place than they are now, but the government did not. Knowing the history of the Liberal government's inaction, I do not believe that another study would result in concrete steps to improve the lives of seniors. What I am really in-

terested in is something that is actually going to make change: something that is going to address the realities that people are living longer and that their retirement savings have to last substantively longer.

I want to see this government help seniors. We need solutions, not studies. I really mean that, because I have talked to too many seniors across the country, and in my own riding of Port Moody Coquitlam, who have told me that they cut their medication in half. They are not taking their medication to save money. They are putting their own health at risk because they cannot afford to take their meds. Now, with the increasing price of food, I am hearing from seniors that are no longer buying meat or dairy, and some not even fresh fruit.

One of the reasons it is getting harder too is the financialization of housing. In my community, I can point to REITs. REITs are going after stable seniors rental housing. Too many real estate developers and agents are tirelessly harassing seniors on the doorsteps of their own homes, encouraging them to sell even when there is nowhere for them to go. It keeps me up at night thinking about how many seniors have already lost their affordable homes due to the predatory tactics of corporate investors. Seniors have been displaced across the country so that some corporation can make a profit through a real estate investment.

Is another seniors study going to stop predatory real estate investors? Is it going to reduce the price of food? Is it going to increase income supports for seniors? Is it going to finally bring pharmacare to this country? I do not think so.

• (1345)

Doing another seniors study is just an unmet promise by the government to do something that it has not done in the past. It will not address meaningfully the lack of income security that supports us as we age. Instead of another study, I believe we need more courage by the government and better prioritization. The government needs to move from love of the lifting of corporations to love of the lifting of people. It needs to make sure that there is support in place for people as they age, so that they can live all their days in dignity.

Right now in this country, too many seniors are facing struggles because they cannot afford to make ends meet and, unfortunately, COVID has left even more of them behind. How did we get to this point, where there is no proper infrastructure in this country when it comes to the care of our citizens? We do not have systems in place that really focus on making sure that people are cared for as they age.

The care economy is a growing concern in this country, and it already supports one in five workers, mostly women and immigrant women who are exploited in workplaces like long-term care homes. That reality needs to be addressed immediately. We do not need another study to know that the government should be prioritizing long-term care and the workers within it.

I spoke earlier about a study that was done last year by the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. That study looked at the impact of COVID-19 on seniors. Let us ensure that study comes to the House.

There are solutions that can be found right now, and it will take only the government's action to bring some simple fixes, some, like the ones my colleague from the Bloc brought up earlier, that would make changes in the House and make income supports available for seniors.

In closing, I want to see action from the government, not another report on a shelf. For that reason, I am not sure I can support the motion as is, but I propose the following amendment and look for all parties' support of this addition. I move that the motion be amended by adding, after the words "interest rates", the following: "guaranteed livable basic income".

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty to inform hon. members that pursuant to Standing Order 93(3), no amendment may be proposed to a private member's motion or to the motion for second reading of a private member's bill unless the sponsor of the item indicates his or her consent.

Therefore, I ask the hon. member for Etobicoke North if she consents to this amendment's being moved.

Hon. Kirsty Duncan: Mr. Speaker, after months of consultation with numerous groups and many attempts with the NDP to even have a conversation, this motion is actually on RRIFs and we did not even hear that discussed, so the motion stands.

The Deputy Speaker: There is no consent. Therefore, pursuant to Standing Order 93(3), the amendment cannot be moved at this time.

● (1350)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating my colleague, the member for Etobicoke North, and thanking her for choosing such an important and timely subject.

In recent years, many of my constituents have contacted me, as their MP, about this issue. This motion gives me an opportunity to speak to the issue and discuss it here in the House of Commons.

I was here for the first hour of debate. I listened to all the speeches and I heard a number of criticisms about the motion. Most of the criticisms were about things that were supposedly missing. I feel those criticisms are unjustified and fail to address the nub of the issue.

It is true that, if I am not mistaken, the motion does not mention the Canada pension plan, the Quebec pension plan, old age security or the guaranteed income supplement, but that is not what we are

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talking about today. We are not talking about those aspects of the support system for Canadian retirees.

I would like to take a moment to speak about the nature of our support system for retirees. It is a mixed system, a system that reflects our ways of doing things and our lifestyle here in Canada. It is reflected in our federative political system, which is a nuanced, multi-dimensional system.

For example, we have a mixed economy that is based on free markets. However, the government does intervene for various reasons. We therefore have a mixed system, which consequently is perhaps more stable and efficient than other economies around the world. In particular, I think that it is more efficient and fairer than the American economic system.

We also have a health system that is somewhat mixed. It is obviously a public health system. However, there is some space on the periphery for private insurance plans to cover the cost of medications, for example, although we are moving towards a national pharmacare system. It is therefore a system that allows for private insurers to cover certain services such as osteopathy, eye exams, psychotherapy and so forth. Once again, it is a multi-dimensional system. In Canada, we have the capacity to find a middle ground. That is Canada's brand, and it makes Canada a force in several respects.

As a complement to public pensions, Canadians also have access to private savings vehicles supported by the tax system. The tax policies of both levels of government make it possible to invest in a registered retirement savings plan, or RRSP, and in a registered retirement income fund, or RRIF. Some of these vehicles enable individuals to manage their own retirement investments.

● (1355)

Even those who do not keep an eye on their portfolio every day—and I think that is most people—still have some knowledge of what is happening in the financial markets. If someone has an RRSP or a RRIF, they obviously keep an eye on the financial markets, even if they are not an expert and they do not work on managing their portfolio every day. In short, those who have these financial instruments are in a position to make fairly informed decisions that will help them maximize the value of their assets to the extent possible.

Many people have written to me to share their concerns about how the current rules, which require them to withdraw a minimum percentage of their portfolio after the age of 71, will leave them less well off financially in the long-term. That means they will not necessarily have the support they hoped to have when they are older and further into their retirement.

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Many have told me that it makes no sense to be required to withdraw a minimum amount from their funds and that they would rather not do that right now because the financial markets are down. Taking out their money is worse than not being able to take advantage of a situation where they might be able to benefit from a capital gain. Worse yet, they are being forced to take a loss. Many of my constituents have written in to urge us to suspend this requirement to withdraw a percentage of the funds in their portfolio.

A few years ago, such a request was not justified because the financial markets were more or less stable. However, I believe that everyone in the House can see that the economy has been more volatile these past few years than it was in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. It is a fact we can see with our own eyes if we watch the news or follow the markets a bit.

Stephen Poloz, former governor of the Bank of Canada, just published a book entitled *The Next Age of Uncertainty: How the World Can Adapt to a Riskier Future*. It is only available in English for now.

Even the former governor of the Bank of Canada has said that the world is more unstable than it once was and that, as a result, financial markets will show a much wider variation or spread in the value of investments. This is a reality we need to come to grips with.

As I said at the beginning of my speech, this may be the time to really look at this issue again. I know that in the past, governments have made adjustments to the amounts and percentages that have to be taken out of one's portfolio. However, I believe that the current economic and financial situation calls for a review of this issue to see whether we need to make changes that would allow pensioners to retain the value of their assets for much longer than if everything stayed the same.

[English]

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to speak in the House on M-45, brought forward by the member for Etobicoke North. It is good to see she is in the House today as well—

The Deputy Speaker: Members cannot say whether anyone is in the House or not.

I will let the member back up and give him the full 10 minutes.

The hon. member for Yellowhead.

Mr. Gerald Soroka: Mr. Speaker, I would like to start off by saying that I am pleased and honoured to speak in the House to Motion No. 45, brought forward by the member for Etobicoke North.

I will say right from the start that I am not opposed to the motion. I am fine with doing the study and everything, but I am concerned about whether we need to do another study. I mean, there has been enough information and there have been enough studies brought forward in the past. One of the concerns I have is that everyone talks about, "Well, maybe this study needs to be updated," or, "Maybe this one is a little too far out of date," but I still think there is enough information.

I will begin with some background and history as to my past. Before I was an MP, I was mayor of Yellowhead County. At that time, I was also part of an organization called the Evergreens Foundation, which was the seniors housing situation in our riding. Not only was I on the board, but I was also the chair of the board, which gave me the opportunity to understand a lot more about seniors' issues. As I am also getting older, it is great to be aware of what is potentially going to happen to me in the future.

At the Evergreens Foundation we were in charge of housing, and that ranged from homes to apartments and right to seniors lodges. There was a lot of information that we had to take in, and a lot of issues in trying to get seniors into our housing areas. There was never this "based on income" requirement in order to be allowed in the housing market, but definitely 30 points were given based on one's income score. If one had too high a level of income, then one was less eligible to get in. Unfortunately, that was not the case for most people. Most had no problem accessing the subsidized part of our housing operation.

However, when I went to conferences, I was quite astounded to learn from one of the speakers about the future plans, or lack thereof, that Canadians had for retirement. The speaker talked about how probably about 25% of Canadians really planned for their future. They knew that the Canada pension was not going to be enough and that they had to supplement it, and they were very secure in making sure that they had no problems financially.

Unfortunately, the next 25% of people knew that they probably would not get enough money from the Canada pension and so they really should start saving, but they also did not put enough money aside.

It gets scarier as we keep going through the numbers. The next 25% believed that they probably should put money aside, but maybe the Canada pension would be enough to take care of them and so they really just sort of thought, "We'll just deal with it."

Unfortunately, the last 25% of Canadians did not even have a clue that they needed to save for their retirement. They just assumed that the Canada pension was going to be enough and that the government was there to take care of all their concerns.

When we look at these numbers, 75% of Canadians are not able to secure their future and have not put enough money aside or did not even know they had to put enough money aside for retirement, so this is where I kind of question a study. The speaker I am talking about spoke at this conference over five years ago, so it has been an issue for many years already that Canadians do not think they need to have a retirement plan. They figure that the government is more than willing to take care of them. One of my concerns with the motion is this: After all these years we have known that Canadians have not saved enough money, I question why we need another study when there is more than enough information out there.

Now, not only is that a problem I had with that committee, but I started to understand a lot more about how Canadians lived their lives, because of some of those statistics as well as being on the board of Evergreens.

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I will change the names and areas so that I do not identify anybody in my riding, but I have dealt with Mary from Thorsby many times in the past. Finances have been a big issue for most of her life, so putting money aside was never an issue for her, because she just never had excess money to put aside. However, every time something came up, she would ask, "Gerald, is there more availability for programs or some other grant or something for housing? Are there things I can access?" Unfortunately, I was never able to give her any real help.

However, when COVID hit, Mary was still working part-time, and she was in her eighties at the time. The organization she was with applied for COVID funding for her, and she was able to get that COVID funding.

• (1400)

The problem was that she did not put any money aside for the taxes, so she ended up paying, and I am well aware we have kind of changed direction on that, so that is not too bad for her. However, her problem still was that she did not get the guaranteed income supplement. She was losing over \$600 a month. When she talked about her Canada pension and all of the bills that she had, and she is about \$450 in the hole every month. She is not able to make ends meet.

I talked to Mary and told her that I did not want to bring it up, but I was thinking her only option would maybe be a reverse guaranteed mortgage. That is where the government or an agency assumes the mortgage on her farm and give her the money she needs. It basically takes the inheritance away from the family members. She told me that she just could not do that.

I thought that it was more about the personal strength of her own farm and knowing that she would have to, in a way, sell the farm back, but that is not what the issue was. The issue was that her son had gotten into some financial trouble a couple years ago and she ended up mortgaging her farm to help her son out. There was no way she could even get this guaranteed basic income from her home with a reverse mortgage situation.

This lady is in a terrible situation because no matter where one thought there could be money coming from, she was not able to access it. That was the devastating part. Through no fault of her own, but for the love of her son, she actually tried to make it better for her family, which ended up hurting her. Now we have this woman who is in her 80s, with no real financial opportunities, who did not plan properly in her life, and I feel for her, but at the same time, there are not any government programs in there.

My concern with this program and doing this study is the fact that it is going to take another year. That is fine, but it will then also take how many more months or another year to implement any of the recommendations put forward. We are probably looking at, at least, a minimum of two years. What do we tell Mary for the next two years, who does not have the money to help her get through and cope with everything she has been dealing with?

It is very devastating for me to have say, "Jeez, Mary, I am sorry. I am not able to help."

Unfortunately, Mary's is just one of the many stories I have heard from seniors living across my riding. I think some of them have thought just like I said. The last 25% believe that the Canada pension was going to be enough, and it never was enough. It was always supposed to be supplemented by some personal savings account.

What a lot of farmers have done is to sell their farms as part of their retirement package and then live off the interest, for whatever time that amounted to. That is great for some people, but not everybody is in that situation. There are many seniors who have rented their whole life, rented right in towns and cities, wherever they may be, and they just never had that asset to sell. Therefore, that becomes a problem when the future comes and they do not have that financial security.

My concern with this motion is the fact that we are well aware of the pitfalls that Canadians have put themselves in. We are well aware of all of the studies that have been done in the past, yet this is not addressing the current needs today.

Unfortunately, it is going to take two more years, probably, before this goes through, so I am really hoping that everyone does support this. I am really hoping that we are able to get Canadians back to the financial security and quality of life seniors deserve in their final days, because it is never good that anyone who has given all their time to Canada, to the community, is having that taken away from them.

• (1405)

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to rise today to discuss such an important issue. I am disappointed, to be frank, that my colleague across the floor did not support my colleague's amendment to add a much-needed guaranteed livable basic income to this motion.

We know seniors are asking for real solutions. Across Canada, more and more seniors are struggling to make ends meet. Despite a lifetime of hard work and contributions to our communities, seniors are unsure how they are going to pay for their groceries, keep a roof over their head and pay their bills. Is this the example we wish to show our children? It is shameful. Seniors deserve to retire with dignity.

In my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith, seniors represent almost a quarter of our population. Too many seniors in our communities are struggling to make ends meet. In Nanaimo, for example, the average cost of a two-bedroom apartment has more than doubled over the last six years. An average one-bedroom rental now costs over \$1,500 a month. For seniors living on a fixed income, these costs mean cuts elsewhere, such as in groceries or their life-saving medications.

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Seniors cannot wait for relief. Why do we keep talking about study after study when we know seniors need action now? Seniors contacting my office have been clear: They want to be treated with dignity and be able to afford to get by. That is why I am so glad that my NDP colleague put forward this amendment for a guaranteed livable basic income so that seniors can be treated with the respect they deserve. I hope that this conversation and this solution continue after this debate today.

Seniors with British citizenship in Nanaimo—Ladysmith and across Canada, as another example, are losing their hard-earned money every month. This is the result of their U.K. pensions being frozen because they live in Canada. If they still lived in the U.K. or almost anywhere else in the world, these pensions would be indexed and would continue to increase year after year, but because Canada never reached an agreement with the U.K., these pensions have been frozen.

Pat, a well-loved and respected 91-year-old constituent in Nanaimo—Ladysmith, continues to contribute in our communities in so many ways. Pat grew up in New Malden, U.K. She left school and went to work at 16 years of age, paying into the U.K. pension plan for two decades before coming to Canada. She began drawing her pension at retirement, as one would expect, and has been receiving the same amount every month for 30 years, which is about 119 pounds or \$190 Canadian per month. As a result, Pat lives well below the poverty line and struggles to make ends meet.

I want to acknowledge all those advocating to the government to finally do better for the 127,000 and counting British pensioners in Canada, such as Ian Andexser, the president of the Canadian Alliance of British Pensioners and a constituent in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

This is not a new problem. Ian and many others have been advocating a change for decades. Most recently, he called the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development to ensure that these frozen pensions are part of Canada's ongoing trade talks with the United Kingdom. While the government chooses inaction on this issue, contributing members of our communities are the ones left to suffer. This is not good enough.

As I conclude my remarks today, I want to thank the member opposite again for making sure that the struggles seniors are facing are recognized and discussed in this chamber. While I agree that the motion has the best of intentions, I want to stress that seniors who are losing their homes or skipping meals because they cannot afford their groceries should not have to wait for another study on this issue.

We know that the government can and should do more to be there for seniors. I really hope that the government reconsiders the NDP amendment to add the guaranteed livable basic income and ensure that we are finding real solutions so that every senior in Canada is able to live with dignity.

Another issue that is coming forward in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith is around supporting seniors during the pandemic. When the pandemic hit, many seniors believed that their support system

from the government would be there for them. The pandemic revealed that this was not the case, unfortunately.

● (1410)

One example of this occurred when seniors who relied upon the guaranteed income supplement, and rightfully accessed CERB during the pandemic, saw their benefits clawed back the next year. Despite seniors and advocates raising this concern for months, and the NDP pushing the government to do better, the government sat on its hands for months before addressing this problem. While I am glad to see that the government has moved forward to begin addressing the problem, it should never have come to this.

As members can see, there are endless tangible items that are being brought forward by seniors to my office. Seniors are asking us to make sure that we are putting in place solutions that afford them the dignity and respect that they deserve. I am apprehensive and concerned that we continue to implement study after study and we are not seeing that action necessary for seniors be put into place. I hope that we start seeing those actions put into place, and I thank the member again for the motion.

● (1415)

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to speak to Motion No. 45, brought forward by my colleague from Etobicoke North. The motion asks for the following:

That:

(a) the House recognize that (i) seniors deserve a dignified retirement free from financial worry, (ii) many seniors are worried about their retirement savings running out, (iii) many seniors are concerned about being able to live independently in their own homes; and

(b) in the opinion of the House, the government should undertake a study examining population aging, longevity, interest rates, and registered retirement income funds, and report its findings and recommendations to the House within 12 months of the adoption of this motion.

My riding of Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley in Manitoba is home to many seniors. Seniors helped build this country and our communities. I have always said that they need to be treated with the respect they are due for building our communities while raising their families. We all stand on their shoulders in this place.

I stay in touch with many seniors I represent, because I value their experience and their wisdom. Not a day goes by that I do not receive an important email or phone call from seniors I represent who are concerned about their finances. Many are on fixed incomes from their retirement pensions. They are worried about rampant inflation, which has been directly caused by the massive, out-of-control quantitative easing program instituted by the Bank of Canada.

Private Members' Business

Even the Bank of Canada governor, Tiff Macklem, acknowledged that he and his lieutenants misjudged the strength of inflation at the start of the year, and pledged to act “as forcefully as needed” to make up for the mistake. During testimony at the Senate banking committee on April 27, he said that we are coming “out of the deepest recession we’ve ever had, but...we got a lot of things right and we got some things wrong, and we are adjusting.” Inflation eats away at pension income because price inflation makes everything more expensive. It erodes the basic fixed income of every senior. The bank’s main responsibility was to keep inflation at 2%, but now inflation is at almost 7% because of the bank’s mismanagement of this issue, as admitted by the governor.

I note that the motion is also concerned about interest rates. As a result of the bank’s mismanagement of inflation, it has been forced to raise interest rates. The bank now uses higher interest rates as a tool to curb inflation. Higher interest rates are great if people have savings, but if they are still paying a mortgage or a car loan, which many seniors do, this just compounds the problem. Any discussion of this matter should in fact include a discussion of how to protect seniors against inflation eroding their incomes. In my view, this motion is very timely. Seniors on fixed incomes have been hurt by the bank’s mistakes and now have to make difficult decisions around what foods they can afford, or whether they can afford to visit their grandchildren or buy them presents.

On top of this, to add insult to injury, instead of providing an adequate income for Canadian seniors, by any identifiable metric the government has done just the opposite. It promised to help seniors and Canadians suffering during the deadliest pandemic the globe has seen in a century. In order to facilitate this, the government implemented COVID-related financial relief. Despite warnings from its own ministerial officials, the government sat on its laurels and allowed this benefit, which was taxable, to decimate tens of thousands of vulnerable, low-income seniors this past year by clawing back their GIS. Only after months of advocacy by my Conservative colleagues did the Minister of Seniors finally take action to fix her government’s mistake by introducing Bill C-12 and issuing a one-time payment to affected seniors. Better late than never, as they say.

While I am happy to support the motion, I just cannot help but feel that this will be just another study collecting dust on the shelf in the minister’s office. The fact of the matter is that these issues have already been studied many times. Seniors do not want or need another study. They want action now, not a year from now or after yet another study. Seniors want action right now, not 12 months from now or three or four years from now. We have a number of studies that are either done or in the process of being done, and recommendations to follow up on. The HUMA committee is currently studying the effects of COVID-19 on seniors. This study covers much of the same ground as what this motion calls for. There will be a large overlap between the information the committee has already gathered and what the member’s motion hopes to achieve.

● (1420)

Also, back in 2018, a motion moved by the member for Nickel Belt, Motion No. 106, seconded by many House caucus colleagues, asked the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities to study and report back to the House on important issues such as in-

creasing income security for vulnerable seniors and ensuring quality of life and equality for all seniors via the development of a national seniors strategy, among other things. Seniors are still waiting for that national strategy four years later.

The result of the committee’s work was a 142-page report entitled “Advancing Inclusion and Quality of Life for Seniors”, which made 29 recommendations. Many of these recommendations speak directly to the motion we are debating here today, and the government has unsurprisingly failed to act on many of them.

There is not time to review every recommendation in the 10 minutes I am allotted, but one of the areas my hon. friend mentioned in her motion is interest rates and registered retirement income funds. As I said, we on this side agree that affordability for seniors was an issue before COVID and before the recent record increase in inflation and the cost of living under the government’s watch. This was caused largely by the mistakes of the Bank of Canada, which it has admitted to.

The very first recommendation of the 2018 report reads, “That Employment and Social Development Canada work with Finance Canada and the Canada Revenue Agency to review and strengthen existing federal income support programs for vulnerable seniors to ensure they provide adequate income.” Four long and difficult years later, seniors know that this recommendation, along with the national strategy, has been ignored.

In addition to the GIS clawback I mentioned earlier in July of last year, the then minister of seniors announced a one-time payment of \$500 to seniors aged 75 and over, stating, “Canadian seniors can always count on us to listen, understand their needs and work hard to deliver for them.” However, apparently, the government was unaware that one particularly important need for seniors, especially those on benefits, is to receive timely and accurate tax information.

Once again, the government’s incompetence resulted in over 90,000 Canadian seniors receiving the wrong tax information, jeopardizing their ability to file their taxes on time. They now run the risk of once again having their benefits cut off through no fault of their own. That is why our party advocated for the government to extend the deadline for seniors filing their taxes so there would remain zero risk of vulnerable seniors having their benefits taken from them by the government once again.

Private Members' Business

When it comes to seniors, the government is all talk but little action. Seniors cannot afford to be an afterthought when it is implementing policies and programs designed to help them. We must work together as a House to deliver results. That is why I will be voting in favour of my hon. colleague's motion. I look forward to seeing the findings implemented efficiently, effectively, speedily, and most importantly, not another four years down the road.

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking colleagues for their support of my very focused Motion M-45 to start a national conversation around registered retirement income funds, or RRIFs. Very specifically, Motion M-45 asks the government to undertake a study examining population aging, longevity, interest rates and registered retirement income funds, and to report its findings and recommendations to the House within 12 months. Studies lead to action.

Today, when Canadians turn 71, they must convert their registered retirement savings plans, or RRSPs, to registered retirement income funds, or RRIFs, and begin making mandatory withdrawals at a set rate. Seniors are concerned that the current rates do not reflect today's realities, that life expectancy is longer and retirement is longer than when RRIFs were created, and that people risk outliving their savings.

I have done a lot of listening to seniors in Etobicoke North and right across the country. What they have told me is that they were forced to take out money from their RRIFs when they did not need the money, when they were not sick, when they had not lost a partner or when they did not need care. However, when they really needed the funds, they had been depleted through mandatory withdrawals. In some cases, they were gone altogether. They said that while their costs were always increasing, their RRIFs were forever decreasing.

Canadians are facing a perfect storm when it comes to long-term financial retirement security. Workplace pensions are becoming less common, retirement costs are increasing, and Canadians are living longer than ever before. Increased longevity and longer retirements mean that mandated RRIF withdrawals put people in a position to outlive their savings. Canadians know that the rules around RRIFs have not kept pace with the times, and they expect parliamentarians to listen, to have a conversation and to act.

Solutions do exist, whether increasing the mandatory withdrawal age, reducing the rate of withdrawal set for each age, doing a combination of these or eliminating mandatory withdrawals. These are just a few options, and the study could identify more. Rules con-

cerning RRIFs have changed before, and they can change again. After RRIFs were first introduced, amendments were made in 1986, 1992, 2015 and most recently in 2020.

Canadians and organizations such as CanAge, CARP, the C.D. Howe Institute, the Investment Industry Association of Canada and the National Association of Federal Retirees have been asking for changes to RRIFs.

With this motion, we have an opportunity to do something for those who have given us so very much. Canada's seniors contribute to our communities, country and society in countless ways. They have helped shape our country, and they have raised, mentored and invested in generations of Canadians. They are our parents, grandparents, friends, neighbours, workers and volunteers, and they matter. We must do more than just thank them for everything they have done for us and our country. After all, they laid the foundation for a better future for all of us. One of the best measures of a country is how it treats its older citizens and the most vulnerable. Seniors worked hard. They played by the rules, and they deserve a dignified and secure retirement free from financial worry.

I know that every member in the House cares about seniors and ensuring they have a dignified retirement. We have an opportunity to do something really important and impactful. We can come together to start a much-needed conversation, encourage the government to gather evidence and come forward with recommendations to improve RRIFs for Canadian seniors. Canadians want this study, and they want action.

● (1425)

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion.

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

The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Speaker, I would like to request a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to order made November 25, 2021, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 15, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

It being 2:30 p.m., the House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:30 p.m.)

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