



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

43rd PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION

House of Commons Debates

Official Report
(Hansard)

Volume 150 No. 119
Wednesday, June 16, 2021

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, June 16, 2021

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1400)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

KINGS—HANTS OLYMPIC ATHLETE

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in this House to congratulate a constituent of mine, Wyatt Sanford, of Kennetcook, on qualifying to represent Canada at the Tokyo Olympics this summer.

Wyatt joins the likes of Tracy Cameron, Silas McLellan and Leigh Miller, all of whom are former Olympians who called Hants County home.

He is the reigning welterweight national champion and has represented Canada internationally, including at the most recent world boxing championships, where he finished in the top 16. That strong showing was important as the most recent Olympic qualifier in Argentina was cancelled, but Wyatt has been selected to represent Canada on the basis of his international ranking.

Wyatt has put in countless hours of training and dedication and carries with him what I call famous Hants County grit and determination. He has already made us proud and I know he will stand toe to toe with the world's best in Tokyo.

I congratulate Wyatt and wish him the best of luck this summer.

* * *

ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate incoming Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett on successfully forming a national government and

to thank Prime Minister Netanyahu for 12 years of service, during which he strengthened the many bonds between Canada and Israel.

I also want to congratulate the Israeli people on electing their new government, the culmination of a robust democratic process, which is the only one in the Middle East.

The Conservative Party will always support Israel, our ally in the fight against terror, and will work toward a future when all the region's people can vote to have their democratic preferences reflected in governments of their choosing, that is to say, elected by a free and fair democratic process, as in Israel and Canada.

* * *

• (1405)

OAKVILLE DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Oakville Deputy Fire Chief Monique Belair has been a trailblazer for women in the fire service for 35 years. She joined the Oakville fire service in 2017 and has made a lasting impact here in our community.

Camp Molly is an initiative Monique developed to encourage young women in Halton to choose the fire service as their career. As she has said, she wanted to show them the fire service is more than just putting wet on hot.

As she embarks on her new role as fire chief for the community of Belleville, I have mixed emotions. I am thrilled for her to take on her new role as chief, a role that sees too few women in Canada, but I am sad to lose her from our community.

I thank Monique for her friendship and all she has done for Oakville, and especially the young women who went through Camp Molly.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TREE PLANTERS

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, 30 years ago, the scout troops of Saint-Jérôme, Saint-Hippolyte, Prévost and Piedmont, led by Prévost resident Loyola Leroux, began a project whose scope can be truly appreciated only through the lens of time.

Statements by Members

In the spring of 1991, they went out and planted 25,000 trees. The next year, they planted 45,000 trees. In 1993, they planted 96,000, and so on and so forth. By 2016, they had planted a total of 2.3 million trees.

The members of Parliament, the mayors and other dignitaries of these cities never missed an opportunity to get their hands dirty in our fertile soil. Two-time Oscar winner and internationally renowned Quebec artist and director Frédéric Back, or the man who planted trees, was among those who came out every year to cheer on these young tree planters.

I think it is important to highlight this anniversary by reminding the government that we are still awaiting the hundreds of millions of trees we were promised by the Prime Minister. If he is wondering how to go about it, I would be happy to introduce him to Loyola Leroux.

I would like to thank these men and women who planted trees.

* * *

ORLÉANS GRADUATES

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, next week marks the beginning of graduation ceremonies, and I want to take a moment to congratulate the 1,722 graduates from the 10 high schools in my riding, Orléans.

This year's graduation ceremonies have to be adapted once again because of the pandemic, but I know that, regardless of how they celebrate, our graduates will find innovative ways to mark this important milestone.

It is always a tremendous honour for me to sign each graduate's certificate, to congratulate them and wish them every success. After such a momentous achievement, they are now beginning a new chapter in their lives. No matter what path they decide to take, now that they have completed high school, they have the tools and support needed to tackle whatever lies ahead.

I want to congratulate all graduates in Orléans and across Canada. They are our champions.

* * *

[English]

CONSTRUCTION ZONE ROAD SAFETY

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in just over a week's time, we will all be back in our home ridings. While all of our ridings are diverse and unique, one activity that will be ongoing in many regions across Canada is annual summer road work and maintenance projects.

I raise this point as a reminder because it is critically important that we remind our constituents to slow down and pay attention when passing through a construction zone. In British Columbia alone, there have been over 13 roadside workers killed over the past decade after being hit by vehicles, and 30 more injured. Let us not forget that a roadside construction site is also a job site, and highway and flagging workers deserve the same respect that we would expect with citizens passing through our job site.

April 28 is our National Day of Mourning for workers killed or injured on the job. Let us make every day this summer a day to take care to ensure those who work on our roads can be as safe and as stress-free as possible on the job.

* * *

● (1410)

SALEH HAFEJEE

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to a community leader and mentor we lost too early. Brother Saleh Hafejee, with whom I worked closely in recent years, was a very special person who made a great impact in our community. He did this through helping the generation of youth as a sports coach and mentor; through his 25 years of service to the Scarborough Muslim Association, Jame Abu Bakr Mosque, recently as president; and through his decades of volunteering, helping people of all backgrounds.

He loved his community, his faith and, most importantly, his family. His passing was sudden and a devastating loss for the Muslim community in Scarborough. I say to his mother, Aisha Hafejee, wife, Fazila Hafejee, his sons, Mohammed and Hafiz Abubak, daughter Mariam Hafejee and his grandkids that we will miss Brother Saleh, or, as his son said yesterday at his funeral, "every-one's dad". He leaves behind a legacy we can all be proud of.

* * *

GURDIAL KAUR OPPAL

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, British Columbians recently lost pioneer and centenarian, Gurdial Kaur Oppal, at the age of 104. She came to Canada at the height of the Depression and became widowed at the age of 30, but her tenacity and strength to never give up remained with her until the end.

As a Sikh-Canadian pioneer and devoted member of society, she was also a feminist. She was always speaking out if women were not allowed to participate. She raised two amazing boys, one who became the first Sikh justice and attorney general, the Hon. Wally Oppal, and the other a prominent realtor and boxing fight judge, Harry Oppal. Gurdial Kaur Oppal's life efforts and accomplishments will not go without acknowledgement. She will always be remembered as an exceptional member of society, as well as a kind-hearted woman fulfilled by serving others.

I would like to extend my most heartfelt condolences to Wally, Harry, Jasmine, Josh and the entire Oppal family as they grapple with the loss of their beloved matriarch. On behalf of Surrey Centre, our thoughts and compassion are with them during this difficult time.

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's pledge of a one-shot summer and his recent attendance at the G7 summit simply prove that Liberals have one set of rules for themselves and another for hard-working Canadians who are abiding by health guidelines and who simply want this pandemic to be over.

Every day I hear from my constituents who have been separated from their families and loved ones by the lengthy and extended border closure with the United States. This border closure has also had a devastating impact on our local and national tourism economy. Niagara is the number one leisure tourism destination in Canada employing some 40,000 tourism workers and generating over \$2.4 billion in tourism receipts. Budget 2021 commits only \$1 billion in tourism funding, which completely misses the mark when we consider that Canada's tourism industry generated over \$105 billion annually before COVID. Severely underfunding indigenous tourism only adds to my disappointment in budget 2021.

The Liberal government has failed families, border communities and Canada's travel and tourism industry, and it continues to fail the people of Niagara.

* * *

ISLAMOPHOBIA

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Afzaal family were kind-hearted, innocent Canadians who went out for an evening walk. They mattered, they were loved and they were murdered because they were Muslim. Our Etobicoke North community knows the terrible pain we are once again feeling. We are still reeling and still healing from the brutal murder of Mohamed-Aslim Zafis, our friend who looked after the congregation at the International Muslim Organization of Toronto.

This past weekend, we came together to grieve and show solidarity at a vigil at the IMO mosque. Families are afraid, they are angry and they want our mourning to lead to further action because hatred and violence can have no place in our country.

I say to our Muslim community that they belong, they matter and they are loved. I stand with them during this very difficult time, and I will continue to fight for a better, more inclusive Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

LUCIE CÔTÉ

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to pay tribute to Lucie Côté, a friend who left us far too soon because of COVID-19. Lucie was a determined woman who was proud of her roots. She was a loving partner to her husband Rémy and a devoted sister to Diane and Sylvie, who cared about her a lot. She was the mother of four children, Jean-François, Jocelyn, Caroline and Isabelle, the beloved grandmother of 12 grandchildren, and a friend to many.

All her life, she worked for the well-being of others and she was active in her community at both the local and national levels. This caring woman was a source of inspiration and leadership to us all.

Statements by Members

Before her untimely death, Lucie was getting ready to live out her retirement dreams with her husband Rémy after a busy lifetime of hard work.

Lucie, we miss you very much and we will always remember your zest for life, good humour and sensitivity.

Rest in peace, Lucie.

* * *

• (1415)

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Bob Benzen (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Parliament will rise this summer without receiving a report from the national defence committee into sexual misconduct allegations plaguing our military. Rather than facing tough questions on what transpired within the leadership of the armed forces on the current government's watch, Liberal members of the defence committee, empowered by their partisan chairperson, have instead filibustered, delayed and repeatedly suspended the committee to prevent a report from coming forward. Our current meeting has been ongoing since mid-May.

To show how blatant and pathetic the Liberals' obstruction has become, they have lately been filibustering their own amendment to a motion: anything to avoid a vote they know they will lose, instead of giving answers to Canadians. Multiple defence reports are now casualties of the government's partisan antics. The Liberal members continue to place their party above the people, and especially above victims of misconduct in our military.

* * *

JANE BIGELOW

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to pay tribute to London's first woman mayor, Jane Bigelow, who passed away on June 1. Jane served from 1972 to 1978, and placed a great deal of importance on making London a better place to live, grow and flourish.

Jane was an advocate of libraries, museums, art galleries and festivals. She often travelled by bike throughout the city, and worked to establish our parks and walking and cycling trails. After her political career, Jane volunteered to help women in local shelters and centres.

Oral Questions

Jane was described as a trailblazer. My favourite story of Jane was based on an editorial cartoon in our local paper. It showed “Jane of Arc” riding up to the London Club, a men-only club at the time, which had always invited the mayor to meet with its members. There was a quite stir within the club. The club simply did not know which tradition to follow: no women or no mayor.

It is this leadership that I want to specifically thank Jane for. She is one of the giants upon whose shoulders other women have been able to stand to allow us to fight for people and make London a better place for absolutely everyone.

* * *

[*Translation*]**HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES IN QUEBEC**

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I want to congratulate the graduates of the various high schools across Quebec.

The very important last years of their journey, when people build bonds and friendships that often last a lifetime, did not go as planned, but humans are resilient. I am sure these students found a way to make the most of the situation. Now they are even better equipped to deal with the struggles of life.

I was a high school teacher for 25 happy, fulfilling years. I mainly taught grade nine, where I had the privilege of shaping the citizens of tomorrow. This June, the last cohort of students that I taught for a full year are graduating. I want to sincerely congratulate them and wish them all the best.

Most of all, I want them to always remember that nothing is impossible and that they should not let anyone convince them otherwise.

Congratulations and all the best.

* * *

[*English*]**THE ECONOMY**

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last month 68,000 more Canadian families lost their jobs, yet the Liberal government has spent more in deficits than any other G7 country, and in fact more than ever in Canadian history. It is clear the Liberals cannot manage our economy and deliver results, no matter how much they spend.

It is under the current Liberal government's feminist policy that all economic gains made by women in my lifetime have been completely wiped out, and Canadian families are having to live through the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. Inflation has hit the highest levels in a decade. The costs of groceries, lumber and housing have all skyrocketed to unprecedented levels. The paycheques of Canadians are buying them less and less, yet the Prime Minister and his cabinet are acting as though everything is fine when it is not.

Canada's Conservatives are the only party that will make economic recovery the number one priority, ensuring families have secure jobs and can put food on the table, pay their bills and have

more opportunities in every industry in every region of this great country.

* * *

● (1420)

CLASS OF 2021

Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, hundreds of young Islanders in my district are now looking forward to graduation and heading into a new phase of their lives.

They are proud of their accomplishments, as they very well should be. This past year has been difficult. In many cases, students were required to learn distantly. This disrupted the usual interactions that are so important. The young people I know understood the need to protect families, friends and communities, and every one of them deserves our thanks.

I would like to join with family and friends who are offering their congratulations to all students. I know this: The life lessons and formal education of the past year will build a strong foundation for the future. We should all be so proud of the sacrifices and dedication of a new generation of scholars.

[*Translation*]

I want to congratulate them all.

ORAL QUESTIONS[*Translation*]**THE ECONOMY**

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has confirmed that inflation is at a 10-year high in Canada because this government's spending is out of control. The cost of everything is on the rise: housing, education, transportation and groceries. Canadians can no longer accept this government's limitless spending.

When will the Liberals rein in their spending?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will say that the Conservatives' partisan games are the biggest threat to Canada's recovery right now. Conservative tactics are preventing us from passing the budget. This irresponsible behaviour threatens the well-being of every Canadian.

[*English*]

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, inflation is at a 10-year high. The cost of housing is up nearly 40%. This is quickly turning into an economic crisis for Canada's working poor and families trying to buy their first homes. The working poor and first-time homebuyers cannot afford more of the same economic incompetence.

Oral Questions

Can the government guarantee that housing prices will stabilize and start going down by the end of this summer?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me tell you what poses the single greatest threat to Canada's economic recovery today: Conservative partisan games. Canadians need the wage subsidy, the rent subsidy and income support to be extended until the end of September. Our government wants to do that, but the Conservatives' partisan delaying tactics are stopping us from passing the budget and that irresponsible behaviour threatens the well-being of every single Canadian.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is irresponsible is that Canada is the only country in the world that had no budget for two years. When it comes to the housing crisis, the government is telling Canadians not to buy a house: They should just rent. That minister and an out-of-touch, ideological Liberal government are telling Canadians to give up on the dream of home ownership.

Instead of the failed Liberal approach, Canada's Conservatives have a five-point plan to secure our future, including help for first-time homebuyers. First-time homebuyers know they are going to get help only when the Liberal government gets out of the way and the Conservatives come to get the job done.

• (1425)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is utterly hypocritical for the Conservatives to even pretend to be concerned about Canadians and the Canadian economy. The single biggest threat the Canadian economy faces today is Conservative partisanship, which is blocking our budget. Conservatives are blocking the extension of the wage subsidy, rent subsidy and income supports. Canada is ready to come roaring back. We just need Conservatives to get out of the way.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he falsified his service record, threw Admiral Mark Norman under the bus and misled Canadians. Do we want to hear more? The Liberal caucus seems to forget he bought used fighter jets. He cut benefits to our troops fighting ISIS. He cut health care for military members. He cut defence spending. He all but eliminated Canadian peacekeeping and, of course, for three years he covered up sexual misconduct allegations in the Canadian Armed Forces. The Canadian Armed Forces need leadership.

When will the Prime Minister fire his defence minister?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives when it comes to looking after our women and men in the Canadian Armed Forces. We know that we have a lot more work to do, and we will get it done.

It was the Conservative government that cut from defence with the strategic review and the defence reduction action plan they had. We, as a party, have increased the defence budget by over 70%, and we have outlined it for 20 years. We know that we have a lot more

work to do to look after our Canadian Armed Forces members, and we will get it done.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister will not do the honourable thing and resign after having failed women in the Canadian Armed Forces. The Prime Minister will not fire him. The Liberals are never accountable.

Therefore, I want to speak directly to the voters in Vancouver South. If they want to end cover-ups on sexual misconduct in our military, and if they want to secure accountability in Ottawa, it is going to be up to them to support the Conservatives in the next election, demand better and replace the most corrupt and incompetent defence minister in Canada's history. It is up to them.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will let my actions be judged by the members of Vancouver South. I am proud of my service.

Let us talk about the hypocrisy of the Leader of the Opposition. He leads a party that fails to protect a woman's right to choose, that amplified Islamophobic rhetoric when it was in government and that voted against a motion to condemn Islamophobia. Let us talk about a record, and we will let the constituents of Vancouver South choose, and all Canadians choose, to see the Conservatives' hypocrisy.

* * *

[*Translation*]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Quebec government is preparing to amend the Charter of the French Language, in tandem with the Quebec National Assembly, obviously. Meanwhile, the federal government is tabling another statement of intent on the Official Languages Act that will never pass, of course.

The federal bill competes and creates a divide between what Canada wants and what Quebec wants. When this is pointed out to the Minister of Official Languages, she says that she simply does not want to talk about it and wants only to work together. However, she is going to have to talk about it.

The question is simple: What takes precedence in promoting and protecting French? The federal legislation or the Quebec National Assembly?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure my colleague that the government did not merely issue a statement of intent; it introduced a bill.

We want to pass this bill, and we are asking all opposition parties, including the Bloc Québécois, if they intend to support it or not. Do they want better protection for French in Quebec and across the country? Do they want francophones to have access to linguistic security that will ensure the longevity of the French fact in Quebec as well as in Canada going forward?

Oral Questions

No, they want to keep talking separatism and make Quebec a country.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, she certainly understood some things.

The Bloc Québécois wants a legitimate approach to ensuring better protection for French in Quebec. That means putting Quebec's National Assembly in charge. The minister had better not count on our support for her bill to further entrench official bilingualism.

Here is my question. Does she really think that her bill, which has not been passed and therefore remains a statement of intent, will do a better job of protecting French than Quebeckers themselves are doing with the Charter of the French Language?

• (1430)

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is what the Bloc Québécois is all about, looking for a fight when our goal is still and always to protect French and to ensure that linguistic minorities across the country are protected.

Indeed, our remarks involve the entire country. Why? Because that is important. That is how we strengthen our federalism and how we are able to ensure that it makes sense across the country, including in Quebec and including francophones. Under the circumstances, our goal will still be to defend the Official Languages Act, to strengthen it and to bring it into the 21st century.

* * *

COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the big banks have received billions of dollars in support from this government. They have made huge profits, but are increasing their banking fees. However, this government is doing nothing and giving them free rein.

For the nearly two million people who need their Canada recovery benefit to pay the rent, the Prime Minister is going to cut support to these families by \$800 a month. This is a bad decision. Will the Prime Minister reverse his decision to cut support to families?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the opposition refuses to pass the budget bill, key COVID-19 measures will end. The wage subsidy, the rent subsidy and the Canada recovery benefit will no longer be available.

If the NDP thinks that Canadians no longer need these supports then it should be honest and just say so.

[English]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to put forward a contrast for members. At least 68 companies, large corporations in Canada, received billions of dollars in support from the Liberal government. They then turned around and paid out billions of dollars to their shareholders. The government is doing nothing about that. It is not going after them at all. However, for the nearly two million Canadians who cannot go back to work and need to rely on the CRB to pay their rent, the government is going to cut their help by \$800 a month.

That is my question. Why is the government doing that? Will the Prime Minister reverse his decision to cut help to families in the middle of this pandemic?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I question why the leader of the NDP is stopping our government from extending the CRB. We agreed that Canadian workers need additional support over the summer as the Canadian economy comes roaring back. That is why our budget would extend support to September 25.

If the New Democrats think that support is no longer necessary, they should be open and say that to Canadians. Otherwise, they should help us pass the budget and extend these necessary supports.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our Canadian Armed Forces are in chaos. The unravelling of the top brass and the repeat cycle of resignations are beyond disturbing. Who is actually in charge? It is clear the defence minister has lost all respect. He and the Prime Minister are considered a joke because of their terrible leadership. The men and women in our military cannot afford any more of this.

Can the minister tell us if the Prime Minister ever voiced concerns to him about how he handled sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government and I are absolutely committed to making sure we create an inclusive environment for the Canadian Armed Forces. Our resolve was just the same when we came in to form the government in 2015 as it is now, and I hope that the member opposite will support budget 2021, in which we are adding \$236 million for eliminating sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will take that as a no, which means our military can just expect more of the same from this fake feminist government.

Our military deserves a minister and a Prime Minister who do not just say the right words, but actually do the right thing. The respect and trust for the minister is gone. The damage to him is beyond repair, and when our military does not respect its top commander, we are in a very precarious place. Our armed forces in our country cannot afford this to continue.

Will the minister do the right thing and finally resign?

Oral Questions

• (1435)

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Conservatives continue with the political cheap shots, we will stay focused on the Canadian Armed Forces. When they were in government, they cut from the Canadian Armed Forces' budget. We have added to it, and we are increasing the defence budget by 70%.

We put people first. Chapter number one of our defence policy is about our people and is focused on our people, but we know we have a lot more work to do to eliminate any type of misconduct from the Canadian Armed Forces, and we will double down and get it done.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he is doubling down on defending himself and his horrible, failed record. The men and women in the Canadian Armed Forces do not respect the minister, and his continuing in this role is damaging our military. The minister has failed the people who defend us. Our troops have sacrificed so much, and it is time the minister did the right thing for these men and women. Conservatives have a five-point plan to secure Canada's future, and that includes bringing accountability, honour and respect back to our military.

Again, I ask this minister if he will do the right thing. Will he step aside for the sake of our country and for our men and women in uniform?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, we know that we have a lot more work to do. We need to get the work done, and we will, but when it comes to honouring the sacrifice of our Canadian Armed Forces members, it is about supporting them and giving them the proper resources for them to do their work. That is what our government has done.

In our defence policy, we have increased the budget by over 70% within 10 years and guaranteed it for 20 years. We re-equipped all our services and did not cut from the defence budget, as the previous government did so it could balance its budget.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, enough is enough. It is time to send a message.

The Minister of National Defence completely abandoned the Canadian Forces during years of incompetence. The Prime Minister himself said that the problem of sexual misconduct in the military had been ignored for far too long, but he acts like that is not the case.

If he really wants to start changing things, the Prime Minister needs to fire his Minister of National Defence.

Why is the Prime Minister insisting on keeping the minister in place?

[*English*]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I stated, we know that we have a lot more work to do when it comes to eradicating all forms of misconduct. We started that on day one when we formed government. We know that we have a lot more work to do, and I hope that the member opposite

will support budget 2021 because it includes \$236 million for eliminating sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is a country with honour. The brave men and women who serve in our armed forces deserve all the support we can give them. Every day that the Minister of National Defence stays in office is a show of disrespect for the service of our armed forces.

The Minister of National Defence has to stop trying to fix things. It is too late. He needs to step down.

When will the minister realize that?

[*English*]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what our government understands is making sure to support our women and men in the Canadian Armed Forces. We need to resource them properly, and we need to put proper policies in place.

As I stated before, we know we have a lot more work to do given the recent allegations we have seen, and we will get it done. We have appointed Justice Louise Arbour to make sure that we get the right recommendations on how to make sure that we eliminate all forms of sexual misconduct. We will get this done.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government's situation has morphed into a cycle of scandals followed by its empty excuses and a false promise to do better. There is never any accountability.

The situation in the armed forces is a perfect example. It has become toxic and is falling apart before our eyes.

The Minister of Defence must resign or the Prime Minister must boot him out. Which one of them will do the honourable thing?

[*English*]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government will continue to support the Canadian Armed Forces with what it needs, not like the previous government, which cut from the defence budget just so it could try to balance its budget.

We have increased the budget by 17%, but most importantly, we put an emphasis on supporting our people. Chapter 1 of the defence policy, if the member read it, focuses on our people.

We know that we have a lot more work to do when it comes to eliminating sexual misconduct or any form of misconduct from the Canadian Armed Forces, and we are going to get it done.

Oral Questions

● (1440)

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec wants to protect the French language. All that Ottawa could do in its jurisdictions to protect French in Quebec was to let Quebec's Charter of the French Language apply to federally regulated businesses.

However, the minister is doing the opposite with Bill C-32. She is setting the stage for increased bilingualism by extending the scope of Canada's Official Languages Act. She is creating a jurisdictional squabble instead of helping stop the decline of French.

Why is the minister refusing to do something useful by letting Quebec apply Bill 101?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague made reference to a squabble with Quebec. That may be some wishful thinking on her part, but it is certainly not the case.

The reality is that, once again this morning, I had a conversation with my colleague, Simon Jolin-Barrette, and yesterday with Sonia LeBel, and we will certainly come to an agreement. Why is that?

It is because 55% of businesses in Quebec have already chosen to be subject to Bill 101. We will, of course, let them choose whether to continue as is or to be subject to the Official Languages Act.

We are filling a legal void. We want people to have access to services in French in federally regulated businesses and we want people to have the right to work in French at those same businesses.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there is no legal void and Quebec has no plan to rely on Bill C-32.

Quebec's minister responsible for the French language said, "One thing is for sure: The terms and conditions of Quebec's bill will be the ones that apply in Quebec".

The federal minister, looking for a fight, responded, "We have jurisdiction over federally regulated businesses.... What do they want to do? Do they want to protect French or do they want to keep arguing?"

The minister clearly chose to keep arguing, because her bill does not protect the French language. It protects bilingualism. Why does the minister not simply let Quebec protect the French language with Bill 101?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for my colleague, but I wonder if she actually read the bill.

The bill is clear: It covers the right to work in French, the right to be served in French and, of course, the right not to be discriminated against for being francophone in federally regulated businesses in Quebec and regions with a strong francophone presence.

This is the first time the federal government has taken this step in the right direction. It was time. That is why, as a government, we

are proud to have introduced the official languages bill yesterday. It was a historic event.

Will the Bloc Québécois be supporting it, yes or no?

* * *

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence has always had a casual relationship with the truth. He misled Canadians about the protests of Iraqi officials for pulling our CF-18s out of the fight against ISIS. He embellished his service record, saying he was the architect of Operation Medusa. He originally denied he knew about the General Vance allegations in 2018, but was complicit in the cover-up for three years.

Canadians do not trust the Minister of National Defence. Members of the military do not trust him. When will the Prime Minister fire him?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will take no lessons from the member opposite, who was the parliamentary secretary of national defence when the Conservatives were in government, when they slashed the budget of defence at that time. They did not put the troops first. They did not deal with the misconduct.

When we formed the government, we made it very clear that we wanted to put our people first and eliminate sexual misconduct or any form of misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces. We know from the recent allegations that we have a lot more work to do. We are willing to get it done.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister has not learned anything from his own mistakes, so he should actually follow our example.

The Canadian Armed Forces is losing senior officers at an alarming rate. Two chiefs of defence staff are under investigation, and the seventh vice chief of defence staff since 2015 just resigned. All of this is happening under the failed leadership of the defence minister and is creating a national security crisis for our nation. The Minister of National Defence must be held to account, and no one trusts him to rebuild our armed forces.

Will the Prime Minister fire his inept defence minister today?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to supporting our Canadian Armed Forces, we need to put our money where our mouth is, and that is exactly what our government did, not like the previous government, especially when the member was the parliamentary secretary to national defence.

We have invested in the Canadian Armed Forces. All our services will be re-equipped when it comes to that, because we have increased the budget by 20%. We have put an emphasis on dealing with the misconduct, something we wish we could have done immediately, and we wish we could have it done overnight. We know we have a lot more work to do, and we are willing to get it done.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians were shocked to learn that the man with control over the sexual misconduct investigation went golfing with the man accused of the sexual misconduct, General Vance. Clearly these men at the top of the Canadian military were not informed of the seriousness of this investigation and were not informed of the need for a culture change in our military.

The Liberal government and the defence minister have had six years to fix this, yet they resoundingly failed or this golfing scandal would have never happened.

How can the minister take these questions with a straight face? Has he no honour?

• (1445)

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as stated before, the acting chief of the defence staff is reviewing this matter very closely as it falls within his responsibility within the chain of command, and the acting chief of the defence staff has stated already that the vice chief of the defence staff is currently no longer in his role.

Our government has a lot more work to do when it comes to dealing with misconduct, and we will get it done.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has built his entire image on being a feminist, yet, after six years, he has allowed this toxic culture to continue under the watch of his defence minister, who sat idly by and allowed the most powerful military men in our country to continue to demean and disrespect our women in uniform. What message does this send to women and to men in our country, to aspiring women leaders in our military, that the Prime Minister thinks this is acceptable behaviour? Canadians are watching.

Will the Prime Minister be a leader for once and fire his defence minister?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to dealing with misconduct, we know we have a lot more work to do. I hope the member opposite will support budget 2021, in which we have outlined \$236 million to eliminate sexual misconduct from the Canadian Armed Forces.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister defied Parliament and went back to court this week to try to quash the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruling. His argument is that his government is the party that was wronged, not the thousands of indigenous children whose lives were destroyed in that system from “wilful and reckless” discrimination.

Oral Questions

It is also false to claim that these are historic wrongs. This is happening today. We are losing an indigenous child every three days, yet the Prime Minister would rather fight children in court.

When he is going to stop his toxic legal war against first nations children?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important for all Canadians and, indeed, this entire House to know that there is not a single indigenous child who has been asked to testify as part of this process and as part of the class actions, and it is our aim to keep it so. Any first nations child who has been discriminated by the broken child welfare system will get fair, just and equitable compensation. We will move forward on that as precipitously as possible as well as effect systemic transformation so this does not occur again.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have spent over \$20 million fighting the Nuu-chah-nulth people in court, denying their fishing rights. Last month, the courts reaffirmed the rights of these nations for the third time. The government has until Friday to appeal the court's decision.

The last time I asked if the government would respect indigenous fishers' rights and let them get back on the water to support their families, the fisheries minister said that they were working with the Nuu-chah-nulth. Let me be clear that taking them to court is not the same as working with them.

Will the justice minister respect indigenous rights, call off the government lawyers and confirm that he will not appeal this ruling?

Hon. Bernadette Jordan (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have worked very hard to ensure that first nations are able to exercise their right to fish as well as sell fish. We are going to continue to work with the Nuu-chah-nulth first nation to ensure these rights are upheld.

* * *

SENIORS

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be part of a government that is committed to strengthening seniors' financial security, improving their quality of life. I was happy to see our government fulfill its promise to increase the OAS benefit for Canadians later in life in budget 2021, but we know seniors have other needs.

Could the minister tell the House and Canadians what we are doing to support some of the most vulnerable low-income seniors from coast to coast to coast?

Oral Questions

Hon. Deb Schulte (Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his advocacy for seniors.

While no solution can meet everyone's needs, step by step we are making progress. For low-income seniors we increased the GIS by 10% for singles and increased and enhanced the GIS earnings exemption. We lowered the age of eligibility for OAS and GIS to 65 from 67, and for future retirees we enhanced the CPP by almost 50%. For everyone we are increasing the basic personal amount, saving individuals close to \$300 every year.

Our government's work is making a real difference in the lives of seniors.

* * *

• (1450)

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today we learned that the cost of living is up, way up. Inflation is now at 3.6%, the highest it has been in over 10 years. Prices for everything, gasoline, food, furniture, are up, while millions of Canadians see their dream of home ownership disappear. Canadians need a leader who is focused on governing, not on preening for the cameras at the G7.

When will the Prime Minister finally take his job seriously and make life more affordable for the people he is supposed to be serving?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is utterly hypocritical for the Conservatives to even pretend to be concerned about ordinary Canadians. The single biggest threat the Canadian economy faces today is Conservative partisanship, which is blocking our budget. The Conservatives are blocking the extension of the wage subsidy, the extension of the rent subsidy and the extension of income supports.

Canada is ready to come roaring back. We just need the Conservatives to get out of the way.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, even the finance minister does not get it. Inflation is way up. It is at its highest point in a decade, proving that the finance minister's trillion-dollar debt and endless deficits are inflicting more and more damage on our country. Meanwhile, the cost of everything is going up, and housing has become unaffordable for millions of families.

How much more expensive does life have to get before the minister and her Liberal government realize how badly they have failed exhausted Canadians?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me tell the House what else Canadians, who indeed are exhausted and who indeed do need support, are being deprived of because of the immature partisan games of the Conservatives: \$5 billion to support provincial and territorial health systems, \$4 billion directly to the health care system and \$1 billion for the essential vaccination campaign. That is what Canadians need right now and it is what Conservatives are blocking.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today it is clear that we have an inflationary bubble. The government is just

trying to pump even more hot air into that bubble. It has created a trillion-dollar debt, which means too many dollars chasing too few goods and services. Now, in addition to not having paycheques, Canadians who do work are seeing their paycheques nibbled up by this growing level of inflation.

Will the government reverse its inflationary policy, stop spending what it does not have, restore fiscal responsibility and allow Canadians to afford their cost of living?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me tell the House what is truly irresponsible today just as we are poised to finish the fight against COVID. What is irresponsible are Conservative partisan games. Canadians need the wage subsidy, they need the rent subsidy and they need income support to be extended to the end of September, but the Conservatives are stopping us from passing our budget. It is that irresponsible behaviour that threatens the well-being of every single Canadian.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, so she just wants us to help her give more and more inflationary spending into the economy, driving up the cost of living, particularly on the working poor, and devaluing the wages of the Canadian people.

We have the second-highest unemployment in the G7, higher than the OECD, higher than the U.K., the U.S., Japan and Germany. Now those same unemployed Canadians are facing higher prices for shelter, fuel and food.

Instead of ramming through another inflationary budget that drives up the cost of living, why will she not actually reverse course and protect the value of the dollars Canadians earn?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, the member opposite needs to get his numbers right. Canada's labour force participation rate in April was in fact higher than the labour force participation rates in the U.S., the U.K., France and Italy.

I do want all members of the House to help me and to help our government support Canadians. I want them to help me extend the business and income supports. I want them to help me give more support to our seniors and to our youth.

• (1455)

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-32 invalidates Quebec's Bill 96 and its intent to apply Bill 101 to federally regulated businesses. Bill C-32 does not force the francization of businesses; it simply tolerates that workers speak in French. Bill C-32 does not recognize French as Quebec's only official language, nor does it do anything to make up for its threatened minority status. Bill C-32 therefore prevents Quebec from taking charge of its language policy.

Why would Quebec vote for this instead of its own Bill 101?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us stop trying to scare people, as my colleague is doing.

It is not complicated. Bill C-32, an act to amend the Official Languages Act, which we introduced yesterday, requires federally regulated businesses to recognize the right to work in French, the right to be served in French, and the right of francophones not be discriminated against. Basically, these are the same provisions that are in Bill 101 and that have been adapted to a national system that applies to Quebec, as well as to regions with a strong francophone presence.

For businesses that are already compliant with Bill 101, an agreement will be made with the Government of Quebec. For those that are not compliant with Bill 101, it is not complicated; there is no longer a legal void and they will have to comply—

The Speaker: The hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec wants Bill 101 to apply to federally regulated businesses. Quite simply, this means applying the existing legislation. As a matter of fact, the Bloc Québécois bill does just that.

There is no need for a federal bill dumped on us six days before the end of the session that will not be debated or voted on. Our bill will be voted on in half an hour; it is as simple as that.

Will the Minister of Official Languages vote with us to apply Bill 101 in Quebec?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I remember the debates I had with my colleague, where he kept asking me to strengthen the Official Languages Act, to recognize the specificity of French in Quebec, to recognize that federally regulated businesses have an obligation to work in French and to provide rights, as well as to serve consumers in French.

He should be happy, because this has now been done. The bill has been introduced. Now the question is whether he will support it. Will the Bloc Québécois support the new version of the Official Languages Act?

Oral Questions

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is no reason the government cannot answer the following question.

President Biden directed U.S. intelligence to determine whether the pandemic originated from human contact with an animal or from a lab accident at the Wuhan Institute of Virology.

Last weekend, the G7 discussed this issue, and the government pledged co-operation. Given that government scientists at the Canadian lab in Winnipeg worked closely with the Wuhan lab, will these scientists and their documents, including lab notes, be made available to U.S. investigators?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we support the call by President Biden to get to the bottom of this issue. It is so important, after the world has been turned upside down by the COVID pandemic and over three million people have died, that we try our very best to understand what caused this pandemic.

For that reason, using the best available science, we should do exactly that, try to figure out where this all started.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know from public documents and peer-reviewed academic papers that a Chinese military scientist, Feihu Yan, of the People's Liberation Army worked at the Winnipeg lab, a level 4 facility where the world's most dangerous viruses and pathogens are handled.

Who approved this individual to work at the government's lab in Winnipeg?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the National Microbiology Laboratory is a secure facility, and everyone working at it or visiting the lab must undergo security screening and adhere to the strictest protocols, procedures and policies. This is very important, not only to the lab but to Canada and Canadians.

I want to thank the lab during Public Service Week for its incredible work in helping Canadians through COVID-19.

• (1500)

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister did not answer my question. I will try another.

During this pandemic, the health minister has been telling Canadians to follow public health orders, yet the health minister continues to defy a House order to hand over documents about the Winnipeg lab. Does the minister not see how corrosive this is to the rule of law, when she tells Canadians to comply with public health orders while at the same time defying an order of this House?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is quite a piece of conflation.

Oral Questions

What I will say is that I have fully shared, through the Public Health Agency of Canada and through its president, Iain Stewart, fully unredacted documents to a committee of parliamentarians for their review. Therefore, in fact, those documents are available for review in a way that does not compromise privacy or national security issues.

* * *

[Translation]

SMALL BUSINESS

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, women entrepreneurs across Canada have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

Women have had to leave the workforce in order to care for their children because of the pandemic. It has taken them longer to re-enter the workforce. Budget 2021 makes a generational investment in the early learning and child care system so that women can return to work.

Can the minister tell us about other measures in budget 2021 to support women entrepreneurship?

Hon. Mona Fortier (Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for her very important question.

We know that the pandemic has exposed serious flaws in our social safety net, including the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs. That is why our government has proposed a transformational investment in early learning and child care. Not only will this help these women entrepreneurs get back to work, but it will also help build a stronger, more resilient economy.

It is also important to mention the proposed investment to strengthen the women's entrepreneurship strategy, which will provide women entrepreneurs with greater access to financing, mentoring and training.

As a woman who has owned a small business—

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

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week, the Minister of Health honoured us with her presence before the Canada-China committee to answer our questions. However, she wasted our time for three hours. She did the same thing she does during question period, which is repeat platitudes. The minister even tried to make us believe that she had not received a briefing about the breach at the Winnipeg lab.

Can the Prime Minister confirm that the Minister of Health had not been briefed on the matter?

[English]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again I see the member opposite is putting words in my mouth. In fact, I spent three hours at committee; it was approximately my 26th appearance in front of the House committees this season. I will

say that I was fully transparent with the committee, and I reminded the committee that the fully unredacted documents are with NSI-COP, a committee of parliamentarians that has the appropriate clearance to review those documents.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I urge the minister to go back and look at the committee blues. She clearly said that she did not know anything; she never knew anything.

The other issue we have is that when we talk about the security breach at the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg, the Prime Minister always accuses us of being racist and fearmongering.

However, last week at the G7 meetings, the same Prime Minister supported a motion calling China a threat to public safety with a government seeking to undermine the global system.

The Prime Minister is trying to act tough on the international stage. Why is he unable to tell us the truth and give us the information in Canada?

[English]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I spent three hours at the committee answering questions from parliamentarians and repeatedly referring the parliamentarians to the statement of the president of the Public Health Agency of Canada, who has submitted all the documents, unredacted, to the appropriate committee of parliamentarians that can review those documents.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is the truth of the matter. When the Prime Minister says that the protection of public safety is at stake and that that is why he is hiding the truth from Canada, it is because the real problem is that if people knew what went on, it would put him in conflict with China.

The Prime Minister is still having problems with China. We saw that with the development of the vaccine with CanSino, where we were fooled. As for what happened at the lab in Winnipeg, it is clear that there was a problem, not for China, but for Canada. That is why the Prime Minister does not want us to know.

Could he at least confirm that there is no longer any co-operation with China?

● (1505)

The Speaker: We had an interruption. I would like to remind everyone participating virtually in the work of the hybrid House to make sure their microphones are muted.

I would ask the hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles to repeat his question so that everyone can hear it.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister keeps saying that public safety is the reason he is hiding the truth about the security breach at the Winnipeg lab from Canadians.

The truth is that, if that information were made public, it would show how badly he was fooled by the Chinese Communist regime, just as he was fooled by the CanSino company, which is owned by the Chinese Communist regime.

Can he at least confirm that there is no longer any co-operation going on between the Winnipeg lab and Communist China?

[English]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yet again we see the Conservative Party playing really dangerous games with national security. We will never do that on this side of the House. We understand that there is an appropriate way to release documents in a way that protects their privacy and their national security aspects, and those documents have been released in a fully unredacted fashion to a committee of parliamentarians who have the appropriate clearance to do those reviews.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, climate change is the existential issue of our time, and Canadians across this country want to see their governments take action to address it. More than ever, the environment and the economy have to go hand in hand to offer our children and grandchildren a healthy environment and one in which they can thrive. Could the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance please update this House on the investments we are making to grow the economy and protect the environment?

Hon. Mona Fortier (Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are taking action to fight climate change and grow our economy. Our investments in budget 2021 are a critical step forward because, on this side of the House, we know that climate change is real. Budget 2021 represents \$7.6 billion that would help build a cleaner and more sustainable future, which builds on \$50 billion from our strengthened climate plan and also another \$15-billion investment in public transit.

This includes help to restore wetlands and rehabilitate stormwater systems, and also interest-free loans of up to \$40,000 for home retrofits. We are—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, following the 215 children found buried in Kamloops, first nations are calling for action, but the government is MIA. When the Pimicikamak Cree Nation calls for the International Commission on Missing Persons to come in, the government sends them a form letter. When first nations ask for help to search for mass graves, the government recycles an insulting 2019 funding announcement.

Oral Questions

Now we have news that SNC-Lavalin is filling in while the government neglects its responsibilities.

This is genocide. First nations and experts are calling for an independent commission, international experts and concrete action. When will the Prime Minister listen and act?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians were heartbroken when we learned of the remains of children at the former Kamloops residential school. We are working with the community and our partners, such as the B.C. First Nations Health Authority, to provide all the resources and supports needed as determined by the community and all communities.

We are also reaching out to indigenous communities across Canada on how best to support them in finding their lost children and healing, including how they can access the \$27 million of funding being made available right now on an urgent basis.

* * *

[Translation]

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, I believe you will find the unanimous consent of the House for the following motion:

That the House:

(a) support the unanimous consent motion adopted by the National Assembly of Quebec on June 9, 2021, recognizing primarily that,

(i) the Charter of the French Language explicitly recognizes the right of First Nations and Inuit to maintain and develop their languages and cultures,

(ii) several Indigenous languages are threatened with extinction,

(iii) the 11 Indigenous nations in Quebec have, like the Quebec nation, the right to live in their languages and to promote and protect them,

(iv) the Government of Quebec has a responsibility to assume in this regard; and

(b) call on the federal government to recognize its responsibilities and to deploy more resources to protect and promote Indigenous languages in Quebec and in Canada.

● (1510)

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

I hear no dissent. The House has heard the terms of the motion. All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

There being no dissenting voice, I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

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

[English]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

The House resumed from June 10 consideration of the motion that Bill C-254, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code, the Official Languages Act and the Canada Business Corporations Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: It being 3:10 p.m., pursuant to order made on Monday, January 25, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-254 under Private Members' Business.

Call in the members.

• (1525)

[Translation]

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

*(Division No. 144)***YEAS**

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Alleslev
Allison	Angus
Arnold	Ashton
Bachrach	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benzen	Bergen
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blaikie	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Block
Boudrias	Boulerice
Bragdon	Brassard
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Cannings	Carrie
Chabot	Champoux
Chiu	Cooper
Cumming	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	d'Entremont
Desbiens	Desilets
Diotte	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Duval	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Findlay
Fortin	Gallant
Garrison	Gaudreau
Gazan	Généreux
Genuis	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Gourde	Gray
Green	Hallan
Harder	Harris
Hoback	Hughes
Jansen	Jeneroux
Johns	Julian
Kent	Kitchen
Kram	Kurek
Kusie	Kwan
Lake	Larouche

Lawrence	Lehoux
Lemire	Lewis (Essex)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	Lukiwski
MacGregor	MacKenzie
Maguire	Manly
Marcel	Martel
Masse	Mathysen
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McColeman	McLean
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	McPherson
Melillo	Michaud
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Motz
Nater	Normandin
O'Toole	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Paupé
Perron	Plamondon
Poilievre	Qaqqaq
Ratansi	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Rood	Ruff
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)	Sangha
Saroya	Savard-Tremblay
Scheer	Shields
Shin	Shiple
Simard	Singh
Soroka	Stanton
Steinley	Ste-Marie
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Thériault
Therrien	Tochor
Trudel	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Viersen
Vignola	Vis
Wagantall	Waugh
Webber	Wong
Yurdiga	Zimmer— 168

NAYS

Members

Anand
Arseneault
Badawey
Bains
Battiste
Bendayan
Besette
Bittle
Blois
Brière
Casey
Champagne
Cormier
Damoff
Dhillon
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Easter
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser
Fry
Gerretsen
Guilbeault
Hardie

Private Members' Business

Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Ien
Jaczek	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Kelloway
Khalid	Khera
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	May (Cambridge)
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Medicino	Miller
Monsef	Morrissey
Murray	Ng
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski	Qualtrough
Regan	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Sahota (Brampton North)
Saini	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms	Sloan
Sorbara	Spengemann
Tassi	Trudeau
Turnbull	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Virani	Weiler
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Yip	Young
Zahid	Zann
Zuberi— 151	

PAIRED

Nil

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

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

* * *

[English]

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S ACT

The House resumed from June 11 consideration of the motion that Bill C-271, An Act to amend the Governor General's Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Monday, January 25, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-271 under Private Members' Business.

● (1535)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 145)

YEAS

Members

Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergeron	Bérubé
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Boudrias	Brunelle-Duceppe
Chabot	Champoux
Charbonneau	DeBellefeuille
Desbiens	Desilets
Fortin	Gaudreau
Gill	Larouche
Lemire	Marcil
Michaud	Normandin
Paupé	Perron
Plamondon	Savard-Tremblay
Simard	Ste-Marie
Thériault	Therrien
Trudel	Vignola— 32

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Alghabra
Alleslev	Allison
Anand	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arnold
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Bachrach
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baker
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bessette	Bezan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Blois
Boulerice	Bragdon
Brassard	Bratina
Brière	Calkins
Cannings	Carr
Carrie	Casey
Chagger	Champagne
Chen	Chiu
Chong	Cooper
Cormier	Cumming
Dabrusin	Dalton
Damoff	Dancho
Davidson	Davies
Deltell	d'Entremont
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diotte	Dong
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duvall	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Epp	Erskine-Smith

Business of Supply

Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Fillmore
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gallant
Garrison
Généreux
Gerretsen
Godin
Gourde
Green
Hajdu
Harder
Harris
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Ien
Jansen
Johns
Jones
Jowhari
Kelloway
Kent
Khera
Kmicic
Kram
Kusie
Kwan
Lalonde
Lametti
Lattanzio
Lawrence
Lebouthillier
Lehoux
Liepert
Lloyd
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKenzie
Maguire
Manly
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
Mazier
McColeman
McDonald
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Melillo
Miller
Moore
Morrison
Motz
Nater
O'Connell
O'Regan
Patzner
Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski
Qualtrough
Rayes
Regan
Rempel Garner
Robillard
Rogers
Rood
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)

Falk (Provencher)
Fergus
Findlay
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser
Fry
Garneau
Gazan
Genuis
Gladu
Gould
Gray
Guilbeault
Hallan
Hardie
Hoback
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Jaczek
Jeneroux
Joly
Jordan
Julian
Kelly
Khalid
Kitchen
Koutrakis
Kurek
Kusmierczyk
Lake
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lauzon
LeBlanc
Lefebvre
Lewis (Essex)
Lightbound
Lobb
Longfield
Lukiwski
MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
Martel
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McCrimmon
McGuinty
McKenna
McLean
McPherson
Mendicino
Monsef
Morantz
Morrissey
Murray
Ng
Oliphant
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Poilievre
Qaqqaq
Ratansi
Redekopp
Reid
Richards
Rodriguez
Romanado
Ruff
Sahota (Brampton North)

Saini
Saks
Sangha
Saroya
Scheer
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Shin
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simms
Sloan
Soroka
Stanton
Strahl
Sweet
Tassi
Trudeau
Uppal
van Koeverden
Vandal
Vaughan
Vidal
Virani
Wagantall
Waugh
Weiler
Williamson
Wong
Young
Zahid
Zimmer

Sajjan
Samson
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Schiefke
Serré
Shanahan
Shields
Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Singh
Sorbara
Spengemann
Steinley
Stubbs
Tabbara
Tochor
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Van Popta
Vandenbeld
Vecchio
Viersen
Vis
Warkentin
Webber
Wilkinson
Wilson-Raybould
Yip
Yurdiga
Zann
Zuberi— 294

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—AMENDMENT TO SECTION 45 OF THE CONSTITUTION AND QUEBEC, A FRENCH-SPEAKING NATION

The House resumed from June 15 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Monday, January 25, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly relating to the business of supply.

● (1550)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 146)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Alghabra
Alleslev	Allison
Anand	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arnold
Ashton	Bachrach
Badawey	Bagnell

Bains
Baldinelli
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bendayan
Bergen
Berthold
Bessette
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blanchet
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blois
Boulerice
Brassard
Brière
Calkins
Carr
Casey
Chagger
Champoux
Chen
Chong
Cumming
Damoff
Davidson
Deltell
Desbiens
Dhaliwal
Dowdall
Drouin
Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz
El-Khoury
Epp
Fast
Fillmore
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Gallant
Garrison
Généreux
Gerretsen
Gladu
Gould
Gray
Hajdu
Harder
Harris
Holland
Hussen
Ien
Jansen
Johns
Jones
Jowhari
Kelloway
Kent
Khera
Kmiec
Kurek
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lamoureux
Lauzon
LeBlanc
Lefebvre
Lemire
Liepert
Lloyd

Baker
Barrett
Battiste
Beech
Bennett
Bergeron
Bérubé
Bezan
Bittle
Blair
Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boudrias
Bragdon
Bratina
Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings
Carrie
Chabot
Champagne
Charbonneau
Chiu
Cooper
Dalton
Dancho
DeBellefeuille
d'Entremont
Desilets
Diotte
Dreeshen
Duclos
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Duvall
Ehsassi
Ellis
Falk (Provencher)
Fergus
Findlay
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Garneau
Gaudreau
Genuis
Gill
Godin
Gourde
Guilbeault
Hallan
Hardie
Hoback
Hughes
Hutchings
Jaczek
Jeneroux
Joly
Jordan
Julian
Kelly
Khalid
Kitchen
Kram
Kusie
Lake
Lametti
Larouche
Lawrence
Lebouthillier
Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)
Lightbound
Lobb

Longfield
Lukivski
MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
Marcil
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
Mazier
McCrimmon
McGuinity
McLean
McPherson
Mendicino
Miller
Moore
Morrison
Motz
Nater
Normandin
Oliphant
O'Toole
Pauzé
Petipas Taylor
Poilievre
Qaqqaq
Rayes
Regan
Rempel Garner
Robillard
Rogers
Ruff
Sahota (Brampton North)
Sajjan
Sangha
Saroya
Scheer
Serré
Shanahan
Shin
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Sorbara
Spengemann
Steinley
Sweet
Tassi
Therrien
Trudeau
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Van Popta
Vandenbeld
Vecchio
Vignola
Vis
Webber
Williamson
Yip
Zahid
Zimmer — 281

Business of Supply

Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKenzie
Maguire
Manly
Martel
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McDonald
McKenna
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Melillo
Michaud
Monsef
Morantz
Morrisey
Murray
Ng
O'Connell
O'Regan
Paul-Hus
Perron
Plamondon
Powlowski
Qualtrough
Redekopp
Reid
Richards
Rodriguez
Rood
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
Saini
Saks
Sarai
Savard-Tremblay
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Singh
Soroka
Stanton
Ste-Marie
Tabbara
Thériault
Tochor
Trudel
Uppal
van Koeverden
Vandal
Vaughan
Vidal
Virani
Waugh
Wilkinson
Wong
Young
Zann

NAYS

Members

Wilson-Raybould — 2

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS***[English]***FEDERAL DENTAL CARE PLAN**

The House resumed from June 15 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Monday, January 25, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 62 under Private Members' Business in the name of the hon. member for St. John's East.

● (1605)

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

*(Division No. 147)***YEAS**

Members

Angus	Ashton
Bachrach	Bagnell
Blaikie	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boulerice	Cannings
Davies	Duvall
Erskine-Smith	Garrison
Gazan	Green
Harris	Hughes
Johns	Jones
Julian	Kelloway
Kwan	Lobb
Long	MacGregor
Manly	Masse
Mathysen	McDonald
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McPherson
Qaqqaq	Rogers
Sangha	Simms
Singh	Zann— 36

NAYS

Members

Abouttaif	Aitchison
Albas	Alghabra
Alleslev	Allison
Anand	Anandasangaree
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Benzen	Bergen
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bessette
Bezan	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Block
Blois	Boudrias
Bragdon	Brassard
Bratina	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Carr	Carrie
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Champagne
Champoux	Charbonneau
Chen	Chiu
Chong	Cooper
Cormier	Cumming

Dabrusin	Dalton
Damoff	Dancho
Davidson	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	d'Entremont
Desbiens	Desilets
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diotte	Dong
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Fergus
Fillmore	Findlay
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Garneau
Gaudreau	Généreux
Genuis	Gerretsen
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Gould
Gourde	Gray
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hallan	Harder
Hardie	Hoback
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Iacono
Ien	Jaczek
Jansen	Jeneroux
Joly	Jordan
Jowhari	Kelly
Kent	Khalid
Khera	Kitchen
Kmiec	Koutrakis
Kram	Kurek
Kusie	Kusmierczyk
Lake	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon
Lawrence	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Lehoux	Lemire
Lewis (Essex)	Liepert
Lightbound	Lloyd
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
Lukiwski	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKenzie	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maguire	Maloney
Marcil	Martel
Martinez Ferrada	May (Cambridge)
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McColeman	McCrimmon
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McLean
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Melillo
Mendicino	Michaud
Miller	Monsef
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Morrissey
Motz	Murray
Nater	Ng
Normandin	O'Connell
Oliphant	O'Regan
O'Toole	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Plamondon	Poillievre

Powlowski	Qualtrough
Ratansi	Rayes
Redekopp	Regan
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Robillard
Rodriguez	Romanado
Rood	Ruff
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)	Sahota (Brampton North)
Saini	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sarai	Saroya
Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Schieffe	Schmale
Schulte	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Shields	Shin
Shipley	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Sloan	Sorbara
Soroka	Spengemann
Stanton	Steinley
Ste-Marie	Strahl
Stubbs	Sweet
Tabbara	Tassi
Thériault	Therrien
Tochor	Trudeau
Trudel	Turnbull
Uppal	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Van Popta
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vaughan	Vecchio
Vidal	Viersen
Vignola	Virani
Vis	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Weiler
Wilkinson	Williamson
Wong	Yip
Young	Yurdiga
Zahid	Zimmer
Zuberi — 285	

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 53 minutes.

[*Translation*]

It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Vancouver East, Housing; the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable, Seniors; the hon. member for Kelowna—Lake Country, the Forestry Industry.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a) I have the honour to table, in both official

Routine Proceedings

languages, the government's response to five petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly respecting its participation at the 18th autumn meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, held in Marrakesh, Morocco, from October 4 to 6, 2019.

[*English*]

Also, I present the report of the Canadian delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly respecting its participation at the 19th winter meeting held in Vienna, Austria, February 20-21, 2020.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, entitled "Mandate of the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise". Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Madam Speaker, Conservative members on the committee are presenting a supplementary recommendation to the Subcommittee on International Human Rights' report on the Canadian ombudsman for responsible enterprise, CORE.

[*English*]

The committee heard expert witnesses that expressed concerns about CORE, in particular its advisory capacity, its potential conflicts of interest and its effectiveness and jurisdiction.

• (1610)

Extraterritorial concerns, at a minimum, would require information and collaboration with entities outside of Canada. In addition, greater industry consultation would be necessary if CORE's responsibility was to be expanded to all sectors, which is a desire that has been expressed by the government.

Conservative members recommend the government conduct, through an independent expert panel, a comprehensive review of CORE every four years to ensure its effectiveness as a tool to uphold human rights.

Routine Proceedings

ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

Mr. Raj Saini (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Special Committee on the Economic Relationship between Canada and the United States, entitled “Buy America Procurement Policies: An Interim Report”. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, entitled “Ensuring Robust Security in Federal Purchasing”. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

I would also like to take a moment to thank the clerk who did such a great job of organizing the meetings that led to the production of this report. I thank the analysts who wrote the report. Their work is impressive, and we appreciate their dedication in producing this outstanding document that will hopefully go a long way when it comes to how the government looks at the integrity of its procurement procedures. I thank the witnesses for their well-thought-out testimony and candour during the meetings that took place on this study. Their contributions are invaluable and are the crux of this report. We really appreciate the time and effort undertaken to provide us with this input.

I thank the House of Commons staff including our interpreters and technical staff. We know that these hybrid meetings have not always been easy, and we are so thankful for the work that they have done behind the scenes to keep everything up and running.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Conservative Party definitely supports the report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates on the contract awarded to Chinese firm Nuctech.

However, we consider it urgent to table a supplement to this report because we believe that it is essential to uncover the extent of the systemic flaws in the federal procurement process. This standing offer is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the federal government’s complacency on national security issues associated with these procurements. Urgent and necessary changes to the contracting system are needed to correct these systemic flaws. Another thing that is urgently needed is strong leadership.

We studied the details of the contract awarded to Nuctech and heard from several industry representatives. Dubbed the “Huawei of airports” and banned from U.S. airports, Nuctech is a China-based company founded by the son of former Chinese leader Hu Jintao. The government awarded it a standing offer despite the national security risks. This standing offer made Nuctech the supplier of X-ray equipment to all Canadian embassies, consulates and high commissions around the world.

That the Prime Minister considered it a good idea to award such a contract to a company under the control of the Chinese Commu-

nist regime shows his disregard for the national security that he claims to be defending. Canadians have good reason to be concerned about his failure to take the threat posed by the Chinese Communist regime seriously. That is why we are tabling this supplement to the report, which contains additional recommendations.

[English]

TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, entitled “Emerging from the Crisis: A Study of the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Air Transport Sector”.

I will take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to all the witnesses who gave testimony for this very important study; our clerk, analysts and other members of the House of Commons resources team; as well as members of the committee and their respective teams.

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

● (1615)

INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS

Mr. Bob Bratina (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, three reports of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs. The ninth report is entitled “Supplementary Estimates (A), 2021-22”. The committee has considered the estimates referred by the House and reports the same.

The 10th report is entitled “Food Security in Northern and Isolated Communities: Ensuring Equitable Access to Adequate and Healthy Food for All”, and the 11th report is entitled “Collaborative Approaches to Enforcement of Laws in Indigenous Communities”.

The committee worked remarkably well in difficult circumstances. It heard amazing testimony from a tremendous panel of witnesses for each of our studies, and of course, the hard-working staff and analysts are to be congratulated for helping to prepare these very important reports.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to the 10th and 11th reports.

[Translation]

INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, entitled “Wage Fixing in Canada: And Fairness in the Grocery Sector”.

[English]

I would like to take a moment to thank all members of the INDU committee for their collaboration and give a special shout-out to the clerk, the analysts and the IT team.

[Translation]

I also want to thank the interpreters for their hard work.

[English]

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

* * *

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE ACT

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-311, An Act respecting early learning and child care.

She said: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Winnipeg Centre for seconding this bill and for her work on this file.

There is an affordability crisis in child care across the country. Families are struggling to find child care spaces and get on wait lists before their children are even born. Costs are unaffordable in many cities and parents are forced to make impossible choices between delaying their return to work or paying huge amounts for the child care that they need. Liberals have promised an affordable universal child care program for 28 years without action, and women, taking on much of the care work, have been disproportionately impacted by their delay.

Budget 2021 has made several promises and is finally moving forward with establishing a child care program. However, there is still a lack of critical details. I am tabling this bill today to establish the core principles of a universal child care program, one that is based on accountability, quality, universality and accessibility, and to establish the standards needed to meet these principles.

I am calling on the government to work with us in moving child care forward. It is too important not to get right.

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

* * *

• (1620)

PETITIONS

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise today to present e-petition 3393 on behalf of many Canadians, particularly those from my riding of Chatham-Kent—Leamington.

The petitioners are extremely concerned that Bill C-10 unjustly infringes on citizens' right to freedom of expression outlined in section 2(b) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, particularly that the speech Canadians engage in on digital platforms is crucial to their conveying of their basic individual expressions. Bill C-10 would provide the CRTC with the authority to control and regulate

Routine Proceedings

user-generated content on digital platforms that Canadians use every day and censor what Canadians post and see on social media and the Internet, providing it with sweeping powers over how Canadians communicate and express themselves online.

These Canadians want their rights upheld and due process followed. I commend you, Mr. Speaker, for so ruling yesterday.

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce two petitions. The first is e-petition 2853, which has been signed by over 500 citizens.

The petitioners assert that the climate crisis is the foundational issue of our time. It represents an existential threat to all species. Working with indigenous leaders, they ask that we protect our old-growth forests for our planet's health and future generations. To do so, we need to stop logging old-growth trees now. These magnificent species are global treasures that must be preserved and nurtured for the wonder of all humanity.

I join with the petitioners in their call for the government to create a citizens' assembly on climate and ecological justice to accomplish these goals.

CERB ELIGIBILITY

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is e-petition 3282, which has been signed by over 750 citizens.

The petitioners point out that the CERB requirement of a minimum of \$5,000 in earnings was arbitrary and that, perversely, it prevented some of the poorest Canadians from receiving benefits. It has been estimated that 175,000 workers did not get benefits because they earned under \$5,000 in income. The petitioners call for the removal of this arbitrary and punishing standard, and to have retroactive compensation.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, if I may be permitted, I would like to wish a happy birthday to my lovely wife, Sheryl, who turns, I will not say how old, today.

The Speaker: You are not permitted, but I too wish a happy birthday to Sheryl.

FARMERS' PROTESTS IN INDIA

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in this House, a petition that is signed by many Canadians, calling the government's attention to the farmers' protests that continue to take place in the states of Punjab and Haryana, India.

The petitioners are calling on the Canadian government to respond to reports of violence against these protestors. They also wish to convey their sincere belief in the right of individuals to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

Routine Proceedings

I note that those rights to peacefully protest are enshrined in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

[Translation]

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I am tabling this petition signed by nearly 100 people, all of whom are concerned about the rise in international trafficking in human organs.

These petitioners are calling on all parliamentarians to pass Bill S-204, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act with regard to trafficking in human organs, which is currently before the House and which seeks to prohibit the trafficking of human organs removed without consent or as a result of a financial transaction.

[English]

OPIOIDS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition from Moms Stop The Harm stating that the opioid crisis is one of the most deadly public health emergencies of our lifetime, with a death taking place on average every two hours and a death toll of almost 15,400 over the past four years alone, and that the overdose crisis continues to rage.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to declare the overdose crisis a national public health emergency; take steps to end the overdose deaths and overdose injuries; immediately collaborate with provinces and territories to develop a comprehensive pan-Canadian overdose action plan; ensure that any plans consider reforms that other countries have used, such as legal regulation of drugs to ensure safe supply, decriminalization for personal use and changes to flawed drug policy and policing; and ensure that this emergency is taken seriously, with adequately funded programs and support.

CONVERSION THERAPY

Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition calling on the House to address concerns related to the broad definition applied to conversion therapy in Bill C-6.

The petitioners' concerns relate not to the intent of Bill C-6, which they strongly support, but rather to the chilling effect the broad definition contained in Bill C-6 may have on counsel from parents and teachers, as well as professionals and religious counselling that is voluntary and with full consent.

The petition contains four recommendations to the House with respect to clarifying the definition.

• (1625)

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to table a petition initiated by constituents in Nanaimo—Ladysmith. It is the 29th petition of this nature.

The petitioners are deeply concerned about protecting British Columbia's endangered old-growth forest from clear-cut logging. They know that old-growth forests provide immeasurable benefits,

including carbon sequestration, biodiversity, and cultural, recreational and educational value.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to work with the province and first nations to immediately halt the logging of endangered old-growth ecosystems, fund the long-term protection of old-growth ecosystems as a priority of Canada's climate action plan and reconciliation with indigenous peoples, support value-added forestry initiatives in partnership with first nations to ensure Canada's forestry industry is sustainable based on the harvesting of second- and third-growth forests, ban the export of raw logs, maximize resource use for local jobs and ban the use of whole trees for wood pellet biofuel production.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of petitioners in my riding of Kings—Hants, specifically in the Windsor-West Hants regional municipality, who are calling on the government, specifically the minister of fisheries and oceans, to act on their concerns around the continued use of ministerial orders with respect to the Avon River.

Specifically, the petitioners note that there are concerns around environmental impacts to the existing freshwater resource; on Ski Martock, the third-largest employer in the region; and on the ability of firefighters to draw fresh water from the Avon River to fight fires in emergency situations or for persisting dust storms, which are causing health concerns for residents in the area. The petitioners specifically call on the minister to use her discretion under subsection 34.1(1) of the act to reverse the current order to protect the interests and effects highlighted in this petition.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present the following petition on behalf of constituents in Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon. The federal government introduced Bill C-21, which includes sections that prohibit the majority of replica firearms, such as airsoft guns. It will also criminalize thousands of law-abiding Canadians for possessing legally obtained firearms and financially devastate thousands of Canadians who are reliant on the sale of firearms. As well, hunting has a long history in Canada for both indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians and needlessly revoking the firearms of citizens erases and discounts our history and traditions. Therefore, the petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to stop targeting law-abiding citizens for possessing legally obtained firearms, protect their rights and freedoms by ensuring that firearm legislation is based on evidence and not ideology, and withdraw Bill C-21.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have only five petitions to table today.

Canada has spent a great deal of blood and treasure in Afghanistan. The first petition I am tabling highlights the situation of the Hazara community in Afghanistan regarding historical violence and the ongoing violence and persecution the community faces. The petition identifies a terrible genocide that took place at the end of the 19th century, and identifies more recent acts of violence, such as a horrific attack on a maternity ward in May 2020 and targeted attacks in Behsud, Jabrayil and Jalalabad in the earlier part of this year.

Over 150 Canadian men and women have lost their lives in the fight in Afghanistan, so Canada has a close relationship with Afghanistan. Canadians feel a deep desire to advance justice and human rights there.

Therefore, the petitioners call on the House to formally recognize the ethnic cleansing perpetrated between 1891 to 1893 against the Hazaras as a genocide, to designate September 25 as Hazara genocide memorial day and to support Bill C-287, which seeks to ensure that all development assistance contributes to peace and security when it is being disbursed.

• (1630)

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is in support of Bill S-204, a bill that would make it a criminal offence for a person to go abroad and receive an organ in the case where there has not been consent. This bill is currently before the House, and the petitioners would like to see it passed expeditiously. It was passed in the same form unanimously in the House in the previous Parliament, and it has been passed twice unanimously in the Senate.

CONVERSION THERAPY

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third petition I am presenting deals with Bill C-6, the government's conversion therapy bill.

The petitioners are very supportive of efforts to ban conversion therapy. However, they are concerned about the definition as writ-

Routine Proceedings

ten in the bill, believing that it is inaccurate and that it would apply to private conversations in which sexual behaviour is discussed but that have nothing to do with conversion therapy as it has been historically defined.

The petitioners call on the government to ban coercive, degrading practices that are designed to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity; to ensure there are no laws discriminating against Canadians or limiting their ability to access services on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity; and to fix the definition in Bill C-6.

ETHIOPIA

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fourth petition highlights the situation in the Tigray region and more broadly in Ethiopia. The petitioners are concerned about the human rights and humanitarian situation in Ethiopia and want to see greater engagement from the Government of Canada on these issues. That includes promoting greater engagement in elections and in the election monitoring coming up in Ethiopia.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fifth and final petition I am tabling today highlights the horrific situation confronting Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims in China. The petitioners note various aspects of these atrocities in the petition.

They call on the government to recognize the Uighur genocide. They also call on the government to use the Magnitsky act and to recognize that any proposed co-operation with the Chinese state should be viewed through the lens of the fact that the Government of China and the Chinese military are in the process of committing a genocide as we speak.

I commend these petitions to the consideration of members.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 681, 683, 693, 695, 698, 703, 705, 715, 720, 721 and 723.

[Text]

Question No. 681—**Mr. Gary Vidal:**

With regard to the government's statistics on graduation rates of First Nations high school students: (a) what were the graduation rates of First Nations students who attended high school on reserve, broken down by province and year for each of the past five years; and (b) what were the graduation rates of First Nations students who attended high school off reserve, broken down by province and year for each of the past five years?

Routine Proceedings

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, ISC does not report on high school graduation rates of first nations students who attended high school on or off reserve, broken down by province and year.

The department does, however, report in its Departmental Results Report, DRR, on national secondary school graduation rates for first nations students ordinarily resident on reserve who are funded by ISC. Here are the links to the DRRs for 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20: 2017-18 DRR: www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1538147955169/1538148052804; 2018-19 DRR: www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1562155507149/1562155526338; 2019-20 DRR: www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1603722062425/1603722082047.

Question No. 683—**Mr. Gary Vidal:**

With regard to the government's consultation process on Bill C-15, An Act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: what are the details of all consultations the government conducted with individuals from First Nations, Metis Settlements, or Inuit communities prior to tabling the bill, including, for each consultation, the (i) type of meeting (in person, Zoom conference, etc.), (ii) names and titles of attendees, including who they represented, if applicable, (iii) date, (iv) location?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice, with the support of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, has published a "What We Learned" report that is responsive to Q-683. The report can be found at www.justice.gc.ca/eng/declaration/wwl-cna/index.html. As described in the report, a series of engagement sessions were held with first nations, Inuit and Métis leaders, modern treaty signatories, regional indigenous organizations, indigenous women's organizations and indigenous youth. These meetings were held virtually over the Zoom conference platform, largely between September 30 and November 6, 2020. The list of indigenous partners and groups that participated is also presented in the report.

Question No. 693—**Mr. Alex Ruff:**

With regard to the Universal Broadband Fund (UBF) program: (a) why was the Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) 2.0 proposed project denied funding to the UBF program; (b) which of the government's objectives did the proposed SWIFT 2.0 fail to meet; and (c) with SWIFT projects being a solution to address competition issues in Southwestern Ontario between Internet Service Providers (ISPs), how can SWIFT be a partner in achieving the government's goal of having 98 per cent of Canadians access high speed internet?

Ms. Gudie Hutchings (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), since 2015, the Government of Canada has made \$6.2 billion available for rural and remote Internet infrastructure to help ensure all Canadians have access to fast and reliable Internet, no matter where they live. With the proposed budget 2021, the now \$2.75-billion universal broadband fund, UBF, will help the government achieve its goal of connecting 98% of Canadians to broadband by 2026 and all Canadians by 2030.

The UBF is an application-based program and therefore requires that a project application be submitted in order to receive funding. The Government of Canada cannot provide the level of detail requested on any particular applicant under the universal broadband fund without disclosing proprietary third party information provided in confidence, and treated confidentially by the applicant. The program received a number of applications for southwestern On-

tario, and announcements of successful projects under the rapid response stream are already under way. These projects can be found on the universal broadband website: <https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/139.nsf/eng/00021.html>. Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada is still finalizing its assessment of rapid response stream applications and has begun assessing applications received under the "core" UBF. More announcements are forthcoming.

In response to (b), the Government of Canada and Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology, SWIFT, share the same objectives of connecting rural and remote Canadians to the broadband Internet they need. Through the building Canada fund's small communities fund, the federal and provincial governments are each contributing \$63.7 million to SWIFT for a \$209-million project, to install 3,095 kilometres of fibre, targeting 50,000 households and businesses by 2024. The Government of Canada recognizes the important role that SWIFT and other partners will play in closing the digital divide in Ontario.

In response to (c), connectivity is a shared responsibility. While the Government of Canada is playing a leadership role by providing funding, it is imperative that all orders of government across Canada, as well as the private sector, Internet service providers and other stakeholders, lend support and resources to close the broadband gap and achieve the targets set out in Canada's connectivity strategy. The Government of Canada recognizes that a flexible and collaborative approach is important in engaging with provinces, territories and other partners to help achieve our goal of universal connectivity. SWIFT has already been an important leader and partner in this effort.

Question No. 695—**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:**

With regard to the government's decision to ban all pleasure craft in the Canadian Arctic Waters and cruise vessels in all Canadian waters until February 28, 2022: (a) why was the length of the ban not contingent upon vaccination levels of Canadians or related to vaccination requirements for those on-board the vessels; and (b) what role did the low level of Canadians vaccinated in January and February of 2021, due to the government's inability to secure enough vaccines fast enough, have on the decision to extend the ban for an entire extra year?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to minimize the introduction and spread of the COVID-19 virus in the marine mode, Transport Canada has chosen interim orders as the instrument of choice. In developing its interim orders, Transport Canada has worked in close collaboration with the Public Health Agency of Canada and consulted broadly with other levels of government, health officials, transportation industry stakeholders, provincial and territorial governments and indigenous and Inuit peoples. Transport Canada developed these interim orders taking into consideration the health situation throughout the country at the time and advice provided by public health experts. One of the primary reasons interim orders were used is that they enable the Minister of Transport to apply appropriate temporary measures while retaining the ability to rescind the prohibitions if it is determined that the pandemic has substantially improved and that the prohibitions are no longer needed. To inform any such decision, Transport Canada will continue to work with the Public Health Agency of Canada and local health authorities to monitor and assess the situation.

Question No. 698—**Mrs. Tamara Jansen:**

With regard to the Canada-British Columbia Early Learning and Child Care Agreement and the \$10 per day Child Care Prototype Site Evaluation: (a) when did the Government of British Columbia share the results of this evaluation with the Government of Canada; (b) what were the findings of the evaluation; (c) what were the recommendations; (d) how can the public access the full report, including the website address where the report may be downloaded from; and (e) what were the specific findings of the evaluation regarding the feasibility of \$10 per day child-care?

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to providing Canadian families with access to high-quality, affordable, flexible and inclusive child care. Budget 2021 has committed up to \$30 billion over five years, with \$8.3 billion every year, permanently, to build a high-quality, affordable, and accessible early learning and child care system across Canada. This funding will work towards cutting child care fees by 50% on average by the end of 2022, and achieving \$10/day child care on average by 2026.

In response to (a), the B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development contracted R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. to conduct an evaluation and analysis of the British Columbia universal child care prototype sites or \$10-per-day child care pilot. This evaluation was funded by the provincial government. ESDC was not provided with an official copy of the report prior to its release.

In response to (b), (c), (d), and (e), the full report is publicly available on the Government of British Columbia's website.

Question No. 703—**Mr. Alex Ruff:**

With regard to the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Operation HONOUR Tracking and Analysis System (OPHTAS) 2020's annual incident tracking report: (a) when was this report completed; (b) why was this report not published and released on the government's website in the summer of 2020, in a similar timeline with the previous year's reports; (c) who made the decision not to publish the document in the summer of 2020; (d) on what date was the Minister of National Defence or his office informed that the document would not be published in the summer of 2020, in line with the schedule of the previous years; (e) if the report has since been published, on what specific website is the document located; and (f) how is the OPHTAS report data fused with other department of National Defence or CAF reports, including the annual CAF Provost Marshall report, the Judge Advocate General Annual report, the Director General Integrated Conflict and Complaint Management

annual report, and the Sexual Misconduct Response Centre annual report, in order to provide a consolidated view of sexual misconduct in the CAF?

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no room in the Canadian Armed Forces or the Department of National Defence for sexism, misogyny, racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, discrimination, harassment, or any other conduct that prevents the institution from being a truly welcoming and inclusive organization.

National Defence understands that a culture change within the Canadian Armed Forces is required to remove a culture of toxic behaviour and to create an environment where everyone is respected and valued, and can feel safe to contribute to the best of their ability.

To this end, the Minister of National Defence has appointed the Hon. Louise Arbour to lead an independent external comprehensive review of the culture and practices of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence. This review will provide recommendations aimed at addressing systemic issues and creating lasting culture change within the organization.

Additionally, the acting chief of the defence staff has appointed Lieutenant-General Jennie Carignan to the newly created position of chief of professional conduct and culture, to lead efforts to promote culture change across the defence team, including the enhancement and consolidation of National Defence's sexual misconduct tracking mechanisms. This will identify areas that require focused attention, and ensure that all reported incidents are addressed appropriately in a timely manner.

Through these actions, National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces will move to eliminate harmful attitudes and beliefs that have enabled misconduct and will create an environment where all feel welcome.

In response to part (a), the report was not finalized.

In response to part (b), challenges and delays caused by COVID-19 forced National Defence to adjust the development, approach, and timelines to the 2020 report's data release.

In response to part (c), the normal release schedule for the annual Operation Honour sexual misconduct incident report is in the fall, using data pulled in the late spring from the Operation Honour tracking and analysis system, OPHTAS. The impact of the COVID-19 restrictions through the spring and fall of 2020 delayed the completion and release of the report.

Due to the delays in the process, the previous approach of relying on data gathered in the spring was considered no longer sufficient to provide an up-to-date overview of sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Routine Proceedings

Given the unexpected challenges and delays, the acting chief of the defence staff made the decision to combine the 2020 and 2021 reports.

In response to part (d), as there is no legislative requirement to release this report, revised timelines were not communicated formally to the Minister of National Defence.

In response to part (e), National Defence remains committed to openness and transparency, and will re-establish a regular reporting cycle for sexual misconduct incident data.

National Defence anticipates the release of the 2021 report in the fall of 2021, which will provide a comprehensive overview using data from April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2021.

In response to part (f), several organizations within National Defence, such as the Canadian Forces Provost Marshal, the Judge Advocate General, the director general of integrated conflict and complaint management, and the sexual misconduct response centre, have databases that are designed to support their mandates. These databases may capture certain data related to sexual misconduct incidents, such as information on investigations, charges laid, and trials. This information is made available in these organizations' annual reports.

The Operation Honour tracking and analysis system, OPHTAS, is the only database dedicated to tracking all sexual misconduct incidents reported through the chain of command. While there may be an intersection of sexual misconduct data in OPTHAS and other departmental databases, these databases are currently not linked, and a direct comparison of the information held within each cannot be made.

National Defence is working to integrate all databases that record data related to sexual misconduct. This project will help achieve a more consolidated picture of sexual misconduct data, while respecting the legal privacy and confidentiality requirements of the various databases.

Question No. 705—Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan:

With regard to the processing of parents and grandparents applications in the 2020 intake by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada: (a) how many interest to sponsor forms were received; (b) how many of the interest to sponsor forms received were duplicates; (c) how many individuals have received invitations to apply; (d) how many applications have been (i) submitted, (ii) approved, (iii) refused, (iv) processed; and (e) what is the current processing time?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), 209,174 interest to sponsor forms were received.

In response to (b), 5,961 of the interest to sponsor forms received were duplicates.

In response to (c), IRCC can confirm that the department sent out more invitations to apply, ITAs, than the target in order to come close to receiving 10,000 complete applications for the 2020 year.

In response to (d)(i), IRCC can confirm that enough applications were submitted to reach the annual cap of 10,000 complete applications for 2020.

IRCC cannot publicly release the number of ITAs that were sent for the 2020 parents and grandparents, PGP, process, as the data

figures reveal a technique, which is applicable to paragraph 16(1)(b) under the ATIP act, which could compromise future ITA PGP processes.

In response to (d)(ii), (d)(iii) and (d)(iv), zero applications have been approved, refused, or processed, as processing from the 2020 cohort has not started. IRCC cannot release the figure for how many applications have been submitted for PGP 2020, as, at this point in time, completeness checks have not been completed.

In response to (e), the current processing times for permanent residence applications for the parents and grandparents category from April 2020 to March 31, 2021 is 28 months.

Question No. 715—Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:

With regard to the implementation of Orders in Council entitled “Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order (Prohibition of Entry into Canada from any Country Other Than the United States)” and Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order (Mandatory Isolation): (a) what specific direction was given to border agents regarding new and modified Order in Council provisions directly from the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness or his staff; (b) what procedure was followed ensuring the Orders in Council’s proper enforcement by Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) agents; and (c) what specific direction was given to CBSA agents regarding non-application – requirement to quarantine, specifically for persons who must enter Canada regularly to go to their normal place of employment or to return from their normal place of employment in the United States?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the Canada Border Services Agency, CBSA, works in close co-operation with the Public Health Agency of Canada, PHAC, to implement and operationalize the travel restrictions and public health measures at the port of entry. The measures that have been implemented are layered, and together, aim to reduce the risk of the importation and transmission of COVID-19 and new variants of concern of the virus related to international travel.

The regulatory framework that has been developed to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19 at the border is complex. At time of seeking entry, the CBSA officers are required to consider various facts and make multiple decisions related to a single traveller.

While the border services officers, BSOs, are focusing on the eligibility to enter under an order, as well as their public health requirements, they are also assessing all relevant obligations under other acts or regulations including their admissibility under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

The CBSA has issued a number of operational bulletins, shift briefing bullets, annexes and job aids to support officers in the decision-making process. As the orders in council, OICs have evolved over time, so has the guidance issued to frontline officers.

All guidance is point in time and is updated on an ongoing basis as more clarity is required, or where there are changes to the OICs. The CBSA and PHAC regularly consult on interpretations of restrictions and public health measures and collaborate on adjustments and improvements where issues have been identified.

With regard to part (b), every day, BSOs make over 35,000 decisions across the country and those decisions are made based on all laws and information made available to the BSO at the time of entry. To facilitate decision-making, the CBSA provides support to frontline BSOs through operational guideline bulletins, 24-7 live support access and regular case reviews. In addition, the CBSA conducts detailed technical briefings prior to the implementation of new or amended OICs to support the accurate implementation of new provisions and ensure clarity for frontline employees. The CBSA has also established a process to monitor decisions made by BSOs as they relate to the application of OICs for essential service providers and will continue to make adjustments or review the CBSA operational guidance to BSOs, as required. If the CBSA discovers that an incorrect assessment has been made at the border, it works with PHAC to rectify the situation.

With regard to part (c), the operational guidance referenced in the response to part (a) of this Order Paper question includes passages specific to cross-border workers and how specific public health requirements within the OICs may apply in these circumstances.

More specifically, in those instances, when assessing whether an exemption may apply, BSOs have been instructed to remain mindful of the following points. The traveller must be able to demonstrate that their purpose of crossing was specific to attending their normal place of employment. “Regular” is typically interpreted to mean daily or weekly, but a person able to establish a regular pattern of travel for this purpose could qualify. This exemption applies to persons who must cross the border regularly to go to their normal place of employment on either side of the Canada-U.S. border. There may be some circumstances where travel to another country could qualify, e.g., weekly or biweekly travel required. Those who are looking to establish that they must cross regularly must demonstrate to an officer that they will be crossing on a regular basis going forward when being processed. If the cross-border work involves medical care for persons over age 65, i.e., nurses, home care specialists, pharmacists etc., an individual request outlining the precautionary public health measures intended for interaction with this older age group must be submitted for determination of the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada.

Officers are trained to reach a decision on the basis of the entirety of the information made available to them over the course of an interaction with a traveller. As such, information and circumstances beyond the items listed above will be considered by BSOs when determining a traveller’s admissibility to Canada, as well as in relation to any applicable exemptions from public health requirements.

Furthermore, in an effort to assist cross-border workers who by virtue of their employment are required to enter Canada regularly, the CBSA has also published guidelines on its website.

Question No. 720—**Mr. Dan Albas:**

Routine Proceedings

With regard to the Greener Homes initiative that was announced in the Fall Economic Statement, but is still not available for applications and has had a message on its website to come back in the coming weeks for months: (a) when will the program launch; (b) how will the retroactivity be implemented; (c) what will happen to people who believed they were eligible, but due to the lack of application information were denied; and (d) why was there such a major delay in opening this program?

Mr. Marc Serré (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the Canada greener homes grant initiative, announced in the fall economic statement, launched on May 27, 2021.

With regard to part (b), to be eligible for retroactive payment, homeowners must document their retrofit journey and are asked to keep copies of all invoices both for the EnerGuide home evaluation and for their retrofit work. The home energy adviser will take before and after photos. Homeowners can access the online portal to register and submit this information for reimbursement, provided the retrofit measures undertaken are on the list of eligible measures.

With regard to part (c), to be eligible for reimbursement, participants in the Canada greener homes grant initiative must obtain an EnerGuide home evaluation before the retrofit and then a post-retrofit evaluation once retrofit work is completed. Call centre operators and program officers are available to help homeowners navigate the program’s eligibility requirements. Should the homeowner not be eligible for reimbursement under the Canada greener homes grant initiative, program officers can assist in identifying other federal, provincial/territorial, municipal and/or regional programs for which the homeowner may be eligible.

With regard to part (d), in the fall economic statement, the government committed to launching the Canada greener homes grant initiative during the spring of 2021. Government officials have been working in an expeditious manner since this announcement and the Canada greener homes grant initiative launched during the spring of 2021 as announced.

Question No. 721—**Mr. Dan Albas:**

With regard to the \$2.3 billion over five years announced in Budget 2021 for conservation: (a) when will the ‘thousands of jobs’ be created; (b) where will the 1 million square kilometers of land be located; (c) has all the land been located; (d) have lands under provincial jurisdiction been identified and have provincial governments agreed; (e) what is the cost breakdowns for funds earmarked for partnerships with indigenous peoples; and (f) what is the total cost breakdown for how exactly this money will be spent?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), millions of jobs rely on nature, including those in farming, fishing, forestry and tourism. Investment in conservation, therefore, is also an economic opportunity.

Routine Proceedings

Over the course of the next five years, the work announced in budget 2021 will generate jobs in nature conservation and management for Canadians. Arising out of partnerships with provincial and territorial jurisdictions and indigenous governments, organizations and/or communities, these jobs will be distributed across all regions of Canada, including in rural and remote areas and indigenous communities.

With regard to parts (b), (c) and (d), the government is currently working to finalize a concrete and ambitious approach that would achieve protection of 25% of land and oceans by 2025, and set the stage for 30% by 2030. While not all of the specific locations are yet identified, we continue to engage with provinces and territories, indigenous organizations, foundations, the private sector and non-profit conservation organizations to get their views on how it can work together to achieve these ambitious targets. Specific efforts are ongoing and we will continue to work with provinces and territories to find mutually beneficial approaches to conserving land and addressing species at risk and biodiversity loss.

The government is aware of specific landscapes and waterscapes that have been included in provincial, territorial and municipal land use planning, and other protected areas systems plans including the Natural Areas Systems Plan in Newfoundland and Labrador, the Plan Nord in Quebec, the Peel Watershed Land Use Plan in the Yukon, the Living Legacy protected areas plan in Ontario, and Nova Scotia's Parks and Protected Areas Plan, among others.

Parks Canada will continue work to complete negotiations with provincial and indigenous governments for the establishment of two new national park reserves in the South Okanagan-Similkameen, British Columbia, and in the coastal barrier islands of the Sandhills, Hog Island area, Prince Edward Island, and to identify and assess additional national parks with an emphasis on unrepresented regions and natural areas of importance to indigenous communities.

With regard to part (e), we are not yet in a position to share the cost breakdown for how the money will be spent until such time as program details of the funding are finalized and approved by Treasury Board, including funds earmarked for the indigenous guardians program and other indigenous partnerships.

The indigenous guardians program is a good example. Building upon the work initiated in budget 2017, which allocated \$25 million over five years for an indigenous guardians program, budget 2021 provides additional resources to continue supporting indigenous peoples in opportunities to exercise responsibility in stewardship of their traditional lands, waters and ice, including preventing priority species at imminent risk of disappearing. The indigenous guardians program supports indigenous rights and responsibilities in protecting and conserving ecosystems, developing and maintaining sustainable economies, and continuing the profound connections between Canadian landscape and indigenous culture.

Once these final allocations are confirmed, ECCC and Parks Canada will work in partnership with indigenous governance bodies to allocate resources and identify particular projects moving forward.

With regard to part (f), we are not yet in a position to share the cost breakdown for how the money will be spent until such time as program details of the funding are finalized and approved by Treasury Board.

Question No. 723—Mr. Brad Vis:

With regard to the commitment on page 305 of Budget 2021 to implement a "Tax on Unproductive Use of Canadian Housing by Foreign Non-resident Owners": (a) how many internal memos, presentations, or other similar type of documents were created by the government or hired consultants on this proposed tax; (b) of the documents in (a), what are their titles and when were they dated; (c) in which internal documents and when was it "estimated that this measure will increase federal revenues by \$700 million over four years"; (d) what methodology was used to establish the \$700 million figure in (c); (e) on what date will the promised consultation paper for stakeholders be released and to which stakeholders will it be distributed; and (f) how many days is the stakeholder consultation period scheduled to take place and on what date will it (i) begin, (ii) conclude?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Finance and Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, budget 2021 announced the government's intention to implement a national, annual 1% tax on the value of non-resident, non-Canadian owned residential real estate that is considered to be vacant or underused, effective January 1, 2022. The government indicated that it will release a consultation paper in the coming months to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to comment on the parameters of the proposed tax. The government also indicated that, moving forward, it intends to work closely with provinces, territories and municipalities.

With regard to part (a), one internal memo was prepared by the department in relation to the proposal announced in budget 2021.

With regard to part (b), the title of the memo referred to in part (a) was "Tax on Underused Housing" and was dated in 2021.

With regard to part (c), the fiscal impact of the proposal was estimated when planning for budget 2021 and was presented in internal budget documents.

With regard to part (d), the fiscal impact was calculated by applying a 1% tax on the estimated value of non-resident, non-Canadian owned residential real estate considered to be vacant or underused. The value of the proposed tax base was estimated using Statistics Canada data on foreign-owned properties and residential property values, as well as information on British Columbia's speculation and vacancy tax.

With regard to part (e), the date of the release of a backgrounder has not yet been determined. However, budget 2021 indicated that the document would be released in the coming months.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to part (f), while the length of the consultation period has not been established, it would not be uncommon for consultations on proposals such as these to be open for public comment for 60 days.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 682, 684 to 692, 694, 696, 697, 699 to 702, 704, 706 to 714, 716 to 719, 722 and 724 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 682—**Mr. Gary Vidal:**

With regard to expenditures related to promoting, advertising, or consulting on Bill C-15, An Act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, by the government, including any that took place prior to the tabling of the legislation, since October 21, 2019, broken down by month and by department, agency or other government entity: (a) what was the total amount spent on (i) consultants, (ii) advertising, (iii) promotion; and (b) what are the details of all contracts related to promoting, advertising or consulting, including (i) the date the contract was signed, (ii) the vendor, (iii) the amount, (iv) the start and end date, (v) the description of goods or services, (vi) whether the contract was sole-sourced or was competitively bid on?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 684—**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:**

With regard to fraud involving the Canada Emergency Response Benefit program since the program was launched: (a) what was the number of double payments made under the program; (b) what is the value of the payments in (a); (c) what is the value of double payments made in (b) that have been recouped by the government; (d) what is the number of payments made to applications that were suspected or deemed to be fraudulent; (e) what is the value of the payments in (d); and (f) what is the value recouped by the government related to payments in (e)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 685—**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:**

With regard to Corporations Canada and the deregistration of federally incorporated businesses since 2016, broken down by year: (a) how many businesses have deregistered their corporation; and (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by type of business?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 686—**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:**

With regard to the government's requirements for hotels being used as quarantine facilities: (a) what specific obligations do the hotels have with regard to security standards; (b) what specific measures has the government taken to ensure these security standards are being met; (c) how many instances have occurred where government inspectors have found that the security standards of these hotels were not being met; (d) of the instances in (c), how many times did the security failures jeopardize the safety of (i) the individuals staying in the facility, (ii) public health or the general public; (e) are hotels required to verify that someone has received a negative test prior to leaving the facility, and, if so, how is this specifically being done; and (f) how many individuals have left these facilities without receiving a negative test result?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 687—**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:**

With regard to the government's requirements for hotels to become a government-authorized hotel for the purpose of quarantining returning international air travellers: (a) what specific obligations do the hotels have with regard to security standards; (b) what specific measures has the government taken to ensure these security standards are being met; (c) how many instances have occurred where government inspectors have found that the security standards of these hotels were not being met; (d) of the instances in (c), how many times did the security failures jeopardize the safety of (i) the individuals staying in the facility, (ii) public health or the general public; (e) how many criminal acts have been reported since the hotel quarantine requirement began at each of the properties designated as a government-authorized hotel; (f) what is the breakdown of (e) by type of offence; (g) are the hotels required to verify that someone has received a negative test prior to leaving the facility, and, if so, how is this specifically being done; (h) how many individuals have left these hotels prior to or without receiving a negative test result; and (i) how does the government track whether or not individuals have left these hotels prior to receiving a negative test result?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 688—**Ms. Nelly Shin:**

With regard to the requirement that entails individuals entering Canada for compassionate reasons to seek an exemption online, the problems with the Public Health Agency of Canada's (PHAC) online system, and the resulting actions from the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA): (a) what is the total number of international travellers arriving at Canadian airports who were denied entry, broken down by month since March 18, 2020; (b) how many individuals in (a) were (i) immediately sent back to their country of origin, (ii) permitted to remain in Canada pending an appeal or deportation; (c) what is the number of instances where the PHAC did not make a decision on an application for exemptions on compassionate reasons prior to the traveller's arrival, or scheduled arrival in Canada; (d) of the instances in (c), where PHAC did not make a decision on time, was the reason due to (i) technical glitches that caused the PHAC to miss the application, (ii) other reasons, broken down by reason; (e) for the instances where the PHAC did not make a decision on time, was the traveller (i) still permitted entry in Canada, (ii) denied entry; and (f) what specific recourse do travellers arriving for compassionate reasons have when they encounter problems with the CBSA or other officials due to the PHAC not making a decision on time?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 689—**Mr. Robert Kitchen:**

With regard to expenditures on social media influencers, including any contracts which would use social media influencers as part of a public relations campaign since January 1, 2021: (a) what are the details of all such expenditures, including (i) the vendor, (ii) amount, (iii) campaign description, (iv) date of the contract, (v) name or handle of the influencer; and (b) for each campaign that paid an influencer, was there a requirement to make public, as part of a disclaimer, the fact that the influencer was being paid by the government, and, if not, why not?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 690—**Mr. Robert Kitchen:**

With regard to all monetary and non-monetary contracts, grants, agreements and arrangements entered into by the government, including any department, agency, Crown corporation or other government entity, with FLIR Lorex Inc., FLIR Systems, Lorex Technology Inc, March Networks, or Rx Networks Inc., since January 1, 2016: what are the details of such contracts, grants, agreements, or arrangements, including for each (i) the company, (ii) the date, (iii) the amount or value, (iv) the start and end date, (v) the summary of terms, (vi) whether or not the item was made public through proactive disclosure, (vii) the specific details of goods or services provided to the government as a result of the contract, grant, agreement or arrangement, (viii) the related government program, if applicable?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 691—**Mr. Randy Hoback:**

With regard to the deal reached between the government and Pfizer Inc. for COVID-19 vaccine doses through 2024: (a) what COVID-19 modelling was used to develop the procurement agreement; and (b) what specific delivery timetables were agreed to?

(Return tabled)

Routine Proceedings

Question No. 692—Mr. Randy Hoback:

With regard to the testimony of the CEO of BioPharma Services at the House of Commons' Standing Committee on International Trade on Friday, April 23, 2021, pertaining to potential future waves of COVID-19 and the need for trading blocs: (a) have the Minister of Finance and her department been directed to plan supports for Canadians affected by subsequent waves of the virus through 2026; (b) what is the current status of negotiations or discussions the government has entered into with our allies about the creation of trading blocs for vaccines and personal protective equipment; (c) which specific countries have been involved in discussions about potential trading blocs; and (d) what are the details of all meetings where negotiations or discussions that have occurred about potential trading, including the (i) date, (ii) participants, (iii) countries represented by participants, (iv) meeting agenda and summary?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 694—Ms. Raquel Dancho:

With regard to the Canada Emergency Response Benefit payments being sent to prisoners in federal or provincial or territorial correctional facilities: (a) how many CERB benefit payments were made to incarcerated individuals; (b) what is the value of the payments made to incarcerated individuals; (c) what is the value of the payments in (b) which were later recouped by the government as of April 28, 2021; (d) how many payments were intercepted and or blocked by Correctional Service Canada staff; (e) what is the breakdown of (d) by correctional institution; and (e) how many of the payments in (a) were sent to individuals in (i) federal correctional facilities, (ii) provincial or territorial correctional facilities?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 696—Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:

With regard to the negotiations between the government and major Canadian airlines that are related to financial assistance, since November 8, 2020: what are the details of all meetings, including any virtual meetings, held between the government and major airlines, including, for each meeting, the (i) date, (ii) number of government representatives, broken down by department and agency, and, if ministers' offices were represented, how many representatives of each office were present, (iii) number of airline representatives, including a breakdown of which airlines were represented and how many representatives of each airline were present?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 697—Mrs. Alice Wong:

With regard to the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO): (a) broken down by end of fiscal year, between fiscal years 2011-12 to 2020-21, how many trademark examiners were (i) employed, (ii) contracted by the CIPO; (b) what percentage in (a) were employed with a residence within the National Capital Region of Ottawa-Gatineau, by the end of fiscal years 2015-16 to 2020-21; (c) broken down by fiscal year, during each fiscal year from 2011-12 to 2020-21, how many trademark examiners were (i) hired, (ii) terminated, broken down by (A) for cause and (B) not for cause; (d) is there a requirement for bilingualism for trademark examiners, and, if so, what level of other-official language fluency is required; (e) is there a requirement that trademark examiners reside within the National Capital Region of Ottawa-Gatineau, and, if so, how many trademark examiner candidates have refused offers of employment, and how many trademark examiners have ceased employment, due to such a requirement in the fiscal years from 2011-12 to 2020-21; (f) what was the (i) mean, (ii) median time of a trademark application, for each of the fiscal years between 2011-12 and 2020-21, between filing and a first office action (approval or examiner's report); (g) for the answer in (f), since June 17, 2019, how many were filed under the (i) direct system, (ii) Madrid System; (h) for the answer in (g), what are the mean and median time, broken down by month for each system since June 17, 2019; (i) does the CIPO prioritize the examination of Madrid system trademark applications designating Canada over direct trademark applications, and, if so, what priority treatment is given; (j) as many applicants and trademark agents have not received correspondence from the CIPO by regular mail and prefer electronic correspondence, does the CIPO have systems in place to allow trademarks examiners and other trademarks staff to send all correspondence by e-mail to applicants and trademark agents of record, and, if not, is the CIPO looking into implementing such system; (k) when is the anticipated date for the execution of such system; (l) what is Canada's ranking with other countries, as to the speed of trademark examination; and (m) what countries, if any, have a longer period of time between filing and a first office action (approval or examiner's report) for trademarks compared to Canada?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 699—Mr. Tom Kmiec:

With regard to the Fiscal Stabilization Program under the Federal-Provincial Arrangements Act, since January 1, 1987: (a) what is the breakdown of every payment or refund made to provinces, broken down by (i) date, (ii) province, (iii) payment amount, (iv) revenue lost by the province, (v) payment as a proportion of revenue lost, (vi) the value of the payment in amount per capita; (b) how many claims have been submitted to the Minister of Finance by each province since its inception, broken down by province and date; (c) how many claims have been accepted, broken down by province and date; and (d) how many claims have been rejected, broken down by province and date?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 700—Mr. Tom Kmiec:

With regard to voluntary compliance undertakings (VCU) and board orders by the Patented Medicines Prices Review Board (PMPRB), since January 1, 2016: (a) what is the total amount of money that has been made payable from pharmaceutical companies to her Majesty in right of Canada through voluntary compliance undertakings and board orders, both sum total, broken down by (i) company, (ii) product, (iii) summary of guideline application, (iv) amount charged, (v) date; (b) how is the money processed by the PMPRB; (c) how much of the intake from VCUs and board orders are counted as revenue for the PMPRB; (d) how much of the intake from VCUs and board orders are considered revenue for Health Canada; (e) as the Public Accounts lists capital inflow from VCUs as revenue, what has the PMPRB done with the inflow; and (f) who decides the distribution of the capital inflow from VCUs?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 701—Mr. Tom Kmiec:

With regard to the Patented Medicines Prices Review Board (PMPRB) and the proposed amendments to the "Patented Medicines Regulations", also referred to as the PMPRB Guidelines, since January 1, 2017: (a) how many organizations, advocacy groups, and members of industry or stakeholders have been consulted, both sum total and broken down in an itemized list by (i) name, (ii) summary of their feedback, (iii) date; (b) how many stakeholders expressed positive feedback about the proposed guidelines; (c) how many stakeholders expressed negative feedback about the proposed guidelines; (d) what is the threshold of negative feedback needed to delay implementation of the proposed guidelines as has been done previously in mid 2020, and start of 2021; (e) have there been any requests made by PMPRB executives to Health Canada officials to delay the implementation of the proposed regulations; and (f) how many times were these requests rejected by Health Canada officials?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 702—Mr. Tom Kmiec:

With regard to reports, studies, assessments, consultations, evaluations and deliverables prepared for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation since January 1, 2016: what are the details of all such deliverables, including the (i) date that the deliverable was finished, (ii) title, (iii) summary of recommendations, (iv) file number, (v) website where the deliverable is available online, if applicable, (vi) value of the contract related to the deliverable?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 704—Mr. Alex Ruff:**

With regard to government data relating to the Cannabis Act (2018) Part 14 Access to Cannabis for Medical Purposes, broken down by month, year, and province or territory since 2018: (a) how many active personal or designated production registrations were authorized for amounts equal to or above 25 grams per person, per day; (b) how many active personal or designated production registrations are authorized for amounts equal to or above 100 grams per person, per day; (c) how many registrations for the production of cannabis at the same location exist in Canada that allow two, three and four registered persons; (d) of the locations that allow two, three and four registered persons to grow cannabis, how many site locations contain registrations authorized to produce amounts equal to or above 25 grams per person, per day; (e) how many site locations contain registrations authorized to produce amounts equal to or above 100 grams per person, per day; (f) how many Health Canada or other government inspections of these operations were completed each month; (g) how many of those inspections yielded violations, broken down by location; and (h) how many resulted in withdrawal of one or more licences?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 706—Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan:

With regard to COVID-19 specimen collection from travellers completed at Canada's ports of entry and through at home specimen collection kits: (a) what company performs the tests of specimens collected from each port of entry; (b) what company performs the tests of at home specimen collection kits; (c) what city and laboratory are specimens collected from each port of entry, sent to for processing; (d) what city and laboratory are at home specimen collection kits processed; (e) what procurement process did the government undertake in selecting companies to collect and process COVID-19 specimens; (f) what companies submitted bids to collect and process COVID-19 specimens; (g) what are the details of the bids submitted by companies in (f); and (h) what are the details of the contracts entered into between the government and any companies that have been hired to collect and process COVID-19 specimens?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 707—Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan:

With regard to Access to Information and Privacy (ATIP) requests submitted to Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC): (a) what is the current inventory of requests and broken down by the type of request; (b) what is the average processing time of each type of request; (c) what percentage of requests have received extensions in response time and broken down by the type of request; (d) what is the breakdown of the percentage of requests in (c) according to reasons for extensions; (e) what is the average length of extensions for response time overall and for each type of request; (f) what is the average number of extensions for response time overall and for each type of request; (g) what percentage of requests have had exemptions applied; (h) what is the breakdown of the percentage in (g) according to the reasons for exemptions; (i) how many complaints regarding the ATIP process has IRCC received since January 1, 2020, broken down by month; and (j) what is the breakdown of the number of complaints in (i) according to the type of complaint?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 708—Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan:

With regard to Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) offices: (a) what lines of business are processed at each case processing centre (CPC), the centralized intake office (CIO), and the Operations Support Centre (OSC); (b) what lines of business in (a) are not currently being processed at each CPC, the CIO, and the OSC; (c) how many applications have been (i) submitted, (ii) approved, (iii) refused, (iv) processed for each line of business, at each CPC, the CIO, and the OSC since January 1, 2020, broken down by month; (d) what is the current processing times and service standard processing times for each line of business at each CPC, the CIO, the OSC; (e) what is the operating status of each IRCC in-person office in Canada; (f) what services are provided at each IRCC in-person office in Canada; (g) what services in (f) are currently (i) available, (ii) unavailable, (iii) offered at limited capacity, at each IRCC in-person office in Canada; (h) what lines of business are processed at each IRCC visa office located in Canadian embassies, high commissions, and consulates; (i) how many applications have been (i) submitted, (ii) approved, (iii) refused, (iv) processed, for each line of business processed at each IRCC visa office in (h) since January 1, 2020, broken down by month; and (j) what is the current processing times and standard processing times for each line of business processed at each IRCC visa office in (h)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 709—Mr. Alex Ruff:

With regard to correspondence received by the Minister of Canadian Heritage or the Office of the Prime Minister related to internet censorship or increased regulation of posts on social media sites, since January 1, 2019: (a) how many pieces of correspondence were received; and (b) how many pieces of correspondence asked for more internet censorship or regulation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 710—Mr. Martin Shields:

With regard to the planning of the government's announcement on April 29, 2021, about the launch of an independent external comprehensive review of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces and reports that some of those involved in the announcement, including Lieutenant-General Jennie Carignan, did not learn about their new roles until the morning of the announcement: (a) on what date was Lieutenant-General Jennie Carignan informed that she would become the Chief, Professional Conduct and Culture, and how was she informed; (b) on what date was Louise Arbour informed that she would be head of the review; (c) was the decision to launch this review made before or after Elder Marques testified at the Standing Committee on National Defence that Katie Telford had knowledge about the accusations against General Vance; and (d) if the decision in (c) was made prior to Mr. Marques' testimony, what proof does the government have to back-up that claim?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 711—Mr. Martin Shields:

With regard to free rapid COVID-19 tests distributed by the government directly to companies for the screening of close-contact employees: (a) how many tests were distributed; (b) which companies received the tests; and (c) how many tests did each company in (b) receive?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 712—Mr. Martin Shields:

With regard to contracts awarded by the government to former public servants since January 1, 2020, broken down by department, agency, or other government entity: (a) how many contracts have been awarded to former public servants; (b) what is the total value of those contracts; and (c) what are the details of each such contract, including the (i) date the contract was signed, (ii) description of the goods or services, including the volume, (iii) final amount, (iv) vendor, (v) start and end date of contract?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 713—Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:

With regard to sole-sourced contracts signed by the government since February 1, 2020, broken down by department, agency, or other government entity: (a) how many contracts have been sole-sourced; (b) what is the total value of those contracts; and (c) what are the details of each sole-sourced contract, including the (i) date, (ii) description of the goods or services, including the volume, (iii) final amount, (iv) vendor, (v) country of the vendor?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 714—Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:

With regard to the RCMP's National Security Criminal Investigations Program, broken down by year since 2015: (a) how many RCMP officers or other personnel were assigned to the program; and (b) what was the program's budget or total expenditures?

(Return tabled)

*Speaker's Ruling***Question No. 716—Mr. Marc Dalton:**

With regard to the Interim Protocol for the use of Southern B.C. commercial anchorages: (a) how many (i) days each of the anchorage locations was occupied from January 2019 to March 2021, broken down by month, (ii) complaints received related to vessels occupying these anchorages, between January 1, 2019, and March 31, 2021; and (b) why did the public posting of interim reports cease at the end of 2018?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 717—Mr. Marc Dalton:

With regard to federal transfer payments to Indigenous communities in British Columbia: (a) what is the total amount of federal transfer payments in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21; and (b) of the amounts provided in (a), what amounts were provided specifically to Metis communities?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 718—Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:

With regard to funding provided by the government to the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS): (a) what requirements and stipulations apply for the CAEFS in securing, spending, and reporting financial support received from the government; and (b) what has the government communicated to the CAEFS with respect to the enforcement of Interim Policy Bulletin 584 before and after the coming into force of Bill C-16, An Act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code, on June 19, 2017?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 719—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to government funding in the riding of South Okanagan—West Kootenay, for each fiscal year since 2018-19 inclusive: (a) what are the details of all grants, contributions, and loans to any organization, body, or group, broken down by (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency providing the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution, or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose; and (b) for each grant, contribution and loan in (a), was a press release issued to announce it and, if so, what is the (i) date, (ii) headline, (iii) file number of the press release?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 722—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to COVID-19 vaccines and having to throw them away due to spoilage or expiration: (a) how much spoilage and waste has been identified; (b) what is the spoilage and waste breakdowns by province; and (c) what is the cost to taxpayers for the loss of spoiled vaccines?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 724—Mr. Brad Vis:

With regard to the First-Time Home Buyer Incentive (FTHBI) announced by the government in 2019, from September 1, 2019, to date: (a) how many applicants have applied for a mortgage through the FTHBI, broken down by province or territory and municipality; (b) of the applicants in (a), how many applicants have been approved and accepted mortgages through the FTHBI, broken down by province or territory and municipality; (c) of the applicants in (b), how many approved applicants have been issued the incentive in the form of a shared equity mortgage; (d) what is the total value of incentives (shared equity mortgages) under the program that have been issued, in dollars; (e) for those applicants who have been issued mortgages through the FTHBI, what is that value of each of the mortgage loans; (f) for those applicants who have been issued mortgages through the FTHBI, what is that mean value of the mortgage loan; (g) what is the total aggregate amount of money lent to homebuyers through the FTHBI to date; (h) for mortgages approved through the FTHBI, what is the breakdown of the percentage of loans originated with each lender comprising more than 5 per cent of total loans issued; (i) for mortgages approved through the FTHBI, what is the breakdown of the value of outstanding loans insured by each Canadian mortgage insurance company as a percentage of total loans in force; and (j) what date will the promised FTHBI program updates announced in the 2020 Fall Economic Statement be implemented?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

GOVERNMENT'S ALLEGED NON-COMPLIANCE WITH AN ORDER OF THE HOUSE—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the question of privilege raised on June 7, 2021, by the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent concerning the government's non-compliance with an order for the production of documents.

First, the Chair wishes to describe the sequence of events that led to the question of privilege currently under consideration.

On two occasions, on March 31 and May 10, 2021, the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations adopted an order requiring the Public Health Agency of Canada to produce unredacted documents. In both cases, the documents were to be sent to the law clerk and parliamentary counsel so that he could assess their contents. The order of May 10 also provided that a report should be made to the House if the documents were not produced within 10 days.

The agency's refusal led to the presentation of the third report from the committee. It recommended that the House adopt an order for the production of the same documents and that it include the same requirements as the order of March 31.

● (1635)

[English]

On June 1, 2021, the House was seized of the matter through an opposition motion, and it adopted an order the next day to have the documents provided to it. The relevant extracts contained the following elements:

(a) these documents shall be deposited with the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel...

(b) the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel shall promptly thereafter notify the Speaker, who shall forthwith inform the House, whether he is satisfied the documents were produced as ordered...

(d) the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel shall confidentially review the documents with a view to redacting information which, in his opinion, could reasonably be expected to compromise national security or reveal details of an ongoing criminal investigation, other than the existence of an investigation;

(e) the Speaker shall cause the [redacted] documents...to be laid upon the table at the next earliest opportunity and, after being tabled, they shall stand referred to the special committee....

Also, the committee, after consulting the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel in camera, may decide to make public any redacted material.

On June 4, 2021, the president of the agency wrote to the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel informing him that the documents sent to him had been redacted because the order of the House did not offer the appropriate guarantees for protecting information related to national security and personal information. He added that the agency was co-operating with the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians and had sent that committee an unredacted version of the documents.

[Translation]

Citing relevant references and numerous precedents, the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent stated that the role of the House and its committees in holding the government to account for its actions includes the power to require the production of documents. The member also argued that sending the unredacted documents to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians is not an acceptable alternative.

He concluded that the government had not complied with the order of the House because it had redacted certain information and had not provided a valid reason for doing so.

There was thus apparently a *prima facie* case of contempt on which the House must rule, and for which it must determine the appropriate sanctions.

The members for Jonquière and St. John's-East added that they shared some of the concerns of the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent, while insisting that privacy and national security are not sufficient pretexts for non-compliance with an order of the House. Furthermore, the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians is not a committee of the House and its membership did not include, at least until very recently, representatives of all parties.

• (1640)

[English]

In response to these arguments, the member for Kingston and the Islands suggested that, if the Chair deems there is a *prima facie* question of privilege, the motion that the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent intends to move is not consistent with our customs and practices. Moreover, it offers no mechanism to preserve the confidential nature of the information contained in the documents, which is why they were sent to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians.

While they are not being challenged, it is still worth recalling that, at the heart of the parliamentary system, and firmly anchored in our Constitution, there are rights and privileges that are indispensable to the performance of members' duties. Thus, one can read the following, at page 137 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition:

By virtue of the preamble and section 18 of the Constitution Act, 1867, Parliament has the ability to institute its own inquiries, to require the attendance of witnesses and to order the production of documents, rights which are fundamental to its proper functioning. These rights are as old as Parliament itself.

[Translation]

That being said, the Chair is essentially being asked to rule on two very specific questions, namely whether there are limits to the application of this privilege and whether sending unredacted docu-

ments to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians is an acceptable alternative.

As I have already indicated, the member for Kingston and the Islands and the president of the agency are concerned about the lack of regard for national security issues and the provisions for protecting personal information to which the government is normally subject. This is not a new argument. It was the subject of an important ruling from April 27, 2010. While confirming that the House had, at times, agreed to abstain from requiring documents for reasons of national security or international relations among others, Speaker Milliken took care to clarify that it was quite different in an instance where the House expressed its will by adopting an explicit order.

[English]

In his ruling, Speaker Milliken, at page 2042 of Debates, responded as follows to the government's objections:

To accept such a notion would completely undermine the importance of the role of parliamentarians in holding the government to account.

Before us are issues that question the very foundations upon which our parliamentary system is built. In a system of responsible government, the fundamental right of the House of Commons to hold the government to account for its actions is an indisputable privilege and in fact an obligation.

House of Commons Procedure and Practice, third edition, adds this at page 985:

No statute or practice diminishes the fullness of that power rooted in House privilege unless there is an explicit legal provision to that effect, or unless the House adopts a specific resolution limiting the power. The House has never set a limit on its power to order the production of papers....

In accordance with the order of the House of June 2, the Chair tabled a letter received from the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel on June 7, informing him that the documents "were not produced as ordered as they were not unredacted versions."

• (1645)

[Translation]

After concluding that there was a *prima facie* question of privilege in his ruling of April 27, 2010, Speaker Milliken, still concerned about the issues raised, deemed it wise to ask members to continue their discussions for a limited period of time before allowing the member who had initially raised the question of privilege to move the usual motion for debate. Indeed, the order in question at the time offered no measure to protect the confidential information contained in the required documents, be it, for example, examining the documents in camera, limiting the number of copies distributed or even providing for their destruction once they had been studied. The result of these discussions would in no way affect his decision, the Speaker's intention was simply to offer a final delay to allow time to reach a compromise.

Privilege

In the current situation, the order adopted provides that the Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel first examine the documents, redact them using specific criteria and discuss them with the members of the Special Committee in camera. The Minister of Health was also called to appear, and did so on Monday, June 14, in an effort to continue some form of dialogue. It is, however, not up to the Chair to judge the extent of the measures taken, but to note that they were considered. There is thus no reason to allow an additional delay.

[*English*]

The second question relates to the government arguing that there is now a more appropriate forum to deal with documents having national security implications, namely the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians. The committee, which was created by statute in 2017, is composed of members of both Houses with top secret security clearance, who are bound by oaths of confidentiality.

Paragraph 8(1)(c) of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians Act allows the committee to consider “any matter relating to national security or intelligence that a minister” refers to it. The Minister of Health indicated that she has formally asked the committee to review the documents at issue. However, as the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent and the member for St. John's East have pointed out, the act also made clear that, despite its composition, this body is not a committee of Parliament. It exists outside of Parliament.

In these circumstances, the Chair cannot conclude that the documents submitted to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians fulfills an order of this House or of its committees. Nothing in the act affects or limits the privileges of the House to order the production of documents, even those with national security implications. It is for the House and not for the government to decide how such documents are to be reviewed and what safeguards are to be put in place, if any.

[*Translation*]

As a result, in the opinion of the Chair, the failure to comply with the order of the House of June 2, 2021, constitutes a prima facie question of privilege.

There is one last point to settle. The Chair has read the wording of the motion suggested by the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent in his written notice. It departs considerably from established practice. The scope of this type of motion is limited, as indicated in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, at page 150, and I quote: “The terms of the motion have generally provided that the matter be referred to committee for study...”

• (1650)

[*English*]

A review of the rare exceptions shows that there was a certain consensus on the procedure to follow and, thus, on the wording of the motion. As Speaker Milliken confirmed in a ruling on March 9, 2011, at page 8842, “The Chair is of course aware of exceptions to this practice, but in most if not all of these cases, circumstances were such that a deviation from the normal practice was deemed

acceptable, or there was a unanimous desire on the part of the House to proceed in that fashion.”

[*Translation*]

There are also precedents that support censure. In short, given that the parameters for such motions are clear and that the practice is well established, the proposed motion should be a motion of censure or to refer the matter to the appropriate committee for study.

Under the circumstances, and since discussions are required, the Chair reserves its ruling and will return to the House as soon as the member is ready to move the appropriate motion.

The table officers and I are available to support and guide the hon. member as he drafts his motion.

[*English*]

I want to thank hon. members for their attention.

The hon. member for Carleton is rising on a question of privilege.

ALLEGED BREACH OF MEMBERS' RIGHT TO VOTE ON A NEW TAX

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, you have notice from me of a question of privilege.

I am rising today because of the government's imposition of a new tax without needed approval of the House of Commons. It has breached the privileges of all members and has done so in contravention of Standing Orders 79(1), 80 and 83.1, as well as principles laid out on pages 827, 828, 829, 831, 833, 835, 841, 893 and 906 through 908 of Bosc and Gagnon's *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, 2017. There are also numerous rulings by the Chair and, most important of all, section 53 of the Constitution Act, 1867.

In essence, I am rising today to ask that you find a prima facie case of breach of privilege because of the government's imposition of a secretive and insidious tax designed to raise funds for it to spend at the expense of the Canadian people without holding appropriate votes in the House of Commons and possibly in direct contravention of other laws that have been passed by this House.

The new tax of which I speak is designed to raise more money for the government to spend. In fact, it raised more money for the government to spend in the last fiscal year than all other sources of revenue combined. This tax should be called the inflation tax, which is—

The Speaker: I am going to interrupt the hon. member for Carleton as we have a point of order from the member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to consider what the member is suggesting to be a question of privilege and rule whether it is admissible for him to try to filibuster time in the House of Commons right now, which is clearly what appears to be the objective here. Can the Speaker provide some kind of insight as to whether what we are hearing in the House right now is actually a question of privilege?

The Speaker: I am going to let the member for Carleton continue. I have not quite grasped exactly where he is going with it, so I will let him keep going.

The hon. member for Carleton has the floor.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, I speak of this illegal inflation tax, in which the government is funding its spending with newly created currency that increases consumer prices through the levy of inflation.

Before I go any further, let me clarify the difference between inflation and the inflation tax. It is not a tax when, independent and separate from government, consumer prices rise due to supply and demand dynamics. However, when they rise because the government and central bank coordinate to expand the money supply, thus raising consumer prices above what they would otherwise be and force consumers to pay what they would otherwise pay, that is a tax.

I do not raise this question of privilege lightly, but after careful consideration of the nature of the government's actions and their real-world effects on Canadians, both of which I have described. As well, I rely heavily on the jurisprudence from the Chair and the clear legal definitions of a tax.

To prove this breach, I would have to show three parts. First, that there is a privilege for members of Parliament at stake, and that the privilege is governments cannot tax what the House does not expressly approve through votes by each member in the chamber. Second, I would need to prove the policy in fact imposes a tax. Finally, I would need to provide proof the House did not approve this tax. Together, these points prove the government committed a prima facie case of breach of my parliamentary privilege by denying me the opportunity to vote on this tax increase before it took effect.

Let me start with the first part. Is there a privilege for each member to vote on any new taxes introduced or imposed on Canadians? The answer is yes. In fact, this privilege on Canadian soil originated with the British North America Act, section 53 of the Constitution, which reads:

Bills for appropriating any Part of the Public Revenue, or for imposing any Tax or Impost, shall originate in the House of Commons.

This constitutional principle is further enshrined in Standing Order 80(1), which states:

All aids and supplies granted to the Sovereign by the Parliament of Canada are the sole gift of the House of Commons, and all bills for granting such aids and supplies ought to begin with the House, as it is the undoubted right of the House to direct, limit, and appoint in all such bills, the ends, purposes, considerations, conditions, limitations and qualifications of such grants, which are not alterable by the Senate.

The failure of this House to “direct, limit, and appoint” revenue-raising measures is accordingly not only a violation of the Constitution but also of the privileges of members of the House set out in the Standing Orders.

In the Eurig Estate case, the courts considered the constitutional implications of a tax raised through such improper and indirect means. Justice Jack Major, writing for the majority, wrote that section 53 of the Constitution “...codifies the principle of no taxation

Privilege

without representation, by requiring any bill that imposes a tax to originate with the legislature.”

Justice Major goes on to say “My interpretation of s. 53...prohibits not only the Senate, but also any other body other than the directly elected legislature, from imposing a tax on its own accord.”

Any other body—

• (1655)

The Speaker: I am going to interrupt the hon. member. I appreciate very much your wise counsel. However, I would ask him to be concise and get to the crux of his point. He can submit what he has on paper to the table and we can look at it.

I will let him continue, but I would ask him to be as concise as possible.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I appreciate very much your wise counsel. However, I missed the last three paragraphs and I was wondering if he could repeat them because I did not quite get the point he was making. For clarity's sake, it might be good if he clarified it.

• (1700)

The Speaker: I will let the hon. member for Carleton continue as he wishes. It is his time.

The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, Justice Major made clear that it is his interpretation that no body, other than the House of Commons, can initiate a tax increase. I would submit that “no body” includes the Bank of Canada itself, in collaboration with the government.

When the court said “there should be no taxation without representation”, it got to the heart of my point here today. It stated:

...the Lieutenant Governor in Council cannot impose a new tax *ab initio* without the authorization of the legislature.... “The Governor in Council has no power, *proprio vigore*, to impose taxes unless under authority specifically delegated to it by Statute. The power of taxation is exclusively in Parliament.”

The court went on to say that section 53 “ensures parliamentary control over, and accountability for, taxation” and quoted the distinguished legal scholar Elmer Driedger, as follows:

Through the centuries, the principle was maintained that taxation required representation and consent. The only body in Canada that meets this test is the Commons. The elected representatives of the people sit in the Commons...and, consistently with history and tradition, they may well insist that they alone have the right to decide to the last cent what money is to be granted and what taxes are to be imposed.

Elsewhere, the court similarly held in the Westbank First Nation case:

...the Canadian Constitution (through the operation of s. 53 of the Constitution Act, 1867) demands that there should be no taxation without representation. In other words, individuals being taxed in a democracy have the right to have their elected representatives debate whether their money should be appropriated, and determine how it should be spent.

The Speaker: I will interrupt the hon. member for Carleton.

We have a point of order by the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Privilege

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I am having a very difficult time understanding the question of privilege. Can the member specifically and concisely indicate what the new tax is that he is referring to. I do not understand the question of privilege at all. He seems to—

The Speaker: I will point out that I did ask the hon. member to be a little more concise and maybe not so descriptive with all the examples, though we appreciate them.

I will let the hon. member for Carleton continue.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, just because the member does not understand the fact, that does not erase that it is indeed a fact.

I thank the member for Timmins—James Bay for his help along the way.

Peter Hogg, who, until his death last year, was Canada's leading constitutional scholar, underscored the point that I am making now in a 2002 article:

It must be remembered that the taxing power is the one upon which the rest of governance depends. As the King and Parliament both recognized in the 17th century, nothing important can be done without resources, and it is control of the taxing power that provides the resources. Moreover, no other power has as direct and immediate an effect on citizens as the taxing power, and (for that reason) nothing government does is as unpopular as the imposition and collection of taxes. There is a huge incentive for governments to offload this power to a delegate, who can raise taxes quietly without any irritating fuss in the Parliament or Legislature, and who can shoulder the blame when the media do get wind of the action.

As Professor Hogg noted, this is not a new problem. In fact, it is one of the oldest and most important matters in the system of parliamentary democracy. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that taxation is the reason we are all here today. The Crown's power to tax and the need to obtain the consent of those paying the taxes is why Parliament exists in the first place. We could look at 800 years of history, going back to the Magna Carta, to find that the principal disagreement between Crown and commoner has been on the subject of taxation.

It is essential to the privileges of every member of this House that every single levy or tax come before us to be voted on before it is enacted. I think I have clearly proven that it is the privilege of every member to vote on a tax increase before it is imposed.

What is the tax of which I speak? The answer is, it is the inflation tax. Is excessive inflation, which results from excessive money creation, in fact a tax? We can look to the definition of “tax” found in Oxford Languages, a 150-year-old dictionary, which defines taxes as follows:

A compulsory contribution to state revenue, levied by the government on workers' income and business profits, or added to the cost of some goods, services, and transactions.

I will break down that definition. First, it is state revenue, “levied by the government”. Second, it is “added to the cost of some goods, services, and transactions.” Third, it is a “compulsory contribution”.

First, is the inflation tax designed to generate state revenue, levied by the government? I will give the data to prove that in fact it is. In February 2020, the Bank of Canada owned \$106 billion of government debt. As of the end of last month, that number had

reached \$412 billion. That is an increase of almost \$300 billion in one year. It is also an increase of 300%. Last year, the amount that the Bank of Canada produced for the government by purchasing government debt was over \$300 billion. It was the single biggest source of revenue for the government, bigger than income tax, consumption tax, tariffs and private loans combined.

Never before has the Bank of Canada been the single biggest provider of funds for the government's operation. It does this through a process whereby the government sells debt onto the market and the bank buys it back at a higher price. This has the effect of flooding government coffers with cheap credit that it could spend liberally, as it did last year and continues to do right now.

● (1705)

The result is a massive increase in the money supply. When the Bank of Canada uses its balance sheet to buy government debt, it increases the number of dollars in circulation. In the period since late winter and early spring of 2020, the money supply has increased by over \$300 billion. In fact, from February 2020 to February 2021, the money supply grew by \$354 billion. The deficit for the last fiscal year was \$354 billion. In other words, the same amount the government needed to borrow was the amount that the Bank of Canada created.

This led to a 20% year-over-year increase in the number of dollars in coins, bills and bank deposits. That is the biggest increase since 1974, which was the last time the government went on a money-printing binge, which led to major inflation crises thereafter. For context, the increase in the money supply is so large that it could fund our Canadian Armed Forces for 10 years. To use another measure, fully one in six dollars in the entire M2 money supply has been created in the last year alone.

In the fiscal year 2021, the Bank of Canada was the single largest source of funds for the Government of Canada. All revenue from other sources was \$294 billion, and net new borrowing was \$41 billion, but revenue from the bank was \$303 billion. That \$303 billion is an extraordinary and unprecedented sum.

The bank did not do this on its own. Let me now speak about the direct coordination between the government and the bank that led to this massive increase in the money supply.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance actually said that there was coordination between the bank and the government. The coincidence that we see in the amount of money printed and the amount of money spent demonstrates this coordination as well. For example—

● (1710)

The Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but I believe we have another point of order.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I have been listening very closely and it seems to me the member is saying there is an inflation tax, so whenever inflation goes up or down it should be brought to the House so that members can say no to inflation by way of a vote. That is the best I can tell. If the member could just move on so that you can make a decision on the issue, because I do not see this—

The Speaker: I do not believe that is a point of order, but I do ask the hon. member for Carleton to be a bit more concise.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay is also rising on a point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I am getting frustrated as well. I am not really sure where the inflationary tax element comes in, but I am very frustrated by the fact that just because the member for Winnipeg North does not understand something the House has to stop and change direction. I would ask him to let the member finish so we could actually understand whether we agree with him or not. I think it is unfair that whenever the member for Winnipeg North is confused he is always interrupting.

The Speaker: We have another point of order, from the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I am getting a real kick out of the fact that the NDP is now on the floor of the House of Commons supporting these antics by the Conservatives. It looks as though the New Democrats have decided they are interested in doing this. I would suggest that you rule that the previous comment by the member from the NDP is out of order because, quite frankly, it was not a point of order.

The Speaker: I am going to stop the hon. member. I ask all hon. members, when they raise a point of order, to please refer to the point or the standing order they are referring to, and we can go from there.

I ask the member for Timmins—James Bay and the member for Kingston and the Islands to respect the hon. member for Carleton and let him continue.

Again, I want to ask the hon. member for Carleton to be as concise as possible and respect the chamber's time.

The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out before the interruption, according to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, the government had been coordinating with the central bank to produce these funds and these funds had been used to spend.

The massive dollar figures involved that I mentioned earlier are not only staggering and unprecedented, but may also be illegal. In fact, I stumbled on a section of the Bank of Canada Act, section 18(j), only hours before I was originally planning to make this question of privilege. Having read that section and looked at the numbers, I came to the conclusion that there very well might be a breach of law involved in what the bank and the government have colluded to do.

Allow me to read the section in question, section 18, which states that the bank may:

Privilege

(j) make loans to the Government of Canada or the government of any province, but such loans outstanding at any one time shall not, in the case of the Government of Canada, exceed one-third of the estimated revenue of the Government of Canada for its fiscal year...

I turn your attention, Mr. Speaker, to table A1.4, “Summary Statement of Transactions”, budget 2021, projected revenues \$355.1 billion. To respect section 18(j) of the Bank of Canada Act, which limits the bank's ability to lend money to the government to no more than one-third of projected budgetary revenues, the bank would be effectively capped in its loans to the government at \$118 billion, \$118 billion being one-third of the \$355 billion of projected revenues. In fact, the Bank of Canada balance sheet shows that it now holds \$415 billion, almost \$300 billion more than the legal cap provided in the act.

When I discovered this apparent breach, I immediately delayed my introduction of this question of privilege to spend the time to verify and re-verify my calculations. I had never seen a government body quite so flagrantly violate limits that Parliament has placed upon it in statutory law, so I thought there must be some mistake. However, as I crunched the numbers, I realized that no, in fact, the one-third limit was breached.

I then reached out to the Library of Parliament to conduct a full review of all the legislation passed to approve emergency COVID spending since the spring of 2020 to find out if maybe the section was temporarily suspended or a special exemption to it was created to allow this kind of dollar figure to be lent from the bank to the government. Sure enough, the Library of Parliament said that there was no such exemption or suspension of the section; it is still in place.

In other words, this research shows, and I ask that you, Mr. Speaker, and your trusted advisers and the officials at the Library of Parliament to verify my claim here, that the Bank of Canada has breached limits that Parliament has imposed on its ability to lend money to the government.

These limits do not exist without reason. There is a reason Parliament chose deliberately to write a section into the Bank of Canada Act limiting the amount of debt the bank could buy. The reason is this: Parliament foresaw that future governments might try to use the printing presses over at the bank to pay for spending that it could not raise through the more normal process of taxation.

With the limits Parliament placed on the Bank of Canada's purchase of government debt, Parliament effectively banned the government from raising taxes by inflationary money creation instead of by legal and legitimate taxation. That the government and the bank have circumvented that ban and broken a law of Parliament breaches the privileges of every member of the House to vote on laws that are made and repealed.

In the process, the government has breached the principle of the independence of the central bank. This breach is not the result of the independent action of the bank.

Privilege

• (1715)

The parliamentary secretary to the finance minister, during the appearance of the Governor of the Bank of Canada before the finance committee on June 16, 2020, said, “There’s been an enormous coordination between OSFI, the bank and the federal government.”

I have given the fiscal and mathematical evidence to show that this coordination has occurred. In fact, not only did it occur last year when the bank bought effectively 85% of the government’s deficit, and wherein the bank increased the money supply by exactly the same amount that the government borrowed in the previous fiscal year, but that “enormous coordination” has continued into this fiscal year.

On April 19, the Minister of Finance introduced a budget in the House projecting a \$154 billion deficit, or borrowing effectively \$3 billion a week. Two days later, the Governor of the Bank of Canada held a press conference, announcing that his bank would be buying \$3 billion a week of government debt. In other words, the government is borrowing \$3 billion a week and the central bank is buying \$3 billion a week. The government is running roughly a \$155 billion deficit and the bank is lending roughly \$155 billion throughout the year. In other words, this coordination is not just in words—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. How much longer are you going to let this go on? When I rise on a point of order or the member for Winnipeg North rises on a point of order, you are very quick to shut us down if we are not addressing the point of order. The member has been going for almost 30 minutes on what is obviously not a question of privilege.

• (1720)

The Speaker: I want to point out that we are letting the hon. member get his information out, and it is a question of privilege that has been raised.

The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, we shall listen to the member who has raised the question of privilege. It is the basis of the House of Commons to respect the will and thinking of each and every member. We could disagree with what the member is saying, but at least we shall listen to him, especially on a privilege question, which is not easy to address; we recognize that. It is so important for the Canadian taxpayer that we listen to the member.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member for Kingston and the Islands can attack me all he wants but he cannot attack the role of the Speaker. He should offer you an apology. You were doing your role, and you were doing it in an impartial, non-partisan manner.

I would ask the member to withdraw those comments and apologize to you, Mr. Speaker, for trying to interrupt the work of the House.

The Speaker: I just want to point out that we are getting into argument here, which is a debate. As I asked earlier, if members are getting up on a point of order, let me know what rule is being broken, and then we can go from there.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I do apologize if I by any means challenged your authority. You do an excellent job as Speaker. However, I certainly did not do that, I do not believe. I merely asked a question as to how long you were going to allow this to go on.

To the point made by the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent, let us just be honest about what is going on here. The Conservatives—

The Speaker: I am going to interrupt the hon. member, because it is turning into argument.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I would ask for order. I will let the hon. member for Carleton continue. I will ask him to be concise, as I did earlier, to get to the crux of the matter and let us know exactly where he wants to go so we can continue.

A question of privilege is very important in the House, but we do want to ensure we get the point so we can rule on it.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, as I said when I quoted the Oxford dictionary, a tax has three characteristics: that it is a state revenue levied by government, that it adds to the cost of goods and services transactions and that it is a compulsory contribution.

I have just gone through the first point in which I have demonstrated that this cash creation is state revenue levied by the government—

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Within our Standing Orders, and you alluded to this yourself, it does state that members do need to be concise and virtually to the point in regard to how a member’s privilege might have been taken. There is a bit of frustration in the sense that we have witnessed other members from the Conservative Party use privilege as a way to—

The Speaker: I am going to interrupt the hon. member. He is absolutely right that a point of order should be concise, but now we are moving into argument or debate, and I do not want to move into that.

We will let the hon. member be as concise as possible, and I will let him continue.

The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, as I said, the second characteristic of a tax is that it adds to the cost of some goods, services and transactions.

Just today, Statistics Canada released fresh data showing what consumers have known for months; that inflation has rocketed up to 3.6%, well above the Bank of Canada’s 2% target. This data was essential to my argument today, thus one of the reasons why I waited for its publication before presenting this.

As of this morning, three of four measures of the Bank of Canada for inflation show that inflation has breached the 2% target. Several product groups were well above that. Gasoline is up 43.4%; home ownership replacement costs, 11.3%; and durable goods, which includes things like cars, appliances and furniture, is up 5%. That is just to name a few. This is demonstrated proof that people are, in fact, paying the cost of the inflation tax.

Food prices are also on sharp rise. According to the latest Canada Food Price Report, food costs increased 2.3% last year, with an expected 4.5% to 6.5% increase in meat, 3.5% to 5.5% increase in bakery and 4.5% to 6.5% increase in vegetables this year.

Housing prices have ballooned 30% from March 2020 to March 2021. This is where the cause and effect is most evident. COVID should have reduced housing prices. The wages with which people buy houses dropped. People lost their jobs, making it harder to place offers on homes. To escape lockdowns, more people moved to the countryside, where prices per square foot are lower. Immigration came to a halt, reducing the number of buyers in the market. All these factors would have driven demand and therefore prices down.

In fact, the country's top housing regulator, CMHC, predicted prices would drop as much as 14% for those reasons, and they did begin to drop in March and April of last year. Then, suddenly, as the Bank of Canada's increase in the money supply began flooding into the market, prices began to reverse. The government pumped \$356 billion of brand new, newly created cash into the system, and that was exactly the size of the deficit and the size of the money supply growth—

• (1725)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member is not being concise and to the point. If the member wants to continue to debate the issue, he can have an opposition day tomorrow. There is a budget debate. That is where he can be making these points. From my perspective, I do not hear, and I leave it to you to make that decision, a matter of privilege, but rather a waste of valuable time.

The Speaker: The Speaker cannot determine whether it is a waste of time, but he can determine that things are being repeated, so I will ask the hon. member for Carleton to be concise and not repeat some of the arguments and the stats that he mentioned earlier.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I will be very concise. Again, the member for Winnipeg North has interfered multiple times without saying anything. I was hoping we would have this done by now, but with the continual interruptions by the member for Winnipeg North, we are almost going to see the clock out, and that is very unfair.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, on that same point of order, the member for Winnipeg North is using points of order as a tactic to interrupt the member for Carleton. The Chair had made a decision and then gave instruction to the member for Carleton to be concise. The member for Winnipeg North then challenged the Speaker's interpretation of what was and what was not concise.

We are seeing this tactic where we have members using their privilege in this place to raise germane questions of privilege, and

Private Members' Business

we have members from the government side who enter into debate instead of accepting the decision of the Chair, and that was with respect to whether the member was being concise. It was not a question of repetition.

I would hope that other members, under your direction, Mr. Speaker, would allow the member to conclude his question of privilege without these interruptions and tactics they are deploying.

The Speaker: Once again, we are getting into debate, but I will let the hon. member for Carleton continue. I would ask him, once again, to be as concise as possible.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, housing prices were dropping until the bank began printing its money. The increase in the money supply flooded into the mortgage system. From the first quarter of 2020 to the first quarter of 2021, mortgage lending grew by 41% and, as a result, from April 2020 to April 2021, housing prices went up about 42%. In other words, there is a direct cause-and-effect relationship between the increase in the money supply and the increase in prices.

This is supported by years of research by academia. For example, Milton Friedman, the Nobel Prize-winning economist, said, "Inflation is always and everywhere a monetary phenomenon", and John Maynard Keynes—

• (1730)

The Speaker: I am going to interrupt the hon. member for Carleton. Private Members' Business starts at 5:30 and depriving members of their Private Members' Business items is really unfair to them. That is something that they wait on. The hon. member for Carleton can continue either tomorrow or later tonight.

It being 5:30 p.m., the House will proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business, as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

FISHERIES ACT

The House resumed from May 10 consideration of the motion that Bill C-269, An Act to amend the Fisheries Act (prohibition — deposit of raw sewage), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to rise tonight to speak to Bill C-269, an act to amend the Fisheries Act regarding the prohibition of the deposit of raw sewage. It is a bill from the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, who also has been Speaker. I probably have not agreed with many of the things the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle has said over the years; however, the issue of raw sewage in our water system is a very important thing to be discussing and I am glad we have an opportunity here to do so.

Private Members' Business

We know an element of this is under provincial jurisdiction, but people should be able to know we have a top quality environmental system in this country to keep people safe. It should be an issue we are all deeply concerned with. My hon. colleagues can probably speak of many municipalities that have issues with raw sewage being pumped into waters and rivers.

However, one of the things I am not really seeing in the bill is the effect in areas under direct federal jurisdiction, which are of course first nations reserves. It is really important for Canadians to understand that across Canada there is a two-tiered system of infrastructure, a two-tiered system of health, a two-tiered system of education and a two-tiered system of rights.

Those are the rights that exist for citizens of this country under provincial or territorial governments, and the rights of those citizens living on the reserves of our nation and who are under the mandate of the Department of Indigenous Services, the old Indian Affairs and the ultimate colonial system. For them, there is chronic underfunding for basic infrastructure.

When the Liberals ran in 2015 on getting rid of the water crisis and told everyone they would have the mission accomplished by the beginning of 2021, it inspired and galvanized Canadians. Canadians asked themselves how it was possible that in a nation as rich as Canada, in a country with the greatest water resources on the planet, so many people could not turn on their taps and drink safely. Dirty water is also tied to sewage and broken sewage systems.

When the Prime Minister was elected on that promise, people believed he would follow through. What would be an easier thing for the incoming Liberal government to do than to ensure we have proper water? What the Liberal government did not promise to do was deal with the water systems, which include sewage. Why is it important to understand that distinction? It is because the government decided it was going to do it on the cheap.

I remember the terrible Kashechewan water crisis, and Kashechewan is in a terrible crisis right now with COVID. The Minister of Indigenous Services sat on his hands and did nothing until the COVID crisis blew up out of proportion. It took me back to when I was first elected in 2005 and there was an E. coli outbreak in Kashechewan. We saw the same lack of action then.

At that time, the sewage system in Kashechewan was built near the water treatment plant because it was done cheap. When the rain came and the sewage treatment settling ponds overflowed, they flowed into the water system. Kashechewan did not even have a proper backup system so that if something came into the outtake it would actually stop the incoming sewage. The government did not bother to put that in because it was done on the cheap. We need to think about it in that perspective, because the water crisis that caused E. coli in that community and led to the mass evacuation of the entire community was the result of the failed sewage system.

When the Prime Minister failed on his latest promise on water, people asked how it was possible. The Prime Minister's number one promise was supposed to be that he was going to deliver clean water. If we look at community after community and at the Indigenous Services list of communities with safe water, the Liberals are al-

ways focused on the press release and not actually assessing the real problems.

• (1735)

They spend a lot of time saying they have gotten rid of this boil water advisory and that boil water advisory. I have been in communities that were told they got rid of six boil water advisories. That is because at the very edge of town there was a building that had a well and now that well was clean, but the rest of the community was not safe. That is not a comprehensive solution.

I asked the Parliamentary Budget Officer to cost out the Prime Minister's promises, and he was very clear that the government was deliberately underfunding the training that is needed to run a water treatment plant. The government was deliberately underfunding maintenance. Only the Department of Indigenous Services could cut a ribbon at a plant, walk away and think that there was never going to be a need for maintenance. Any municipality would say that things break.

There are isolated communities like Marten Falls' Ogoki Post, where the sewage lifts are hit by lightning and the boards "kack out". Residents call and tell the department their sewage lifts are not working anymore and the feds say that it is not their issue. How is a community of 300 going to fix the fried-out sewage lifts? What happens? The sewage gets into the water, the water treatment plant starts to go down and then the feds say they are not going to fix that because it is not in their capital budget, but they will spend upwards of \$2 million a year on bottled water. That bottled water money is not new money. It comes from another community where infrastructure was supposed to be built. They are taking money from an infrastructure project in one community that desperately needs it and they are buying bottled water for another community because they refuse to fix the issue.

When Liberals look at fixing the water situation, they look at what is cheapest, what is easiest and how to get out of it without having any more costs. I will give the example of the community of Attawapiskat. The water supply is a stagnant pool. It does not matter how many chemicals are pumped into that water: It will never be good, clean, safe water. The more chemicals that are pumped into the water, the more caustic it becomes and the more damage it does to children's skin. It is really something to see children living in Canada with open wounds all over their bodies. Anyone can go to any northern first nation and see the effects on these children.

Every now and then the media will pay attention and the government will say it does not understand the mysterious cause of these illnesses and rashes. It is obvious. It is because a stagnant pool of water gets chlorine dumped into it to make it drinkable and when the children are bathed in it, it damages their skin. Their skin starts to open and that is when the infections get in. This has happened in so many communities. I have had to medevac children out because of these conditions.

Another example is Neskantaga, which has gone 26 years without water. The Minister of Indigenous Services keeps scratching his head. He cannot figure out why he cannot get clean water to Neskantaga. It is because Liberals are willing to build a plant, but not willing to build all the infrastructure that supports the plant. A municipality needs a proper water plant, a proper source of water and proper pipes. It needs an entire system in order to get water to the community. Someone from Neskantaga said what the Liberals are offering to do is put a new engine in a rotted-out Ford vehicle, thinking we can drive it down the road. It cannot be done without the proper infrastructure. There needs to be proper piping, a proper water source and a plant that is actually built for the needs of the community. This is something the Department of Indigenous Services will never do.

We also see the same companies getting hired over and over again. In any other municipality, if a company built a water plant and the plant failed, there would be an investigation. Does anyone think that company would get the contract the next time? Not a chance. However, when a water plant fails, the Department of Indigenous Services says, “Oh well, whatever. It is just another day at the office.” The bonuses still go out to the senior bureaucrats and things do not change. These are the fundamental inequities that people are facing. There are communities like Maniwaki, just 100-and-some kilometres up the road from Ottawa. The Kitigan Zibi reserve cannot get clean water, but beside it the municipality of Maniwaki has clean water.

• (1740)

Why is that? One is under a provincial system and under that provincial jurisdiction, there are clear standards. There are obligations. There are rules in place. They have to deliver clean water to their community. However, the neighbouring reserve is under the federal government, so there is no obligation or standards. The feds do not want to put the standards in place because they do not want to spend the money.

That is what systemic discrimination looks like. It is in the water. It is in the sewage. It is in the school systems. It is in the failed health.

I am very interested in this bill and I am very glad that I had a chance to speak. I will be here all week taking questions.

Ms. Nelly Shin (Port Moody—Coquitlam, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise today to speak to Bill C-269, an act to amend the Fisheries Act (prohibition—deposit of raw sewage), which was tabled by my colleague, the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

As the Fisheries Act currently stands, there is no definition of raw sewage. Bill C-269 would amend the act by adding raw sewage to denote the following:

raw sewage means sewage that has not yet been processed or treated to separate and remove contaminants, and includes

- (a) used water from sanitary appliances that contains human fecal matter or human urine,
- (b) used water, other than the type of water described in paragraph (a), from sanitary appliances or from other appliances in a kitchen or laundry, and
- (c) surface runoff and stormwater that is mixed with the type of water described in paragraph (a);

Private Members' Business

The bill inserts a statement in section 34 of the act that would not allow raw sewage to be eligible for an exemption permit from the minister.

Bill C-269 amends section 36 of the Fisheries Act by adding, “No person shall deposit or permit the deposit of raw sewage in water frequented by fish.”

The bill also states non-application for Canadian fisheries waters located in the Northwest Territories, in Nunavut or north of the 54th parallel in Quebec or Newfoundland and Labrador.

The bill also indicates that anyone dumping raw sewage in water frequented by fish is guilty of an offence and liable.

The act would come into force five years after the day on which it receives royal assent.

Bill C-269 is simple and straightforward. It calls for accountability and urgency of action. For me, personally, it triggers a vision for improved environmental protection and infrastructure.

In 2015, when the member for Ottawa Centre was the minister of environment, she allowed the City of Montreal to dump eight billion litres of raw sewage into the St. Lawrence River. Regardless of any justification, that is an unfathomable amount of toxic matter that was dumped into the water. I cannot even imagine what the repercussions of that were.

According to Environment Canada, from 2013 to 2017, more than one trillion litres of untreated waste water is known to have leaked or been purposely dumped across Canada. The City of Victoria and surrounding municipalities finally became one of the last major communities to stop dumping sewage into water in 2020. According to Mark Mattson, president of non-profit water protection organization Swim Drink Fish, Canada still has ongoing sewage pollution problems.

Bill C-269 is necessary to protect our waters from contamination and for wildlife species in water to be able to survive and thrive. It is time there was no more ambiguity on this. Being the member of Parliament for Port Moody—Coquitlam, Anmore and Belcarra, I have the privilege of being an advocate and steward for many environmentally sensitive places within my riding. This privilege brings responsibility. Today, I would like to highlight a very special and globally significant creek, which is Stoney Creek, which some of the rivers in my riding feed into.

Stoney Creek is the environmental lifeline for countless wildlife, as well as an urban oasis for both my riding and the neighbouring riding, Burnaby North—Seymour, and the greater region. Countless hours and decades of work by stream keepers from the Stoney Creek Environmental Committee, as well as local residents, has resulted in the return of salmon to Stoney Creek.

Private Members' Business

Today, Stoney Creek is the most successful Vancouver area urban creek for returning salmon. Stoney Creek is the spawning grounds for chum and coho salmon, as well as steelhead and trout. It is also significant on a global basis as it is home to the endangered Nooksack Dace. Approximately 10,000 Nooksack Dace remain.

It is very moving to watch the salmon on their spawning journey. I see their long, upstream and painful journey of perseverance ending in sacrifice for the next generation. It is very emotional to watch. I was shocked to learn that after torrential rainfalls, sometimes raw sewage overflows from Coquitlam sewers and makes its way to the celebrated Stoney Creek where the endangered Nooksack Dace have made their home and the coho and chum salmon come to spawn.

It is troubling for me that sewage overflow coming from my riding in Coquitlam is contaminating the aqua ecosystem in the riding of Burnaby North—Seymour in Stoney Creek. Upon discovery, I officially offered my assistance to the mayors of Coquitlam and Port Moody to seek federal infrastructure funding for their sewer systems when they seek upgrades.

However, I am perplexed as to why the member for Burnaby North—Seymour, who is the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, who has been in office longer than I have, has not taken any action on this troublesome issue or championed funding for sewage infrastructure when the harm is being done to wildlife in his own riding and reports of sewage being dispensed into Stoney Creek have been happening under his watch for years.

• (1745)

According to obtained records, since 2014 at least nine documented discharges of sewage have occurred in the Stoney Creek watershed. Raw sewage has spewed from manholes in my riding and flowed into the creek, and some experts believe that raw sewage is also escaping through exfiltrating from the Metro Vancouver Stoney Creek trunk line and flowing into the groundwater and ultimately into Stoney Creek.

The Metro Vancouver Stoney Creek trunk line was constructed in 1959. Over time, concrete piping and gaskets will tend to deteriorate, increasing the likelihood of both infiltration of groundwater into the pipe and inflow from surface water entering collectively inflow and infiltration, or I and I, as well as exfiltration of sewage into the groundwater and creek.

Records obtained via freedom of information requests show the following levels of E. coli in Stoney Creek. On September 18, 2020, there were 8,664 colony-forming units per 100 millilitres of water. In August there were 7,701, and in October there were 4,611. Samples exceeded 1,000 colony-forming units per 100 millilitres on six days. Ultimately, to solve the problem, new sewage infrastructure needs to be built. From obtained records, it is apparent that Metro Vancouver trunk line is over capacity, a very common phenomenon.

Meanwhile, the catchment's population is projected to increase 15,000 to 50,000. Constituents and other nearby residents are concerned that not expanding the sewage infrastructure promptly will

result in increased contamination of Stoney Creek as well as situations where new home purchasers will not be able to move into their new homes due to lack of sewage capacity. Something similar recently happened in Campbell River, another B.C. community.

The topic of sewage is not a glamorous one, but waste elimination is a basic health and safety issue that needs to be dealt with. As we have seen, a microscopic virus like coronavirus has done much damage in our lives and to our establishments. Development of residential homes is a natural part of urban sprawl. Building more affordable housing is necessary to allow young families and first-time homebuyers to break into the housing market and have a home, but development without proper infrastructure is dangerous for the community and surrounding ecosystems.

Bill C-269 is a good place to start to trigger more accountability and action to upgrade all the infrastructure needed. Development is inevitable, but without the proper infrastructure, we could see a host of problems, of which the impact could be the contamination of our waters and harm to endangered species and salmon. It requires a concerted effort among all tiers of government to solve this problem effectively of aging sewage infrastructure and innovating new systems to meet the demands created by growing development in urban and suburban centres like my riding, and extreme weather events from climate change. If done with efficacy, a simple bill, like Bill C-269, could instigate the unfolding of a larger vision to yield greater protection of vulnerable fish, species and water habitats and improve public health and safety and job creation to help reopen our economy.

This is a problem across our country, and municipalities are aware of it, but they are stuck. They have so many other pressing matters they have to get to that without the funding, it gets shuffled under the pile. With Bill C-269, accountability would be placed. We can keep talking about the environment with trumpet blasts, but without deadlines and rules and a plan to accomplish these goals, it is still talk and no action. We know, as humans, we all need a deadline and some rules to get anything done. I see this bill as one that has great potential to help us literally clean up our act.

One thing I did discuss with the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle was the five-year term clause. In discussing it with him, it is something that should be debated and discussed with futsome conversation so that we are helping the municipalities set themselves up for success and not failure. It should not be punitive. It should be something to help them get things done efficiently.

Private Members' Business

In closing, I feel that this is an issue that has been around for a long time and everyone is aware of it, but it is one of those things that nobody wants to tackle because the money is not there. We know that with the Canada Infrastructure Bank, the minister promised \$35 billion, but how much of that is used for things like this?

• (1750)

Moving forward, as we discuss Bill C-269, I hope that we can come to the table, bring our different ideas, and use this as a starting point to break that cycle of all this aging infrastructure not being dealt with, so that we can protect the environment, so that we can move forward with positive, prudent development that does not create other problems, and so that municipalities do not feel like they are alone but that they have the support of other tiers of government.

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Western Economic Diversification Canada) and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (Canada Water Agency), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-269, an act to amend the Fisheries Act (prohibition—deposit of raw sewage), and to reiterate the key issues with this bill.

The government opposes Bill C-269 for multiple reasons. It would reduce environmental protections. It would negatively impact current federal, provincial and territorial collaboration on waste water. It would impose significant financial and practical challenges on all levels of government. It would be redundant and could weaken existing federal pollution prevention powers.

As the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle knows, the Fisheries Act is the federal government's most effective tool to prevent and set strong controls for the management of waste-water releases. The tools created through the Fisheries Act combined with our government's historic investments of \$2 billion in support of over 1,700 water and waste-water projects across the country have made significant progress in protecting the water quality of our lakes, rivers and oceans.

The Fisheries Act already prohibits the release of deleterious substances, pollution into water unless the release is specifically managed under federal regulations. The Fisheries Act also contains strong regulatory controls requiring notification of pollution releases and that every effort is taken to prevent a release or to mitigate potential adverse impacts, if one is unavoidable.

We all want to end releases of raw sewage. That is why our government has invested nearly two and a half times the amount of federal funding for waste-water projects compared to the previous Conservative government over the same period, the same Conservative government that in 2012 gutted the Fisheries Act's most powerful pollution prevention tools and severely underfunded investments in water and waste-water infrastructure.

I would also point out that, as the former leader of the Conservative Party, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle proposed cuts to billions in public infrastructure funding, the same funding that helps support critical water and waste-water projects in communities across the country.

Prohibiting raw sewage, as this bill prescribes, would not prevent all untreated waste-water releases from occurring. Due to years of chronic underfunding in public infrastructure under the previous Conservative government, our government has had to step up and invest in critical waste-water treatment to minimize the occurrence of such releases.

Let me be clear. There is already an effective and responsible approach in place to address this problem. Releases of raw sewage are already managed under the federal regulations for waste water, or they are prohibited under the Fisheries Act. Our government has been clear in its commitment to protect Canadian waters. That is why in 2019, we strengthened protections in the Fisheries Act by restoring lost protections and incorporating comprehensive and modern safeguards.

If enacted, this bill would mean taking several steps back. The bill does not introduce any new protections, enhanced monitoring or regulatory controls to address waste water beyond the strong measures that already exist within the act. This bill would not increase, but would reduce, environmental protections, and would have significant and harmful impacts on the ability to prevent and manage pollution under the Fisheries Act.

If enacted, this bill would take raw sewage out of the definition of deleterious substances, thereby removing raw sewage from all other critical protections and requirements that the Fisheries Act currently provides. In addition, by removing raw sewage from the existing prohibition of deleterious substances in the Fisheries Act and excluding northern waters from the proposed bill's scope, this would create a gap where raw sewage could legally be released in the north. This is unacceptable.

While our government's current national strategy effectively targets the most significant sources of pollution, this bill would impose enormous fiscal and practical challenges to all levels of government for a minimal environmental benefit. Eliminating raw sewage within five years would mean replacing the underground plumbing networks in over 700 cities across Canada at a cost of over \$200 billion.

Aside from the unprecedented cost, it is simply not possible to design, plan and build new or upgraded waste-water treatment facilities in over 700 cities across Canada in under five years. A typical planning and construction cycle for waste-water infrastructure would usually take 10 to 20 years.

Private Members' Business

● (1755)

We need to acknowledge that many communities are already making investments to reduce the environmental impacts associated with waste-water infrastructure. This includes projects to advance waste-water treatment, green infrastructure and converting waste to energy. These projects are a much more cost-effective way to achieve environmental outcomes than spending hundreds of billions of dollars on a small percentage of reductions.

The government cannot support such a poorly thought-out bill. It does not add value to the existing strategy to address waste water in Canada. Instead, it actively threatens it. Furthermore, our government already has a robust national strategy in place that establishes achievable and predictable timelines for communities to complete the necessary treatment system installations and upgrades. While upon first glance this bill would appear to offer environmental benefits, a closer look reveals that its proposed legislative changes would create considerable negative environmental and economic consequences.

To wrap up, our government is making historic investments in critical waste-water infrastructure to support our comprehensive national waste-water strategy, which combined will keep Canadian waters safe and healthy.

● (1800)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I must say that the Bloc Québécois welcomes the Conservatives' desire to engage in a debate on water quality and the pollution of our rivers.

At first glance, it might be surprising to see the Conservatives interested in the issue of water pollution. Let us not forget that, during the last campaign, they promised to take action on the dumping of waste water in waterways.

It must be said that the Conservatives happily rode the wave of Montreal's "flushgate", when the city was forced, in 2015, to dump eight billion litres of waste water into the St. Lawrence.

It was probably to fulfill this promise that the former Conservative leader, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, introduced Bill C-269. Again, we welcome the Conservatives' willingness to look at ways to reduce water pollution.

It is true that the debate on Bill C-269 is an opportunity to draw attention to an important environmental issue: the problem of sewage being discharged into our waterways. This is not the first time the Conservatives have focused on this issue.

I would like to return briefly to the promises around sewage treatment and, in turn, federal inaction on this issue.

In fact, in July 2012, Stephen Harper's government enacted the wastewater systems effluent regulations. This was the first Canadian standard for sewage treatment.

At the time, the federal government estimated that 75% of existing waste water facilities met the new standard. For the remaining 25%, the government promised to provide funding to help them comply, and it established three categories of facilities.

The first category includes the highest risk facilities, which must comply with the new standard by 2020. The second and third categories are those facilities that pose less of a risk and have until 2030, as is the case for Montreal, or 2040 to comply with the new standard.

The then minister of transport, infrastructure and communities, Denis Lebel, promised that Ottawa would invest for the long term and would work in partnership with the provinces. For its part, the Union des municipalités du Québec estimated that it would take \$9 billion to upgrade municipal facilities in order to bring them into compliance with the new federal regulations. That was in 2012.

According to a recent Réseau Environnement report, it will actually cost at least \$17 billion just to upgrade the existing treatment facilities, which are beginning to show their age.

This amount does not include waste-water treatment plants that do not comply with federal regulations, nor does it include the investments required to build treatment plants in municipalities that do not have any. In March, *Le Devoir* reported that 80 Quebec municipalities still do not have waste-water treatment plants.

Ten municipalities in the Lower St. Lawrence and Gaspé region, the region I represent, still do not have treatment plants at the outlet of their sewer systems. It is 2021. That is unbelievable. This is a serious, ongoing problem, but the federal government is slow to get involved financially.

Sewage spills happen frequently in Quebec, I am sad to say. The Fondation Rivières counted more than 60,000 spills in 2019, which added up to a total of over 470,000 hours of sewage flow into Quebec rivers and streams. The water pollution problems do not stop there.

The most recent research has brought to light the adverse health effects of endocrine disruptors in water. When these chemicals are present in the environment, they can enter the bodies of animals and humans, interact with their hormones and affect all systems in the body.

This is often harmful for both animals and humans. Even small quantities of these substances in the environment can have a significant impact. The adverse effects of endocrine disruptors have been observed in fish and mollusks in the St. Lawrence River, as well as in amphibians in rivers in southern Quebec.

Many scientists agree that endocrine disruptors are a contributing factor in certain cancers and can cause reproductive issues in humans, though few studies have been conducted in this area.

Research is currently focusing on the endocrine disruptive potential of several chemicals, such as parabens, polychlorinated biphenyls and pesticides.

The presence of microplastics is another problem that demonstrates the importance of addressing waste-water discharge into our rivers and streams.

Scientists at McGill University published a study in 2020 in the well-respected journal *Environmental Pollution* that found that microplastic pollution in the St. Lawrence River is of the same order of magnitude as that measured in waterways near densely populated cities in China. The researchers found, on average, 832 particles of plastic per kilogram dry weight of sediment. That is four times higher than the levels found by another team in the Ottawa River a few years ago. This finding places the St. Lawrence among the worst waterways analyzed to date. One of the problems is that microplastics linger in the environment for a long time. Since they remain in the sediment, many organisms are at risk of ingesting them and passing them up the food chain.

• (1805)

In short, all of this data about endocrine disruptors and the presence of microplastics shows that there is a significant and disturbing amount of pollution in our waterways as a result of sewage spills, and we must do something about it.

Let us get back to Bill C-269. Unfortunately, this bill does not contain a solution to the problem of sewage spills. Why not? Because it is inconsistent. It will still allow certain hazardous materials to be discharged. In short, Bill C-269 is not as good as it looks.

It is true that, to reduce water pollution, we need effective regulations to stop sewage from being released into the environment. However, this bill allows the discharge of certain “authorized” substances, including petroleum products such as oil, gasoline, diesel and grease, chemicals, pesticides, heavy metals, fertilizer runoff and more.

Consequently, even if it were passed, Bill C-269 would allow industry to discharge waste water contaminated with petroleum products from their facilities into our rivers, provided that the discharge complies with the Wastewater Systems Effluent Regulations. This means that waste water contaminated with chemicals like the ones I mentioned earlier would be allowed, but effluent from municipal waste-water systems would not. What will municipalities do then?

Montreal has been talking about building an ozonation plant to treat waste water for the past 15 years. The project was first announced by the Gérald Tremblay administration with a completion date in 2012, which was later pushed back to 2018. In 2019, Radio-Canada revealed that it should finally be completed in 2023 at a cost of half a billion dollars.

In February 2020, Valérie Plante's administration published a notice of interest for the construction of the plant. So far, however, there have been no developments. It is safe to say that the 2023 target may once again be postponed, but the City of Montreal has until 2030 to comply with existing federal regulations.

Private Members' Business

It is all well and good to draft regulations, but if a municipality is unable to build a water treatment plant because it simply cannot not afford it, what will the federal government do?

The solution for keeping sewage from polluting our waterways, including the St. Lawrence River, does not lie in arbitrary, unenforceable obligations or prohibitions. It lies in meaningful investments to help municipalities fulfill their waste-water treatment responsibilities.

The Bloc Québécois believes that, if we want to solve this problem together, we must demand that the federal government invest in waste-water treatment infrastructure through targeted, substantial, multi-year funding. Otherwise, neither municipalities nor Quebec will be able to fix the problem.

In conclusion, I will reiterate that the Bloc Québécois is in favour of having a debate on water quality and pollution in our rivers. We must admit that the debates on Bill C-269 are drawing attention to this important environmental issue. However, for all of the reasons I mentioned, the Bloc Québécois will be voting against the bill.

Again, this bill does not contain a solution to the problem of sewage spills. The health of our waterways requires financial commitments that are not included in Bill C-269. It requires a solid, long-term commitment on the part of the federal government. The government must invest heavily in municipal waste-water treatment infrastructure by means of appropriate transfers to Quebec and the provinces.

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I must admit that during my time in this place, I have always found great value in private members' business. It is our opportunity as members of this place to bring forward legislation that we believe will ultimately better serve this great country. Yes, there is a lottery system in place, but there is also nothing to stop the government of the day from taking a great idea in a private member's bill and incorporating it into government legislation. Indeed, we have witnessed this practice before.

Another aspect of private members' business is that often members in this place will vote more freely than on government bills. That can add a very interesting dynamic, particularly during a minority government.

Given my passion for private members' business, I must state in advance that I am speaking in support of the bill before us, as it is important to me.

Private Members' Business

The bill proposes to exclude raw sewage from the definition of “deleterious substance” so as to entirely prohibit its deposit in water, which is a critically important environmental protection we can pass in this place. Indeed, I suspect that if we asked Canadians, most would believe that this is already a banned practice in Canada. However, as we know, the minister can sign off and essentially provide an exemption to it, just as a former environment minister of the Liberal government has done previously, and that should concern us all.

Increasingly, what we see with the Liberal government is that environmental policy is being applied in a discriminatory manner. While I could provide a number of different examples, I would much rather not. Politicizing this issue is ultimately not helpful in this debate. I would like to think that if there is one thing we can all agree on in this place, it is that it is never a good thing to dump raw sewage into fish habitat. I hope that we would all agree on that point. It should be a basic guiding principle of environmental stewardship that we do not contaminate fish habitat.

While I believe there is much we can agree on in principle with the bill, I also recognize that there are criticisms.

Critics have raised the cost to municipalities as one of the criticisms. It is a fair point. However, it also acknowledges that some municipalities are currently adding to the problem, and that a lack of revenue to fix the problem is the primary reason.

On that note, I will point out that the bill proposes that it will not come into force until five years after the day on which it receives royal assent. That is five years to take action, five years to ensure that this becomes a bigger priority for the federal government and five years to work out the details with local governments. Yes, I realize that there are many challenges and many reasons why some can argue this cannot be done in five years. However, to those people I would ask a very simple question: Does anyone want to argue that this should not be done? On that point, I would like to think we can all agree.

• (1810)

[*Translation*]

I am hopeful about it. If we can agree that it should be done, let us ask ourselves how. If we do not start taking steps in that direction, it would be fair to say that this bill is not perfect, but few ever are.

Having said that, we need to send the message that fish habitat protection is a priority. Critics raise valid points: It might be difficult and it does involve costs. On the issue of costs, it is important to say that we must also consider the cost of inaction.

In my former riding, the water supply for a small rural community was contaminated with fecal matter, which made the drinking water supply unsafe.

To secure the drinking water supply, the source of the contamination had to be found. The process is not as simple as it sounds. They changed the source of the water supply. Costly, unpleasant and heavy chlorination in the water treatment system was to blame.

• (1815)

[*English*]

Back-flow valves were installed. All of that cost a lot of money. Finally, a proper sewage treatment plant was installed. That occurred under a former Conservative government, but that is not the point. The point is that today that community water system is no longer contaminated and, more importantly, the groundwater is not contaminated.

This all matters because the Okanagan River system passes through this unincorporated community, where currently local indigenous communities have been working in partnership, and very successfully I might add, to restore lost salmon habitat. It is an incredible success story. Obviously, it also speaks to the importance of not dumping raw sewage into fish habitat.

To those who raise the valid concerns of cost to local government, I point out that there are many costs of inaction that can result from the situation. More importantly, critics aside, I come back to one simple point: While some have raised concerns over getting this done, I have yet to hear anyone suggest that it cannot be done or that it should not be done. I have only heard that it could be challenging.

Current government members, in 2015, told Canadians, hand on their hearts, that better was always possible. I submit that Bill C-269 proposes better protection for our fish habitat than is currently available. This bill is an important next step in moving forward to better protect our environment.

Before I wrap up, I would like to thank the member who sponsored this bill, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, for his ongoing leadership and commitment to seeing this gap in our governance addressed. This gap, whether it was intentional or not, exists. We cannot let this go by saying there is a cost. We need to count the current costs to the environment. There are challenges here, but it is because of members like the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle that we are debating this important subject, adding a spotlight to an issue that has haunted this country for too long.

As I said before, I hope we can all agree in this place that dumping raw sewage into fish habitat is wrong and that we need to do our part, in partnership with communities, local government, the provinces and indigenous communities, to make this problem go away so that we all can have clean water and feel proud of the contributions we have made to this issue.

I thank the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle for helping to elevate this argument and for this debate. I hope that all members will put aside partisanship and say yes to his proposal.

Private Members' Business

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be speaking today to Bill C-269, an act to amend the Fisheries Act, which I can summarize very quickly as being a good idea only at first glance. My colleague from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia agrees with me completely.

There have been at least 10 sewage spills in Quebec in recent years. Consider the spill of millions of litres of waste water in the Richelieu River in Saint-Jean this past March. It was the fourth such spill in three years. The same thing happened in Longueuil in 2018, when 150 million tonnes of polluted water spilled directly into the St. Lawrence River for eight straight days. It is also impossible to forget “flushgate” in Montreal in 2015, when no less than eight billion litres of waste water was dumped into the St. Lawrence.

These examples are only some of the many similar incidents that have occurred, since sewage spills are unfortunately not a rare occurrence. In Quebec alone, Fondation Rivières counted 60,660 spills in 2019, adding up to a total of 471,300 hours of overflow. That is a lot.

Considering all of the data and the pollution in our waterways, we might have expected a far more ambitious bill. That is why I called it a good idea only at first glance earlier.

It is true that Bill C-269 has given the House the opportunity to talk about the environment and the protection of our waterways. The Bloc Québécois is certainly not going to complain about that. However, Bill C-269 does not offer any real solutions to the complex problem of sewage spills.

Unfortunately, it does not cover all waste water or all the harmful substances that could be discharged into the environment. It does not contain any real solutions for municipalities that are forced to release their sewage into our rivers, including the St. Lawrence, because they do not have adequate treatment systems.

The first fundamental problem with Bill C-269 is that it contains only half measures. The first clause of Bill C-269 excludes raw sewage from the definition of “deleterious substance” in the Fisheries Act. That is the problem.

Bill C-269 prohibits the deposit of raw sewage, which could prevent another “flushgate” in Montreal. However, it permits the deposit of several other substances that are just as deleterious, meaning the Conservatives' bill opens the door to discharges of all kinds in our waterways. Allow me to list a few substances that the Conservatives forgot: petroleum products, chemicals, pesticides, heavy metals, industrial effluent, paint, and cleaning products like bleach.

If we want to truly protect our waterways, we need to go much further. Prohibiting the discharge of waste water is one thing, but allowing the deposit of all sorts of other equally dangerous substances is quite another. If the Conservatives want to prove that they care about protecting our waterways, they should revise their bill to avoid creating two categories of pollutants.

I would like to mention another problem with Bill C-269. How do the Conservatives plan to prohibit the discharge of waste water

if the municipalities do not have adequate water treatment facilities to stop doing it?

Let us consider the facts. Le Devoir recently reported that 80 Quebec municipalities do not have waste-water treatment plants. The article also mentioned a report by the Réseau Environnement that estimated we will have to invest at least \$17 billion just to upgrade existing treatment facilities, which are beginning to show their age. Even with \$17 billion, we will not achieve the miracle solution the Conservatives think they are proposing.

For the Bloc Québécois, until effective regulations against waste-water discharge are implemented, the problem will never be fully resolved. The real solution is clear, but it does not appear in the bill. It is so simple: The federal government must make substantial, regular investments, with dedicated, multi-year funding, to help the municipalities, which should not have to cut corners when it comes to protecting our waterways.

● (1820)

The federal government must invest in order to allow municipalities to build adequate waste-water treatment infrastructure.

In conclusion, if the Conservatives want to look good and burnish their green credentials by showing concern for the health of our waterways, including the St. Lawrence River, they must be bolder and propose real solutions, none of which appear in Bill C-269.

If the Conservatives really want to solve the problem of sewage spills, they must think about including all harmful substances, and the federal government must help municipalities build adequate treatment systems, or the problem will resurface and will never be totally resolved.

For these reasons, the Bloc Québécois will vote against Bill C-269.

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: There is just enough time to invite the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle for his right of reply. The hon. member will know he has up to five minutes.

The hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

● (1825)

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate all the members of Parliament who spoke in favour of this bill. Out of respect for the House's time, I will not repeat the points that I made in my original speech, but I would like to just take a few moments to address some of the misinformation that I heard throughout the debate from members who are opposing this bill.

Private Members' Business

First of all, and we hear this argument all the time from them, the Liberals are making the false allegation that Conservatives were not going to make the same commitments to infrastructure spending as they did. This is completely false. In the last campaign, our platform committed the same amount of money to be partnered with the provinces and municipalities in order to rehabilitate our cities, towns and municipalities.

It is the current Liberal government that has allowed billions of dollars in infrastructure spending to be lapsed, so there is no doubt that cities and towns are feeling the burden, the weight of the lack of action and the extra burden that follows when the federal government does not partner with those dollars. When it allows those dollars to be lapsed, it means that there is further pressure on cities and towns and further pressure on property tax payers.

Another bogus argument I heard was that somehow this bill would weaken protections. Only to a Liberal would banning something lead to weaker regulations. Right now, the minister is able to grant these types of permits, and as was already referenced this evening, did just that when the government allowed the City of Montreal to dump billions of litres of untreated raw sewage into the St. Lawrence River. This is clearly just a case of the Liberals projecting onto another party what they themselves are guilty of.

The Liberal member for Lac-Saint-Louis asked in debate about why the Conservatives did not include it in their platform if this idea was such a good idea. That is an easy one to address. We did include it. We made a campaign announcement, and it is on page 27 of the previous campaign platform our party ran on. This is a long-standing commitment that our party has been in support of.

Another member this evening talked about how this bill would permit the dumping of raw sewage in northern communities. They have that completely backwards. This bill would ban the dumping of raw sewage, but it leaves an exemption for northern communities, recognizing the additional burdens that they face in terms of meeting the needs of their infrastructure requirements.

That means that this bill would not immediately apply to them, but they would be covered under existing regulations. Those existing regulations that are already out there, as was mentioned, would not disappear with the passage of this bill. These are complementary pieces of legislation, and this is no excuse not to support this bill.

I heard, just a few moments ago, from the Bloc member who was wondering why there were not other types of harmful substances covered in the bill. Again, that is not a reason to vote against this bill. If we can all agree that raw sewage should not be dumped into our rivers, lakes and oceans, then surely we can pass this bill.

If there are other substances that members would like to see added to the list of things that would be banned from being dumped, Conservatives are all ears for that. However, members would know that, in a private member's bill, there is a need for much greater focus. Focusing on something that is achievable and practical, something that we can certainly all immediately agree to, is necessary in terms of a private member's bill. Private members do not have the same ability or the same tools as government ministers have.

If the government were saying it was not going to pass this bill because it is coming with a comprehensive list of harmful substances that should not be dumped into rivers, lakes and oceans, then I would be happy to participate and coordinate on that, and I would be happy to support that type of initiative, but it is not. There is nothing on the Order Paper coming down the pipe. Therefore, why would we not take this easy step to ban the dumping of raw sewage?

I know members have talked about the cost. There is no doubt that this would add a significant cost on municipalities, and here is where Conservatives have the answer. The Liberals are talking about the fact that they do not have the funds available to do that. They have no problem costing our economy billions of dollars, attacking our energy sector or cancelling pipelines, even though there is no evidence that those measures have a positive effect on the environment, as we shut down production here in Canada only to see emissions go up in other countries. However, we have a simple, tangible, practical, achievable proposal, and suddenly the Liberals are pretending they are worried about the cost. That is where we know where we can find the money.

● (1830)

The Liberals have put \$35 billion into the Infrastructure Bank, an institution that has completed zero projects in four years, so there is plenty of existing funding that Conservatives would make available to municipalities so they can comply with this new law.

As my colleague from British Columbia mentioned, there is a five-year term clause coming into force, so the government has time, and a future Conservative government has the time, to partner with these municipalities to ensure they have the investments they need to upgrade the systems, so once and for all, we can stop dumping raw sewage into our waterways.

It is 2021, and Canada is a developed nation. There is no excuse for this practice to continue. That is why I am so pleased to present this bill to the House.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6:30 p.m., the time provided for debate has expired. Accordingly, the question is on the motion.

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

The hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded vote.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, pursuant to order made on Monday, January 25, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 23, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent is rising on a question of privilege.

[English]

PRIVILEGE

GOVERNMENT'S ALLEGED NON-COMPLIANCE WITH AN ORDER OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tonight I rise on a question of privilege. I move:

That this House find the Public Health Agency of Canada to be in contempt for its failure to obey the Order of the House, adopted on June 2, 2021, as well as the orders of the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations, adopted on March 31 and May 10, 2021, and, accordingly, orders its President to attend at the Bar of the House, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions on the second sitting day following the adoption of this Order, for the purposes of (a) receiving, on behalf of the Agency, an admonishment delivered by the Speaker; and (b) delivering up the documents ordered by this House on June 2, 2021, to be produced, so that they may be deposited with the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel under the terms of that Order.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members may recall that the Speaker made a statement on this particular matter earlier this day and is satisfied that it meets the notice and admissibility requirements.

Debate is on the motion. The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured to take part in the debate tonight. This is a very important debate that we have to address.

We are talking about transparency. We are talking confidence of Canadians in their institutions. We are also talking about the role of the House of Commons and the role of each and every member of this Parliament. We are here because we have received a mandate from our constituents. Those are our real bosses.

It is not the Prime Minister who can dictate what the House can do and how the truth can be provided. This is why this debate tonight is of key importance for the way we see the House functioning and how democracy can work in Canada.

• (1835)

[Translation]

In the next few moments, I will reiterate the circumstances surrounding our being gathered here today in the House to speak to an order of the House involving a public agency.

This is about the surprising ties that may have existed between the National Microbiology Laboratory located in Winnipeg, a national Canadian laboratory, and the Wuhan laboratory linked to the militaristic communist government of China.

Surprising events have occurred in the past few months in this, Canada's most important and highest-security microbiology laboratory. We have confidence in this institution, but that confidence may fall away if we do not get to the bottom of things. That is why, here in the House, we want to get to the bottom of what happened.

Four events that occurred in this lab are of particular concern to us. When I say us, I do not mean the official opposition, I do not mean the Conservatives, I mean all Canadians. We have seen recent reports on CBC and Radio-Canada, and in *The Globe and Mail*, where the story originated, featuring fairly neutral witnesses and observers with no political affiliations who believe that some troubling events took place in Winnipeg. There are four such events.

Privilege

First of all, the Winnipeg lab gave a top security clearance to a researcher with ties to the Chinese military. How did this happen? We want to know why, but we are not able to as yet.

I want to be very clear. When we talk about the Chinese military and about China, this has nothing to do with racism or xenophobia, as the Prime Minister had the audacity, and I would even say the intellectual dishonesty, to say in the House. Nor are we fuelling conspiracy theories, as a parliamentary secretary speaking for the Prime Minister so insultingly said last week. No, we are not playing chicken, as the Minister of Health so shamefully put it last Friday in the House, when I asked her some embarrassing questions. That is too bad, because that is my job, and I will keep doing it.

The questions we are asking about the relationship between the Winnipeg lab and the Wuhan lab have nothing to do with xenophobia or conspiracy theories. Nor are we engaging in a game of chicken on this, contrary to what Liberal members and the Liberal Prime Minister have said in the House.

First, a researcher with ties to the Chinese military was given the highest security clearance for the work he could do inside that lab.

Second, two deadly viruses were sent from the Winnipeg lab to the Wuhan lab. It is possible that everything was done by the book and that there is absolutely nothing to it, but we still need the documents to prove it. However, as long as they refuse to be transparent, we do not have the answer. The second point then is the transfer of deadly viruses.

Third, two senior researchers, the ones who played central roles in the microbiology research being conducted at this institute, were escorted out of the lab by the RCMP. A few weeks later, they literally lost their jobs. Losing a job can happen to anyone, but when people are escorted out by the RCMP, it seems to me they do not necessarily have a clear conscience.

According to CBC reports, these two researchers—they are a couple, a man and a woman—were earning a combined salary of about \$250,000 Canadian. That is a very respectable amount of money for that level. The problem is that they were living in a \$1.5-million house around Winnipeg and Gimli. The banks there seem to be pretty generous: They were willing to lend people making \$250,000 enough money to buy a \$1.5-million house. That raises some questions.

Lastly, after these three events, two senior executives at the Public Health Agency of Canada suddenly resigned and retired. Why? That is what we want to know.

Privilege

Because this is a public agency, the following four events trouble us as parliamentarians: A foreign researcher obtained the highest security clearance; two deadly viruses were shipped from Winnipeg to Wuhan; two highly placed researchers—the institute's leading researchers—lost their jobs and were expelled and marched out under RCMP escort; and, finally, senior executives at the institute suddenly left their jobs.

These are legitimate questions, which were actually raised by *The Globe and Mail*. I want to point that out.

● (1840)

[*English*]

As members of Parliament, we have a job to do. This is why the opposition tabled a motion a few months ago to create a special committee on Canada-Chinese relations. This is quite important in the events of today, and also in the relations we should have with this country.

This committee worked on those issues, and wants to know what happened in this institution, Canada's National Microbiology Laboratory. Then twice, on two occasions, the committee asked the Public Health Agency of Canada to table documents about those events, on March 31 and on May 10.

[*Translation*]

On two occasions, the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations asked senior officials at the Public Health Agency of Canada, which is responsible for the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg, to table documents concerning these four events. At the time, the fourth event, the sudden departure of two executives, had not yet occurred.

On two occasions, the director refused to properly respond to the committee's request. That is why, on June 2, here in the House, we, the official opposition, put forward a motion to demand that the government, through the Public Health Agency of Canada, table the documents that are key to understanding this matter. This was not a wish or a request, but an order of the House to get to the bottom of these events. Unfortunately, the government did not act on this request, and I will come back later to the circumstances surrounding its unfortunate decision.

Some may be tempted to say that we should calm down since this is a matter of national security, microbiology and international relations. People may think that it is not true that all these documents can be published easily and that we have to be careful. Of course we have to be careful; we are well aware of that.

That is why our motion on June 2 was quite clear, as were the two motions adopted at committee. We established a framework that was absolutely relevant. The Clerk of the House of Commons, with the support of experts, can identify, detect and ferret out any items that might be truly sensitive and do not warrant being made public for national security reasons. He can look at the administrative facts that may have led to two researchers being escorted out by the RCMP or another researcher who is associated with the Chinese military being given a very high security clearance. These are perfectly legitimate questions. However, once the documents are made public, they can be sifted through, as is done in many cases,

by the experts and specifically by the Clerk of the House of Commons, whom we trust.

However, the government decided to override the House's order to produce the documents. The Prime Minister raised national security concerns and claimed that the Liberal government had already created a body that had all the necessary latitude to examine and analyze these types of situations. That body is the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, and it was created in 2016 by the Liberal government.

The Speaker noted that it was not a parliamentary committee, but a committee of parliamentarians.

The Prime Minister was quite proud last week to say that the government had struck this committee to get to the bottom of this without jeopardizing national security, and he was proud to say that all political parties were represented on the committee. That was a mistake: The second opposition group had not been represented for months. Need I point out that we requested transfers for our representatives in September and he did not respond until last week? What a surprise. For months and months, he had no interest in this and, all of a sudden, he is interested.

The committee of parliamentarians the Prime Minister created is his instrument. That is not a bad thing in and of itself, but it has its limits. The group can receive documents. Actually, the Prime Minister and his ministers love to talk about how they gave the committee documents and the committee will do the work, but they leave out the rest. The Prime Minister leaves out the part about how he has the right to veto every single document that is analyzed, every single committee resolution and every single committee finding.

If the Prime Minister personally does not want a document to be released, he is the one who decides that, nobody else. If the committee's recommendation does not suit him, he alone can decide if it is made public or not. If the committee finds that there is a national security issue but the Prime Minister disagrees, he can decide not to talk about it.

I do not even have the right to ask members what happened in that committee, because its members took an oath to not say anything to anyone. I would never jeopardize the legitimacy, honesty and integrity of my colleagues who sit on a committee and who have sworn an oath to not say anything. However, what is the point of setting up a committee of parliamentarians if those who are part of that committee are unable to talk about what goes on there? The words “Parliament” and “parliamentarian” come from the same root word as “parler”, a French word that means to speak, which only makes sense. This committee is the Prime Minister's personal instrument, because he is the one who has the right of veto over everything.

In the ruling the Speaker gave about two hours ago, he very clearly indicated that this committee existed but that it was not a parliamentary committee. I am not going to put words in the Speaker's mouth. However, we believe that this committee is completely under the yoke of the Prime Minister because he gave himself the right to veto the committee's decisions.

We raised a question of privilege because the motion had been adopted, it was about an order of the House, and the government had defied it. We challenged the government's approach by raising this question of privilege and not two hours ago the Speaker of the House of Commons recognized that, on the face of it, we were indeed right.

We are gathered here this evening to determine whether we want to move forward and continue working on this file. We believe that the director of the Public Health Agency of Canada was wrong in refusing to hand over these documents and that is why we are asking that these documents be tabled here.

We also want the director of the agency to be admonished for failing to obey an order of the House, as stated in the Speaker's ruling. We are also asking for relevant documents to be delivered to the House and reviewed by the Clerk of the House to ensure that national security is not jeopardized and, above all, that the orders of the House are obeyed. That did not happen under this government and it is disgraceful.

• (1845)

Since some members have spoken at length about it, I would like to remind members that there was an incident in 2010 concerning the release of documents that could pose a threat to national security. At the time, Speaker Milliken ruled that the documents had to be made public. It has to be done in a certain way, but documents can be made public.

Some members will say that at the time the Conservatives did not want to release the documents, but now that we are in opposition that is what we want. Stop right there. These are two completely different situations.

Members will recall that the 2010 issue pertained to the Afghanistan war. It must be pointed out that we were involved in a military operation, we were in a war zone. Our soldiers, our men and women, were deployed to a war zone and were risking their lives. We had allies, and Afghan interpreters were helping us in the war we were waging against terrorism together with our international allies. We had Afghan nationals who were risking their lives. We had Canadians in uniform who were proudly serving in the military and putting their lives at risk.

That is not at all the case today. We are talking about questionable administrative decisions that resulted in an agency giving the highest security clearance to a researcher associated with the Chinese military. We are talking about an agency that decided to give two extremely rare and dangerous viruses to a foreign laboratory. We are talking about an agency that gave a very high security clearance to two researchers whose career ultimately ended in a shameful and dishonourable manner. They were expelled and escorted out by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. We are talking about two civilian executives who left the administration unexpectedly.

These are questionable administrative decisions that cast a shadow on Canada's great, proud and honourable reputation in the field of research. To my knowledge, that is not at all like what happened in Afghanistan. As far as I know, no one's life was at risk in Winnipeg, at least I hope not. We are not talking about a foreign army like the one we were fighting in Afghanistan. I hope not. We are not

Privilege

talking about allies and friends like our Afghan interpreters putting their lives at risk. These are two completely different things.

Woe, then, to those who dare to draw a parallel between the events of 2010, President Milliken's decision or our entirely legitimate and pertinent reluctance when we were in power because we were in a war zone, and what is going on today when we are in the opposition and are demanding information that would allow us to get to the bottom of things and shed light on situations that deserve our attention. We believe that this situation compromised our national security.

Let us take a quick look at the facts. Ten days ago, the House ordered the government of Canada to table documents in the House. It was an order of the House. The government did not obey the order. Rather, it flouted the House of Commons and the will of the majority of members elected by Canadians, eventually doing its own thing and giving the documents to an entity literally created by the Prime Minister. This entity is entirely under the Prime Minister's control; he has veto power over anything that happens in the committee and anything that might come out of it.

We are asking for the documents to be made public. We are asking for the head of the Public Health Agency of Canada to come back to the House and take the blame, as written and defined in your decision, so that Canadians can learn what happened in these questionable relations deserving of an investigation between a key research and scientific institution, Canada's National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg and another laboratory located in Wuhan following four events that cast a shadow on Canada's reputation and integrity, especially since our scientists must work under the most secure conditions possible, with the support, assistance and confidence of all Canadians. They deserve nothing less.

• (1850)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I voted against the motion that the Conservatives introduced, because I do believe this is an issue of national security.

If we listen to what the member has said, we would think these documents have not been provided at all, and nothing could be further from the truth. The documents were provided to a committee, in fact, two committees: one committee where redaction was required and another committee where there were no redactions whatsoever.

At the end of the day, we need to recognize that there is an issue of national security. The documents in question have been provided in two forms to two different groups, where the membership is made up of members of Parliament from all sides of the House.

Privilege

Does the member not recognize that the Conservative Party could be wrong? Maybe there is a sense of national security, and the Conservative Party of Canada is overlooking that issue in favour of political partisanship in the chamber, which is what we have seen over the last couple of weeks.

• (1855)

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I pay all my respect to my colleague from Winnipeg North. He has served in his provincial legislature and in the House of Commons for the last 30 years. As a member from Winnipeg, I am sure he was very concerned with what happened a few kilometres away in his riding.

I want to address the two points in the question from my colleague.

First, the member talked about the committee, but he did not name the committee. We are not talking about a parliamentary committee; we are talking about a committee created by the Prime Minister for which the Prime Minister has all the authority and power to decide whether some information will be made public. This is a huge difference.

The other point is on whether this is an issue of national security. For sure it is a national security issue, which is why we want to know what happened, but based on the fact that we will correctly address this issue. This is why we follow the rules that have been established for many years. The clerk and some experts will review those documents to be sure no one will lose his or her life over it.

We are talking about four administrative decisions on security in the highest-ranked laboratory that we have in our country. We shall know what happened there and learn the lessons so as not to repeat the bad decisions that may have been made in that kind of situation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my colleague's speech.

The motion we are debating is certainly important. The Speaker has agreed to a debate on the privilege motion, and everyone really needs to take it seriously.

I know my colleague has a lot of experience, not only in the House of Commons but also in the Quebec National Assembly, and my question is very simple.

Based on his experience in the Quebec National Assembly and in the House of Commons, is there a precedent for this kind of privilege motion, as well as for all the actions we have seen in recent weeks?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from British Columbia. Again, I am very pleased to commend him on his exceptional French. It is truly impressive and it inspires us all to learn the other official language so that we can speak both official languages.

My colleague raises a very good question. Personally, no, I have never seen a situation where national security was the key issue in a decision we had to make here as parliamentarians. I did not see that in the Quebec National Assembly.

My colleague from British Columbia remembers very well what I said a few moments ago in the House, that there is indeed a precedent. It was in 2010, when Speaker Milliken said that, indeed, documents could be made public. We Conservatives were in government at the time, and we had more than a few reservations.

Need I repeat that these were two completely different situations? One involved a war situation in Afghanistan about ten years ago, and now we are talking about unfortunate administrative decisions involving a Canadian government agency and laboratory.

These are two completely different situations that require us to get to the bottom of things. That is what we want to do.

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech and for the interesting debate this evening.

For all the tea in China, no one will convince me that there is no pattern to the Liberal government's behaviour. It has a tendency to hide certain things and has shown a lack of transparency, and even a lack of ethics, in several matters. The recent WE Charity decision comes to mind, but there have been other instances where the government lacked transparency.

I would like to hear my colleague's opinion on this.

• (1900)

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Shefford. I appreciate the effort she puts into her work here in the House and in her parliamentary duties.

She used the phrase, "for all the tea in China". I, for one, am not going to make offensive parallels, as the government did in referring to xenophobia, for example.

Being transparent is important, especially for a government that got elected in 2015 by saying that Canada was being obfuscated by the government of the day, that it was going to bring in transparency, that it was going to do everything to be accountable to the public, and so on.

The government just forgot one thing: It no longer remembers what it said in 2015, just as it no longer remembers promising that this was the last time we would have this type of election in our parliamentary system. It also told us that we would run three modest deficits and then achieve a zero deficit. Four years later, the exact opposite is true.

There is one thing, however, that the government did promise—

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was very pleased today to hear the Speaker rule that Parliament does reign supreme. Six years ago, the government said that it would be transparent by default. In fact, as the hon. member was speaking, I was reading the mandate letters of many of the ministers, and every single one of those mandate letters speaks to that. However, what we have seen from the government is a pattern and a history of trying to hide things.

Could the hon. member speak about this pattern, this history and the impact that has not just on our democracy, but on the transparency and accountability of Parliament.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, I want to pay all my respects to my colleague from Barrie—Innisfil. I deeply appreciate his work as a member of Parliament for his constituents and for what he believes in and fights for. I can assure him that he is a very important key player in each and every decision we have to make in caucus.

This is why we want to address the issue of transparency. Yes, it is important to know what happened in the country, especially when we are talking about laboratories. When the Prime Minister and his party were elected in 2015, we remember them saying they would start a new era in Canada, that Canada was back, that they would be more transparent, be more close with people and they would tell the truth at each and every step of the way.

However, without a shadow of a doubt, six years later we can see so many broken promises, especially the one about transparency, except for one. The Prime Minister said during his campaign in 2015 that he would create a committee for national security. He just missed one thing in his promise. He did not say that at the end of this committee, the veto would be held by the Prime Minister. This is the key element of that decision.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I certainly learned a lot from the House leader of the opposition's references to the times when Stephen Harper was found in contempt. However, what I find troubling is that he said that it was different back then because lives were on the line and we were in war.

How does he know lives are not on the line now? In fact, he does not know. When he said that, he followed it up by saying he did not know if lives were on the line. Quite simply, why would he be willing to put lives on the line if the possibility exists?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, the answer is in the hands of the clerk. The clerk is the one who will review documents and will realize if there are some lives in danger. However, let me remind members that in 2010, we were talking about a war zone. I do not think Winnipeg is in a war zone, and I hope the army of a foreign country is not there. If it is, for sure we want to go deep into this situation, but I really hope it is not the case.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would typically start a speech by saying how happy I am to be speaking to a particular bill or motion, but I am not going to start my speech this way because, quite frankly, I am not happy to be speaking to this motion and would like to tell the House why.

Canada is in the middle of a global pandemic. The Public Health Agency of Canada is at the forefront of this fight against COVID-19 and doing everything in its power to help Canadians stay safe.

Now, I am getting heckled from members of the other side because they clearly perhaps do not think the Public Health Agency is at the forefront. They are entitled to their opinion, through those heckles, but I would like to take the opportunity to explain to them what the Public Health Agency is doing on the front lines.

Privilege

When it comes to vaccine distribution, to date this includes sending over 33.8 million vaccines to provinces and territories, with millions more arriving in the weeks and months to come. It includes \$284 million in strengthening provincial vaccine distributions.

The Public Health Agency is also assisting with respect to hot spots throughout the country. This includes working closely with provinces and territories to support them in the responsibilities to deliver health care. Through the safe restart agreement, \$7.5 billion has been invested to help provinces and territories access the PPE they need. We are also investing in contact tracing and testing to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and increased hospitalizations.

Testing assistance is another thing the Public Health Agency is doing. Canadians have been tested for COVID-19 35,830,746 times, and we continue to have a high rate of testing. We are constantly working with provinces and territories to increase laboratory capacity and the number of tests done per day, and the safe restart agreement has supported provinces to increase their testing capacity.

The Public Health Agency is also supporting direct lab assistance. We have six federal labs that are up and running to support provincial lab capacity by processing an additional 6,000 tests every single day in this country.

On border protection, the Public Health Agency, since March 2020, has deployed its employees to keep our borders secure. More than 180 public health officers are currently present at points of entry across the country. Travellers' quarantine plans are verified upon entry into Canada. We have made up to 4,600 calls every day to verify travellers' compliance with these mandatory requirements, and when needed, cases are referred to law enforcement.

Isolation is another thing the Public Health Agency is assisting with. The safe voluntary isolation sites program is helping more than 15 cities, municipalities and health regions provide safe, accessible places for people who receive a positive COVID-19 diagnosis to self-isolate to keep them and their households safe and prevent community transmission.

While the Public Health Agency is at the forefront of the fight to protect Canadians from COVID-19, the Conservatives want to hold the agency in contempt of Parliament. Why do they want to do this? It is because the Public Health Agency of Canada was not prepared to provide documents that could threaten the national security of Canada without appropriate safeguards.

The Public Health Agency should be spending all of its time and effort right now fighting COVID-19, but instead it has to spend its time fighting self-serving Conservative partisanship. The hypocrisy that comes from the Conservatives is astounding. They claim to be the party of law and order, but they are willing to put the national security of Canada at risk at the first opportunity because they believe it helps their partisan self-interest.

Privilege

Conservatives want to distract the Public Health Agency of Canada from fighting the pandemic because it is good for the Conservative Party. This is pathetic. This shows the true colours of the Conservative Party under the leadership of this Leader of the Opposition.

• (1905)

We do not deny that the House has the power to order documents. However, just because we can do something, that does not mean we should. It might come across as a cliché, but with that great power that we have here does indeed come great responsibility. Conservatives have chosen power without responsibility, for nothing more than a fishing expedition in search of political gain, all at the expense of those who have been supporting us these past 15 months.

As I indicated in my intervention in response to the question of privilege from the House leader of the official opposition, the opposition day motion from the Conservatives lacked any meaningful mechanism to ensure the confidential information contained in the papers ordered to be provided to the public.

The member is now proposing that the Minister of Health table unredacted documents in the House, which means they would become public. Let that sink in for a moment. Conservatives want documents that could threaten the national security of Canada to immediately be made public. How reckless and irresponsible. This is the modern Conservative Party of Canada.

Now let us talk for a minute about what we as a government propose, so that we could ensure that MPs have access to these sensitive documents, while also ensuring that the national security of Canada is protected.

Before I do that, I would like to point out that one of the highest priorities of any government should be to protect information that could harm the national security interests of Canada. This should be the priority, quite frankly, of any party that purports to position itself to be the government in waiting.

While Conservatives like to give themselves fancy titles like “shadow minister” and pretend as if they are ready to govern, they have failed the most basic test of any party that seeks to form government. They are willing to sacrifice the national security of Canada, simply because they can and because they cannot control their innate instincts to overreact and act recklessly when they think it helps their partisan self-interest. I think this tells Canadians all they need to know about the Conservative Party of Canada under the leadership of this leader. They are simply not ready.

The government took a responsible approach to the documents by referring the matter and providing unredacted documents to the national security committee of parliamentarians, given the expertise of the members of the committee in matters of national security.

I would note that there are two Conservatives who sit on that committee. Why the Conservative Party does not trust them is beyond me, but perhaps it should look at replacing them with people it does trust. This approach is similar to what the Conservative government did in 2010 with the Afghan detainee documents.

Providing the unredacted documents to NSICOP respects the balance of interests between the rights of parliamentarians to have access to information and the obligations of the government to protect information related to national security.

As I have stated in the House previously, NSICOP has a broad mandate to review Canada's “legislative, regulatory, policy, administrative and financial framework for national security and intelligence”. It may also review “any activity carried out by a department that relates to national security or intelligence”.

Committee members come from both Houses of Parliament. It is a body that was created by an act of Parliament, by parliamentarians from both the House and the other place. All members hold top-secret security clearance and are permanently bound to secrecy under the Security of Information Act. The mandate also states, “Members swear an oath or solemn affirmation indicating that they will obey and uphold the laws of Canada, and not communicate or inappropriately use information obtained in confidence as part of their responsibilities on that committee.”

NSICOP was created for exactly these types of situations and is the appropriate place for the review of these documents. By proceeding in this way, the government has ensured that information that may be injurious to Canada's national interest, that could compromise national security or the privacy rights of Canadians, or that may be related to an ongoing criminal investigation can be protected.

• (1910)

This leads me to my next point: Why? Given that the government chose a responsible approach, similar to the process that the Conservatives used in 2010 for the documents that they released, so that they have access to information while protecting national security, why have Conservatives decided to proceed with this question of privilege? The simple answer is obstruction. They do not want the budget implementation act to move forward, despite the fact that it includes key measures for Canadians.

First is the extension of the Canada emergency wage subsidy, the Canada emergency rent subsidy and the lockdown support, all these, until September 25, 2021. These are due to expire this month unless Parliament approves the extension. Second is the extension of important income for Canadians, such as the Canada recovery benefit and the Canada recovery caregiving benefit. Third is establishing a new Canada recovery hiring program, which would help businesses with the costs of hiring new workers during the recovery. Fourth is an increase in old age security for those over 75, to provide seniors with better financial security when their savings may run out.

Enhancing the Canada workers benefit would mean more money for low-income Canadians. It would support about one million Canadians and lift nearly 100,000 people out of poverty. The budget would also enhance employment insurance sickness benefits from 15 to 26 weeks. It would establish a \$15-an-hour federal minimum wage. It would extend the waiver of interest on federal student loans and apprentice loans to March 2023. It would provide for emergency top-up of \$5 billion for provinces and territories, specifically \$4 billion through the Canada health transfers to help—

• (1915)

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. While I appreciate the hon. member's intervention, we are dealing with the motion related to the question of privilege, so perhaps the member would like to spend time talking about why his government redacted the document and is not being transparent.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give the member the leeway to explain why he is making his points.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I can understand why the Conservatives do not want to hear this. I am telling members why it is that they are choosing this path right now, why they do not want to talk about these things and why the member for Carleton stood up here for 45 minutes on a question of privilege that had nothing to do with privilege. It is because they do not want to debate and discuss these meaningful implementations for Canadians.

This is despite the fact that members of Parliament from all parties in this House have debated this legislation for a combined 22 hours, hearing from more than 160 speakers. The House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance has studied the bill exhaustively for more than 40 hours, hearing from 132 witnesses, and the minister appeared before the committee to address the members' questions.

The Conservatives are also obstructing because they do not want Bill C-12, the net-zero legislation, to pass. Why do they not want this to pass? It should not be a surprise to anybody that they do not even believe in climate change. Do not take my word for it, Madam Speaker. The member—

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. Although I am enjoying this, I find that you have given the member lots of leeway. Could we get him back to, perhaps, where he is going on this? It seems like it is just an attack and not actually talking about the relevance of this motion.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: On that point of order—

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: No, no, you are speaking. I do not think you have to make a point of order.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I just want to add briefly to the point of order from the previous member.

The member for Kingston and the Islands frequently rises on points of order with respect to the relevance of other members' comments. I wonder if there is some basis for insisting that he be held to the same standard that he seeks to apply to other members.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We are entering the domain of debate here.

Privilege

I would like to encourage the member to please stick to the subject of discussion.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, before I continue, I just want to make sure that the clock was stopped during that time. I believe the clock continued to run while the member for Elgin—Middlesex—London was talking. I just want to make sure that we will backtrack that.

I do not blame her for trying to interject on me there. When a party does not believe in climate change, it makes sense that any time somebody brought that to anybody's attention, it would want to shut it down. However, the Conservatives—

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: I am rising on a point of order, Madam Speaker. I appreciate this, but I find that he continues with the irrelevance of this conversation that he continues to have. If he could get back to it, because he is now absolutely misleading people. I believe in climate change, and I do not feel—

• (1920)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I am misleading people? That is not—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Hon. member, please. We do not start a debate in the middle of the debate on a question of privilege. I would encourage the member to please go to the question of privilege and speak to it.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, once again I was interrupted, a second time, because the Conservatives do not believe in climate change. I can understand why this is something that is tough for them to swallow, but the truth hurts sometimes and they are going to have to listen to it. This is what happens when 54% of Conservatives, in their party, say they do not believe in climate change. Members could go back and review the records from their most recent annual convention.

The Conservatives want to obstruct the passing of Bill C-10 which would update our Broadcasting Act to support our cultural sector. They continue to distort and hijack the issue by helping the web giants. The reality is those web giants are taking more of the share of how we listen to our music, watch TV and watch movies. Unless they are brought into the Canadian regulatory framework, then we will lose our cultural sovereignty.

That is precisely why Bill C-10 was brought forward and why we need to ensure that it is adopted. The Conservatives also want—

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

Hon. Ed Fast: Madam Speaker, we have had a number of points of order made, all pointing to the fact that this member is not following the rule of relevance. If you wish, I would be glad to read the motion that is before us. It is a motion of contempt against the Liberal government and the Public Health Agency of Canada. That is what we are debating—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have asked to consult a table officer on this issue.

Privilege

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands on the point of order.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, as I indicated earlier on, the reason I am raising these points is to explain to the House why I believe the Conservatives have introduced this motion, so it is completely relevant.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am prepared to give a bit of leeway in the way the hon. member brings the subject forth, but we do have to go back to the subject of the motion.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, the Conservatives also want to obstruct the passage of Bill C-6, which brings forward amendments to the Criminal Code and moves us closer to seeing an end to the damaging practice of conversion therapy, a practice that continues to harm the LGBTQ communities in Canada and around the world.

This harmful practice must finally—

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

Hon. Ed Fast: Madam Speaker. I have now heard this member address everything but the motion. He has touched on the budget implementation legislation, Bill C-30. He skated over to Bill C-10. Then he skated over to Bill C-6. What other legislation is he going to touch on before he gets back to this motion?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): If I may, the hon. member started, in the first nine minutes or so of this intervention, to speak strictly to the question of privilege. It is in the past five minutes that he has been on this subject.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I am trying to explain to the House why it is that I believe the Conservatives have brought forward this motion. It is hard to listen to this. I can appreciate the member for Abbotsford does not want to hear this.

However, the reality is that there are people in our LGBTQ community across this country who are subject to a horrific practice, and this Conservative Party is holding up the government, with the Bloc and the NDP, passing important legislation to keep these Canadians safe.

Conservatives continue to obstruct the passage of this bill. In fact, two members of their caucus, the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan and the member for Cloverdale—Langley City recently produced a video that highlights the benefits of professional counselling to challenge gay sexual behaviour.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would remind the member, please, that we are approaching the end of the member's time, so could we go back to the relevance of the question of privilege.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I would submit to you, and I will sum up right now, that what I have been trying to put to this House today are the reasons I believe the Conservatives are up to these games.

We have six precious days left in which we could pass very meaningful legislation. We could ban conversion therapy. We could pass a budget bill that helps Canadians. We could make sure that

very important legislation is put in place for our environment. These are all items that the Conservatives do not want us to complete before this legislative calendar is over.

Why? I do not know. What I do know is that, today, the member is challenging me on relevance. Today, the member for Carleton stood there for 45 minutes, rambling on about a debate issue that had nothing to do with the question of privilege, and the member for Timmins—James Bay supported him through it, encouraged him through it, and gave him excuses to continue on and on. We—

• (1925)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, the question of relevance was previously raised and the Speaker gave instruction for the member to resume. Since that point, the question of privilege that the House is debating has not been raised, but, instead, all items except for that item have been raised, including naming other items on the Order Paper in the coming days and questions of privilege other than one that is currently being debated, including the one raised by the member for Carleton earlier today.

The member is not being relevant to the topic at hand.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): As I have expressed before, there is leeway in the way we interpret relevance.

I have invited the hon. member to go back to the question. The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands has the floor and he may proceed with his points.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: In my remaining couple of minutes, Madam Speaker, I will start with something that is very relevant. The Conservatives are great at dishing it, but they cannot receive it. That is exactly what we are seeing.

I am trying to give a speech to the House of Commons as to why I believe the Conservatives put forward this motion today, and I genuinely believe this. The member for Abbotsford, the member for Elgin—Middlesex—London and the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes can all stand and say that my motives in speaking today have nothing to do with relevance, but I would argue that they are completely relevant. The relevance is that this is why they are doing this. This is why they put forward this motion.

If I do not explain to this House why I believe the Conservatives put forward this motion, how could I possibly not be more relevant than that? Conservatives have been hell-bent on obstructing this government for the last several months. I have been here every single day to witness it.

The NDP and the Bloc, by and large, have been here to debate policy and to talk about what we can do to advance Canadians while still maintaining their partisan approach. The Conservatives have lost that. They do not know how to do it anymore, they do not realize what their role is in this House and they will do anything for political gain.

Privilege

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, I found it very interesting to listen to the member's speech. His speech emphasizes the exact point that the government is contemptuous of the very idea of what Parliament represents, and that is democracy. It is telling that he wanted to talk about everything other than the fact that the government has done everything it can to obstruct, limit access and ensure that Canadians do not get the answers that the majority of parliamentarians want.

The member keeps saying that somehow partisanship is driving this. My constituents would suggest very much otherwise. I will not use the unparliamentary language that the member used to describe Conservative actions, but Canadians are tired of politicians playing politics. The member's conduct is exactly what Canadians are sick and tired of.

I would ask the member to take some responsibility for the fact that we find ourselves in a position where we are debating the absolute contempt that the member and the government have shown for Canadian democracy.

• (1930)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, the member may not have listened to the beginning of my speech where I specifically talked about why it was so out of place for these documents to come here, but I will let him cherry-pick what he wants.

I will tell the member what Canadians in my riding are talking about. Canadians in my riding are asking why on earth the Conservative member for Cloverdale—Langley City would say the LGBTQ community is unclean. That is what my constituents are saying. The member wants to talk about democracy. How about we start representing Canadians, the people throughout this country, who are negatively impacted so seriously by the actions that have occurred throughout this country? Why are we not protecting them?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Kingston and the Islands for his remarks.

However, I would like him to explain something to me. I believe that what we have just experienced is highly symptomatic of three things. First, this government is in contempt of democracy. Second, as I said earlier, this government has shown contempt by obstructing and lacking transparency on several issues. Third, the government is telling us this evening that we would rather debate this issue than other bills, and yet it is the government that is responsible for its own legislative agenda. It has sat on many bills for a long, long time, and it is entirely responsible for the delays.

I would like to ask my colleague a question, and I would like him to avoid telling me what he believes the Conservatives were thinking when they moved tonight's motion. Why did my colleague not take more time in his speech to specifically address the issue that we are debating right now?

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I am sorry, but the Bloc Qu b cois had to support this government on a number of occasions to invoke closure or time allocation because we needed to move on with the agenda. The member is so incredibly aware of what is going on in this House that she has actually had to support

the government on occasion to move forward with the legislative calendar. She knows that the legislative calendar is completely being held up by the Conservatives. I apologize if it is not clear. I recognize the fact that on this particular issue she has a different point and that she supported the Conservatives to get to here, but the reality is that we cannot move the calendar along because of what the Conservatives are doing.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to what the hon. member was saying. I find it curious that he tries to enlarge the debate to a whole bunch of other matters that he is concerned about with the official opposition. That is delaying matters. The reason we are here today is because the government itself refused to follow the precedents of this House, the ruling of Speaker Milliken on April 27, 2010. It clearly states the powers of the House of Commons for members of the House of Commons, members of Parliament, to have access to documents. It is a seminal ruling. It was confirmed again today by the Speaker.

The simple way of ending this debate is to just agree to comply with the rulings of the Speaker and with the order of the House and produce the documents so they can be produced to the committee in accordance with the ruling of the Speaker who is satisfied that the provisions have been made for their protection. That is the simple answer to his argument.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate this member on a very good speech that he gave last night while saying goodbye to this House.

With respect, I would disagree that that is such a simple thing to do. The documents have been withheld because of the national security nature of them. Does the member not think that the director of PHAC understands the seriousness of documents being ordered, but still chose to do something outside of that direction? The director did that because of the national security implication. To suggest that it is just as easy to turn them over is a massive, wilful misunderstanding or non-appreciation of the reality of the situation.

• (1935)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, this member has given a long speech and he has ridiculed and pointed fingers at certain members and their intentions, but he sounds like he is speaking from a position of absolute truth. Does the member have security clearance to be able to say that those documents say exactly what he wants to say? That is the problem. He is not part of the executive. He has a duty, like all of us who are not part of the executive in this place, to hold the government accountable.

Does he have some sort of confidential information that says that those documents say exactly the narrative he is trying to frame tonight?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, no I do not, and that is the whole point. The difference between the member and me is that I err on the side of caution and he errs on the side of reckless behaviour that potentially exposes national security items to the public.

Privilege

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, handing over these documents is not a matter of political choice; it is actually a matter of law. The Liberals should not think of themselves as being above the law.

I will observe for the benefit of the member that when PHAC was first asked about these issues, the president of PHAC did not invoke national security. He actually invoked the Privacy Act. The idea that there is a national security problem with handing over these documents is a talking point that was invented later. It was not the rationale used in the first place for not handing over the documents.

Finally, I want to put to the member that the second motion, adopted by the committee on May 10, was moved by the member for Cumberland—Colchester, a Liberal member. A member of his own caucus moved a motion to demand the documents. That motion was adopted unanimously by the committee. Every single Liberal member of the committee voted to have the documents handed over to the law clerk, reviewed by the law clerk and redacted by the law clerk, and then given to the committee in camera, which was a secure process endorsed by the Liberal members of the committee.

The member does not have to like the Speaker's ruling, but the Speaker has ruled on a matter of law and on the obligations of Parliament. The Speaker has ruled that NSICOP is not a parliamentary committee. That is clear in law and it is clear in the Speaker's ruling.

Does the member believe that the government has an obligation to comply with the law in this case?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I absolutely do, but I also respect the fact that the government has a responsibility to protect national security and privacy, which is legislated. What did members do to try to rectify this situation in a way that would create a good balance? They delivered the documents to a proper committee that had the proper security clearance for this.

I am sorry if the Conservative members do not trust their representatives on the committee—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, I salute our Conservative colleagues.

The House is debating a motion that hits on something, which is that, ultimately, parliamentarians should have rights. When we adopt something like a motion, it should not just fade into oblivion, like a big show or circus just passing through, as if it stops mattering once the vote has taken place.

We are constantly being told that under Canada's parliamentary system, which originated in the United Kingdom, Parliament is the supreme body and has all the powers, and that the legislative branch does everything and the government is accountable to it. However, in the end, we see that the votes in this Parliament are forgotten and serve no purpose. Is this normal? Is that how this parliamentary system, the virtues of which are constantly being dinned into our ears, is supposed to work?

We are also told that this is a parliamentary monarchy, but I think the monarchy part gets more airtime in the House than the parliamentary part. Apparently, the legislative power is merely symbolic when we vote on a motion, as is the case here.

In fact, I see the same thing in my files. I am the international trade critic, and every time a trade agreement is discussed, we, as parliamentarians, are not asked to tell the negotiators which issues we want them to play up or down, or which interests they should suggest or protect. We are not consulted at all, and it is only at the end of the process that we are asked to rubber-stamp it.

The motion moved by the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent, a member of the official opposition, also hits the nail on the head with regard to this whole parliamentary culture, which is parliamentary in name only. That is unacceptable.

The Bloc Québécois was in favour of the motion, but it questioned some aspects of it. The government House leader spoke earlier about information that could impact national security and that must not end up in the wrong hands, redacted information that should not be revealed. The Bloc Québécois also expressed concern in that regard, and we told our official opposition colleagues that we agreed with their motion but that we were somewhat concerned about that aspect of it.

That did not stop us from voting in favour of the motion, because we figured that any disclosure of information had to be approved in committee and that there were enough members who would vote to prevent sensitive or essential information from being leaked, since no party holds a majority in committee. I therefore do not really understand the motivation or rationale behind the concerns of our colleague opposite, the government House leader.

There is something else we need to address, and the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent touched on it earlier when he said that the Conservatives' motion was not meant to stigmatize China or the Chinese community.

The Bloc Québécois has a completely different approach to China than the Conservative Party. We have always spoken in favour of normalizing relations with China, and we are in favour of maintaining good relations between our two countries, even though these relations have worsened over time.

Just a few years ago, we had excellent relations, to the point that we almost signed a free trade agreement with China. We were seriously considering it. The Bloc Québécois would have been against such an agreement because it would not have been a good idea. However, the fact that we were talking about this proposal and it has now been completely abandoned shows that our relations with China have deteriorated.

All the same, that should not stop us from remaining clear-eyed. My colleague from the Bloc Québécois, the member for Lac-Saint-Jean, has brought up the situation of the Uighurs several times. The week following the election, we also voted with the Conservatives in favour of creating the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations.

Privilege

Our position is one of respect, because China went a long time without getting the respect it was due. For a long time, it was not even recognized. It was France, under the insightful General de Gaulle, that finally recognized that China was more than just Taiwan. That was the right thing to do.

• (1940)

Still, we have to be clear-eyed about the fact that human rights abuses are happening and that some serious issues there need to be discussed. I will not go over the timeline or talk about how the doctor, her husband and her students were removed from the lab. I think the timeline is well established. However, that does raise some questions about the labs.

Let us talk about the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg, Canada's only containment level 4 virology lab. This lab handles some of the most dangerous pathogens on the planet. This kind of lab follows very strict protocols to prevent viruses from escaping, which would have disastrous consequences.

This kind of facility also has numerous chemical showers, and employees have to don pressurized rubber suits with external air supplies. Security protocols are highly detailed. Everything is closely monitored and tightly controlled. Access to the lab is tightly controlled, as is egress, of course. We do not want anything getting in that should not be there, and we definitely do not want anything getting out that should not be out. Very few people have access to the lab.

A level 4 lab does not usually work with viruses like COVID-19. That kind of virus is usually handled in a level 3 lab. A level 4 lab typically handles pathogens for which there is no antibody or treatment.

As members know, according to certain conspiracy theories, Dr. Qiu and Dr. Cheng shipped the COVID-19 virus to the Wuhan Institute of Virology. For the reason I just mentioned, this theory does not hold up. The laboratory actually deals with viruses like Ebola, Lassa fever, smallpox, henipaviruses and other similar virus types. It is managed by the Public Health Agency of Canada, and it is the type of laboratory that is designed to prevent pathogens from being released in the event of an earthquake or a fire, for example.

Let us now talk about the laboratories in China. It is quite an interesting subject. China has two level 4 laboratories, the Wuhan Institute of Virology and the Harbin Veterinary Research Institute.

The Wuhan institute was established in collaboration with France. One of its features is that it can handle viruses like the coronavirus, and this is the source of the conspiracy theory that emerged early in the pandemic and recently resurfaced, namely, that the COVID-19 virus escaped from a laboratory. The Wuhan lab holds the world's largest collection of coronaviruses. We know that China has been somewhat lax and that there have been leaks in a number of areas. My colleagues probably remember SARS, or severe acute respiratory syndrome. Well, SARS escaped from level 3 labs in Beijing several times in the past, despite the fact that it posed a very high risk to the population.

Most scientists agree that the virus came from animals rather than the Wuhan lab, although this possibility has not been ruled out.

Let us agree that if this does turn out to be the case, the COVID-19 crisis would truly be to China what Chernobyl was to the Soviet Union. It is a disaster of the same magnitude.

Still, we need to bear in mind one aspect that has been observed and that was mentioned in a 2017 article published in the journal *Nature*. In this article, a number of researchers showed that the Chinese regime its lack of transparency was preventing laboratories from being safe, because it was impossible to criticize the authorities and the senior ranks. If anything went wrong, they might be tempted to cover up what was going on.

At the Wuhan institute, the risk of a leak is significant. In the case at hand, it is surprising that Canada allowed the shipment of virus samples.

• (1945)

It would be very surprising if this shipment caused the virus to make its way from Canada to China. I explained why a little earlier. Nevertheless, it is very surprising that the shipment was allowed.

There is no denying that there are concerns about safety.

In 2005, scientists at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States recreated the Spanish flu in a laboratory so they could study it and better understand how it works. They tested the virus on animals, and the animals quickly died. The U.S. military also took an interest in the virus, studying several sample fragments to sequence the virus's genomes.

China may well be conducting similar tests, but its lack of transparency makes it impossible to know for sure. China is particularly interested in Ebola and is investing heavily in Africa, but those investments could be threatened by a resurgence of the virus.

This research raises concerns about the possible use of other countries' intellectual property. China is known for taking intellectual property from Canada.

In May 2020, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced plans to make a potential Chinese vaccine available to the entire planet. The reality is that China is giving away some doses, but it is also selling them to other countries. As everyone knows, China sells licenses, so it is already much better than pharmaceutical companies in the western world. However, China is using vaccines to pressure Taiwan. For instance, China recently pressured Pfizer to stop distributing the vaccine directly to Taiwan, to force the Taiwanese administration to negotiate with Beijing.

It is important to understand that, generally speaking, in the health context, China is a real expert when it comes to collecting data, especially medical data.

Privilege

Of course, I could go on and on about China's economic and trade strategy, but let us focus on what China refers to in its official communications as the belt and road initiative.

When this initiative was launched a few years ago, it was essentially about transportation infrastructure. However, a health component was added during the pandemic, and a digital component was also developed. In the issue we are concerned with today, that may represent something much bigger that we will have to examine.

China is investing heavily in research and development and in various technologies, such as 5G, data centres and artificial intelligence. It has adopted policies concerning global collection of health data. Private technology firms are extremely integrated with the research arm of the military. China's and Canada's data protection standards are quite different. It is important to know that.

Take the Chinese firm BGI, for example. BGI's headquarters are located in Shenzhen, which is known as the Chinese Silicon Valley. During the COVID-19 pandemic, BGI donated equipment to almost 20 countries, but a dozen or so U.S. states refused them out of fear. They rejected this seemingly generous offer. BGI also has many partnerships with hospitals, universities and research centres.

BGI is listed on the Chinese stock exchange, which is regulated by Beijing. BGI built and manages the China National GeneBank DataBase, which is under government control. This database holds the largest number of genetic and biological samples in the world. BGI sometimes uses the Chinese army's supercomputers to process genetic data. This shows that everything is closely connected: the data collection, the companies, the military and the Chinese government.

• (1950)

The lab at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto analyzes 15,000 COVID-19 test samples every day. In 2020, the lab did not have enough money to pay for equipment, but it received donated equipment from BGI Group. This equipment included an extraction robot that speeds up the process for analyzing COVID-19 tests. The company also installed the equipment and provided training and logistical support. Global Affairs Canada remained silent on the issue.

BGI has an office in Montreal, Quebec, on Avenue du Parc. The company's website claims that this office has been conducting genome sequencing since 2019. However, in an interview with Radio-Canada, BGI denied that this office did sequencing. It even said that the office was closed and that no one worked there. Who is telling the truth, BGI or BGI? Do we believe their website or their official statement? Actually, these are both types of official statements.

As far as the public is aware, there are six BGI sequencers in Canadian universities and research centres, including in Quebec. In Quebec's case, the two devices at McGill University remain BGI's property. McGill University claims that the data is not shared with the company, but it refuses to answer questions on where the data is stored and who is authorized to access it. BGI also has a maintenance agreement regarding the machines. That means that company technicians have access to the machines and can do whatever they like with the data they contain.

Canada is the only country in North America with BGI sequencers. Apart from the equipment, the company has also entered into a scientific collaboration with Genome Canada. It is normal that such an agreement should be confidential. However, there are still two major issues with it, namely data collection and China's commercial power grab in America's biopharmaceutical sector.

We know that China is collecting DNA data and sometimes uses it for repressive purposes. That has been proven and documented. The lab at the Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto that I was talking about earlier claims that no data is shared with BGI. The people at the National Counterintelligence and Security Center in Washington are looking into that, and they are worried about China controlling America's biopharmaceutical industry.

Of course, Washington also has its own imperialistic tendencies and its own ways of using data, algorithms and so on. One empire is criticizing another and creating one of its own. However, that is not the issue.

We can still consider the recent 750-page report that was just submitted to the U.S. Congress and President Joe Biden, in which the National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence also warns the country about these practices.

Did Canada consider those issues too? Presumably not. Unfortunately, the tone that the government is taking today on this motion regarding past events suggests that it is no more prepared to face the present and future than it is the past.

• (1955)

[*English*]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, as I mentioned earlier when the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent was speaking, we have seen a really disturbing pattern in this place with the government's lack of transparency and accountability. There was an order of Parliament to provide these documents.

Thankfully, the Speaker ruled today, as a last line of defence for this Parliament and this democracy, that what the government had done was in fact a breach of parliamentary privilege. That is the reason we are here tonight to debate this issue. It was the Speaker who said that it was up to the opposition to come up with a motion. The motion was presented, yet we heard the indignation of the member for Kingston and the Islands when he spoke about everything except this privilege motion.

I want to ask the hon. member if, in his opinion, he feels this is a fair debate to be having tonight given the systemic pattern of lack of transparency and accountability in this Parliament by the current government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Madam Speaker, it appears extremely clear that the government does not like when we pry into its affairs. We saw that with WE Charity and many other issues.

Although we are more than willing to work together, which is something we should be doing in a time of crisis, it is obvious that the abuse of power is neither warranted nor justifiable. The government's lack of transparency is a blatant, highly reprehensible problem.

[English]

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Madam Speaker, we just heard that other committees were trying to receive information from the government and they failed to get it. We now have a clear ruling from the Speaker. The government's response, in this case, was to send the documents to NSICOP, which we argued was not a committee of the House and answers to the Prime Minister. The Speaker concluded that committee exists outside of Parliament and that the documents submitted to it does not fulfill the order of the House.

Is he satisfied that this is so, that this is the first opportunity we have had to get the government to recognize and fulfill an order of a committee for documents, now made by the House, and that this is the time for the government to comply with these orders and produce the documents?

• (2000)

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Madam Speaker, I will repeat my point very briefly and very simply.

A Parliament has rights and, if it adopts a motion, that motion should be respected. The government should not always be looking for a way to slip through the cracks and play between the lines. At some point, enough is enough. A motion requires that important documents be disclosed, responsibly, of course. This motion must be respected, period.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, my always eloquent riding neighbour, for his speech.

I took three things from his speech. First, my hon. colleague talked about the work in committee and in the House, where the government is acting more like a majority government than a minority one. The government forgot that the voters gave it a minority mandate.

Second, by infringing on our parliamentary rights, the government is behaving according to an archaic monarchical model rather than a true democratic model.

Third, my colleague has clearly outlined our different approaches to international relations. The Bloc Qu b cois vision is different from that of the Liberals and the Conservatives.

Should Quebec not form a country so that we can exercise better control over our borders and national security and so that we can sign our own treaties? Internationally, would it not be important for the country of Quebec have a seat at the United Nations Security Council?

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Madam Speaker, the answer is yes.

Privilege

[English]

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, in his intervention, the member certainly chronicled a large number of concerns regarding China, but ultimately this motion is more about holding our own government to account. The government has said that it is concerned about national security and laid out a plan to have NSICOP do a review, but ultimately, the Speaker ruled that was not a committee of Parliament. Now the government has to come clean, and we want to have the president of the Public Health Agency of Canada come, be censured by the Speaker and then supply the information to the law clerk.

Does the member agree that through that process we will be able to ascertain the government's managerial confidence, while at the same time preserving this country's national security interests?

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Madam Speaker, if I understand my colleague's question, I think he is asking me to repeat what I said in my speech, in other words that we need to strike the right balance between national security and transparency. Of course, I reiterate that this is precisely our position.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a question, because the Liberal member's intervention seems to suggest that the government is not taking this question of privilege seriously. It is up to the Speaker to decide whether there is a *prima facie* question of privilege, and the government does not seem to understand this.

I want to ask my colleague a very simple question. Does the government understand the scope of a question of privilege that has been accepted by the Speaker of the House?

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Madam Speaker, I would say to my colleague that it is up to the government to answer that question. From what I can see, we do not get the sense that they actually grasp the scope of the motion. It is pretty plain and simple. We heard one speech that did not address the question of privilege at all.

After that, we heard a lot of points of order being raised to try to cut others off. We saw that the member wanted to sidestep the questions that were asked and give the kind of answer we are used to seeing from this government, which is a non-answer.

I get the distinct impression that, no, the government does not understand what a privilege motion is.

• (2005)

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I wanted to ask the member about the broader question of research co-operation with the Chinese military, because this is an important values question and a policy question that underlines this debate. One gets the sense there might be information about this co-operation in these documents that the government does not want to see shared.

Privilege

We know now that of the people working at the Winnipeg lab, one in particular was an official from the People's Liberation Army's Academy of Military Medical Sciences. We know there has been interchange and other forms of co-operation between Chinese military institutions and Canadian labs.

When this issue was raised at committee, the health minister seemed sort of broadly comfortable with the fact that this kind of co-operation was happening. However, it is happening in the context that a genocide is taking place. A genocide is being committed by this very same military as we speak, and we know how viruses can be used in military applications.

Can the member share his thoughts as to whether it is right, appropriate and just for the Canadian government to allow Canadian labs to be collaborating with the Chinese military on research that the military might use to harm our interests or to commit human rights violations?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Madam Speaker, in fact, there are a number of things. It is a complex issue. As far as collaboration is concerned, I agree. I said at the beginning of my speech that we should not see China as an enemy, that we should have a dialogue, that China deserves to be treated as a country in its own right. That is not the issue.

Now, we need to be clear on one thing. Economic warfare, and more specifically warfare involving data and information, is the new global dynamic today. Canada's standards in terms of research, data and development are not at all shared by China. When opening up dialogue and co-operation, things need to be made very clear and be monitored extremely closely, as in any form of diplomatic co-operation.

My sense is that Canada is not ready for this truly global, cut-throat competition for research, information and data, and that it ought to be.

[*English*]

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate tonight. I know the member for Kingston and the Islands is not, but I am because I think it is a very important debate. It underscores the extremely seminal basic right that is now recognized fully by our Parliament, the House of Commons and members of the House of Commons, to hold the government to account.

We hear that time and again, but in this government's mind it appears to simply be a cliché, because Liberals seem to be taking the same position that was taken by the Conservative government in 2010.

In 2010, the Conservatives took this position in the House when the Afghanistan committee asked for documents related to detainees who had been captured by Canadian Forces in Afghanistan, turned over to Afghan authorities and subsequently tortured. It was important for the Afghanistan committee to examine this question and determine what was happening, how it may have happened and what the government and military officials knew and did not know. All of those questions were extremely important in terms of Canada's legal obligations under the Geneva convention and in

terms of various extremely serious matters regarding Canada's international affairs and reputation, and all that went with them.

That was more serious, one might argue, than this particular circumstance, yet the government of the day took that position in 2010. I know something about it, because I acted as a member of the Afghanistan committee and participated in debates that were similar to this one in terms of what the powers of committees are and what the powers of the House are versus the executive.

I will read from Speaker Milliken's ruling of April 27, 2010. I participated in the debate and in the argument leading up to it. Speaker Milliken said that:

With regard to the extent of the right, the Chair would like to address the contention of the Minister of Justice, made on March 31, that the order of the House of December 10 is a breach of the constitutional separation of powers between the executive and the legislature.

Speaker Milliken had just concluded that the Chair must conclude that the House did indeed have the right to ask for the documents listed that the order of December 10, 2009, referred to. He went on to say that:

It is the view of the Chair that accepting an unconditional authority of the executive to censor the information provided to Parliament would in fact jeopardize the very separation of powers that is purported to lie at the heart of our parliamentary system and the independence of its constituent parts. Furthermore, it risks diminishing the inherent privileges of the House and its members, which have been earned and must be safeguarded.

That separation of powers is between the executive branch and the legislative branch, which has the constitutional duty to hold the government to account.

In his conclusion, Speaker Milliken said that:

As has been noted earlier, procedural authorities are categorical in repeatedly asserting the powers of the House in ordering the production of documents. No exceptions are made for any category of government documents, even those related to national security.

He goes on to say that:

...it is perfectly within the existing privileges of the House to order production of the documents in question. Bearing in mind that the fundamental role of Parliament is to hold the government to account, as the servant of the House and the protector of its privileges, I cannot agree with the government's interpretation that ordering these documents transgresses the separation of powers and interferes with the spheres of activity of the executive branch.

That is a powerful statement. It resulted in an order being made for the production of documents by the Speaker, and it was reaffirmed today by the current Speaker in his ruling. I think it will go down in history, as well as Speaker Milliken's ruling, with the previous ruling having been followed in other legislatures for its authority.

Privilege

● (2010)

The current situation is not much different. Obviously the circumstances are different, but the principle is fully the same about who ultimately has the authority to access the documents, to decide how to dispose of them and to decide how to protect national interests in the name of security. The Speaker, in my opinion, made a very good, strong ruling dealing with the questions put before him and found a *prima facie* case of a breach of the rules of Parliament. Having found that, the appropriate motion was expected to be made. He found that the motion that was offered by the Conservatives was not in keeping with the precedents of the House. As a result, a break was taken so that the motion could be revised.

The other issue decided by the Speaker in his ruling today was with regard to a solution. I think that, as the member for Kingston and the Islands said, there is clearly a responsibility that goes with that. That responsibility is for the House to take and make measures to ensure the security of the documents. It is up to the House to do that. The House has done so in the motion that was made before it. The alternative, presented by the government in its response, suggested that it should go before the national security committee of parliamentarians. That was the government's solution. From everything that I know, this was the first time the government and the House proposed how they would deal with the question of Speaker Milliken's ruling. The committee was set up just for situations like that.

I first heard about that when the government responded to questions about why it did not comply with orders of the House made on June 2, as well as with the March 31 and May 10 orders of the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations. That was the first time it was presented, to my knowledge, as to why NSICOP had been set up. As the Speaker ruled, this was not an answer as to how the House should deal with questions of national security if that is not what the House determined.

It has been argued at the Canada-China committee, and in the House here tonight, that the NSICOP committee is made up of members of Parliament and members of the Senate. It involves two branches of Parliament but is not a committee of Parliament. It says so right in this act. Members are appointed by the Governor in Council, which is the cabinet, and they are appointed to serve "during pleasure", which means they can be removed at time. NSICOP also makes its reports to the Prime Minister, who has the right to demand that the reports be changed and has the right to withhold documents from the committee, and all of the other things that the executive branch has in dealing with the bodies it creates.

The Speaker quite rightly concluded, when this argument was presented to him, that the act makes it clear that it is not a committee of Parliament. He stated that:

It exists outside of Parliament.

In these circumstances, the Chair cannot conclude that the documents submitted to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians fulfill an order of this House or of its committees.

He goes on to say:

Nothing in the act affects or limits the privileges of the House to order the production of documents, even those with national security implications. It is for the House and not for the government to decide how such documents are to be reviewed and what safeguards to put in place, if any.

● (2015)

That is what has happened. The House itself has passed a motion that provides for safeguards, provides for a method of dealing with that, and that was something that was discussed by Speaker Milliken and was also recognized by the Speaker. The Speaker, when he was dealing with this matter, said in his review of Speaker Milliken's April 27, 2010, ruling that Speaker Milliken was still concerned even after he found that there was a failure to deliver unredacted documents to the House. He said he was still concerned about the issues raised.

As the Speaker said today, Speaker Milliken:

...deemed it wise to ask members to continue their discussions for a limited period of time before allowing the member who had initially raised the question of privilege to move the usual motion for debate. Indeed, the order in question offered no measure to protect the confidential information contained in the required documents....

He went on to suggest some of the ways that this could be done. He suggested that they have some discussions about that. He said the results of these discussions would in no way affect his ruling but that "the Speaker's intention was simply to offer a final delay to allow time to reach a compromise."

Then he went on to say something else, and this is the contention that the member for Kingston and the Islands made. It was that there was no protection made for security. He said:

In the current situation, the order adopted provides that the office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel first examine the documents, redact them using specific criteria and discuss them with the members of the Special Committee in camera. The Minister of Health was also called to appear, and did so on Monday, June 14, in an effort to continue some form of dialogue. It is...not up to the Chair to [decide] the extent of the measures taken, but to note that they were considered. There is thus no reason to allow an additional delay.

We did have the Minister of Health at the Canada-China committee on Monday. The minister was asked many times to acknowledge that the NSICOP committee was not a parliamentary committee, and she deferred on answering that question and just said that it had security privileges.

That is not an answer to the question, and it is clear that the Speaker of the House has acknowledged that the excuse being offered by the government is not valid, that it is not acceptable that the NSICOP committee be the depository of these documents, that in fact the motion made today in the usual form is in order for this House to deal with, and that it is in order for this House to pass this motion. This motion is one that the House is entitled to make and it is up to the House to decide whether to accept the motion or not.

I think the matter is very simple. I am not going to go deeply into the question as to why these documents are necessary. They are necessary clearly because the Canada-China committee requires them in order to conduct its duties and carry out its responsibilities to hold the government accountable and to look into the relationship between Canada and China. Those are specifically its obligations under the motion creating that special committee.

Privilege

The committee has been doing that. It has been looking at the security issues and dealings between the microbiology lab in Winnipeg and the labs in China that were China's responsibility. They were dealing with very serious and dangerous viruses and with security measures to be undertaken in order to properly look after the security of the people of Canada, the security of the labs and the security of public health.

That is a simple matter, well within the jurisdiction of the committee under its mandate, and it is up to the committee to decide what papers it needs to do that. Having had the support of the committee and the support of the House, it is the responsibility of government now to fulfill that obligation and make those documents available in the manner that has been suggested.

● (2020)

The government refuses to do that. This motion is required in order to purge the finding of contempt on the Public Health Agency of Canada that will be found if the motion is passed. It will be found in contempt for its failure to obey the order of the House and produce the documents so that they can go to the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel in order for him to carry out his function of helping to redact the documents and follow through on the motion put before the House.

That is all I wish to say. This is an extremely important issue. It involves the basic understanding of how Parliament works and the responsibilities members elected to the House undertake when they take their own oaths of office. In fact, it is a function of our democratic society that the House has the ultimate power and that the executive is to be held to account by the House of Commons.

If it were not for that, we would not have a democracy but a rule by the cabinet, by the executive, and not by the House of Commons, by the people who are elected directly by the electors. That is our democratic system. This is a function of upholding that democratic system. It is a sacred trust that we have, by which we are required to carry out and support the efforts of our committees and the work we are doing by requiring under this motion that these documents be produced.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I certainly want to thank the member for his presentation tonight. Last night he also made a presentation in a just-in-case speech, so I want to thank the member for his service.

More importantly, the issues he spoke about were more about his commitment to this democracy and to this House. I think there is no greater honour than to be called a House of Commons person, because this institution is important.

When it comes to our duty to hold the government to account, if we are not part of the executive, the cabinet, as was impressed on me in my first year in this place, we have a responsibility to hold it accountable. That is how we have responsible government.

Would the member agree that by supporting the motion, we would not just be protecting the rights of this chamber but also giving information? The government has stonewalled us at every attempt to get this information so that we can truly know whether there was a lack of confidence in the execution of its duties or whether there were legitimate national security reasons that it

would not say anything. Do the backbenchers on the Liberal side not deserve to know their own government's confidence or lack thereof?

When we present a motion such as this, do we not put forward every member's duties by giving them the information to hold the government to account?

● (2025)

Mr. Jack Harris: Madam Speaker, that is an excellent question asked by the member, who is very adept at making these arguments in Parliament and understands the role of every member of the House. He makes the interesting point that every member on both sides of the House who is not in the cabinet also has a duty to hold the government to account.

What is interesting in this case is that the resolutions that are referred to in the motion, the resolutions of March 31 and May 10, which were adopted by the committee, were adopted unanimously. The Liberal members of that committee, the Conservative members of that committee, the Bloc member of that committee and the NDP member of that committee all supported a notion that these documents must be made available because there was an expression of disbelief in the opinion being offered to the committee that these documents needed to be withheld for national security and other reasons, including privacy.

That is something that is important to know. It is that this committee was unanimously seeking to hold the government to account and was unanimously seeking to be able to examine the required papers to do so. It is a very important point.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, first, I would like to say hello to the member for St. John's East, in Newfoundland and Labrador; I sincerely hope that he has a very happy retirement after he leaves Parliament. I congratulate him on all the work he has done, and he can leave with his head held high.

I heard two things in his speech. One thing he talked about was Canada's reputation abroad. I would like to hear him speak about the fact that, when it comes to international relations and co-operation, Canada is not back. The loss of influence in this area, which began under the Conservatives, continues. No, Canada is not back.

He also spoke about the importance of denying our own privilege as parliamentarians to access documents. My colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot clearly demonstrated the balance that could have been struck in committee between this vital issue of national security and the need to have access to these critically important documents. Again, this is proof of the Liberal government's contempt for the opposition parties.

I will leave it up to my colleague to decide whether he wants to answer the first or the second part of my question.

Privilege

[*English*]

Mr. Jack Harris: Madam Speaker, on whether Canada is back or not, Canada is back, but in what form? I guess that is the question. We could certainly debate that. The expectation was that Canada would be different. That was the promise of the Prime Minister back in 2015. We have not seen a lot of evidence of that, and I believe we are struggling to retain or regain the reputation that we once had.

However, I would rather answer the second question, which was about whether or not the government is refusing to comply. Obviously the Liberals have been stonewalling the attempt to get the information. The government has continued to do that and is continuing to do it here tonight. It has given no indication that it wishes to compromise or find a way to do this in a way that would work.

The Liberals have clearly offered nothing, only the non-response of having a committee that is not of this Parliament deal with these documents. The government is refusing to comply tonight, instead of agreeing with the motion and moving on.

● (2030)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for St. John's East for his speech. He brings such a lot of experience and wisdom to this place, especially around this subject, which he knows well.

We are debating a motion of privilege here tonight, which seems to bring up a pattern of behaviour from the government. It is a pattern of a lack of transparency and a lack of openness. In terms of committees, we have seen the government thwart the work of committees through filibusters to stop the production of documents and to stop important witnesses from coming forward.

We have also seen a pattern of ignoring the will of the House. Just last week we had a unanimous motion in the House that, among other things, asked the government to stop taking indigenous kids to court. Monday the government was back, taking indigenous kids to court.

Would the member like to comment on this pattern?

Mr. Jack Harris: Madam Speaker, there is clearly a pattern that has emerged over the last number of months. At the same time that the Liberals are complaining that business is being held up, they have been holding up the business of committees by filibustering one after another, sometimes for days at a time, making it difficult for the committees to do their work.

Yes, this is a pattern. It is a pattern of the Liberals saying one thing and doing another. Essentially they are saying that they want to move business through the House; we want to move business through the House too. There are lots of bills that are important to be passed. We want to see Bill C-12 pass. We want to see Bill C-6 pass. We want to see Bill C-10 pass. There is legislation that needs to be passed because there is an urgent need for it. However, instead of doing that, the Liberals are prolonging this debate, and in committees they are filibustering in unnecessary ways when there is business to be done.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member touched on a number of very important points about why this debate is important and how concerning the flippant nature of the Liberals is on this very serious issue.

I would, however, like to ask the member a specific question. The government has referred this issue to NSICOP. Some of the concerns that have been brought up are related to the structure of that committee, which is a committee of parliamentarians and not a committee of this House. This is a manifestation of some of the concerns that were brought forward when the initial act that created NSICOP was debated, and how the pinnacle of what was claimed to be accountability was left in the hands of the Prime Minister.

I wonder if the hon. member for St. John's East would have further comments on that.

Mr. Jack Harris: Madam Speaker, that committee has a particular role. The concern at the time was that we had these secret investigative bodies, like CSIS, the CSE and the RCMP security division, conducting secret operations on behalf of the government. They were reporting directly to the Prime Minister, and there was no oversight.

We had obviously gotten into trouble in the past with some of the behaviours of our security services that were inappropriate, doing things they should not have done, such as breaking the law, breaking various conventions and acting in a manner that was supportive of torture in certain cases, and the Canadian government was sued.

Therefore, the purpose of that was to review what went on in these agencies and make reports to provide that oversight, not to do the kind of job we are talking about here.

● (2035)

Hon. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as chair of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, I want to provide this evening an overview of the committee's composition, mandate and functions, given there have been numerous recent references to NSICOP in the House. I speak this evening exclusively as the chair of our non-partisan committee.

To begin, I wish to offer my sincere thanks on behalf of our committee to our out-going members, the member for Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, the member for Pickering—Uxbridge and the member for Provencher, all valuable members of our committee who offered their considered wisdom, enlivened our debates and provided an important contribution to our work.

[*Translation*]

I would also like to welcome our new committee members. We look forward to working with the member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, the member for Kootenay—Columbia, the member for London—Centre—North, the member for Mississauga—Erin Mills and the member for Montarville.

The committee was established in June 2017 with the passage of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians Act. In November of that year, the first committee members were appointed. After the 2019 federal election, the committee was reconstituted in February 2020, and yesterday its membership was again updated.

*Privilege**[English]*

The committee was set up to fill a gap in Canada's national security review framework: first, to give parliamentarians the necessary clearances to conduct reviews of the security and intelligence community drawn from highly classified information; and second, to create a body that could look across the community at a range of issues without being constrained by the mandate of individual organizations or the narrow focus of their review bodies.

The act that established NSICOP is specific and very clear. It lays out, with precision, the committee's membership, the appointment process, members' security obligations, the rights and limits to access information for the committee's work, procedural rules and reporting obligations.

The act also provides that the appropriate committees of the House and the other place must comprehensively review its provisions and its operation five years after its coming into force, which will be in 2022.

Our committee is unprecedented in Canadian parliamentary history. It is unique in terms of our security clearances, the physical requirements of our secure workspaces and our structure. The nature of the committee is multi-party, bicameral, and a membership with a broad range of experience brings a unique perspective to these important issues. We act as a proxy group for Parliament and for Canadians in examining issues related to national security and intelligence.

[Translation]

The committee consists of a chair and up to 10 other members, all of whom are members of one of the two Houses of Parliament. Up to three members may come from the other place and up to eight members may come from the House. No more than five of them can be members of the government, which means that government members never form a majority. With yesterday's announcement, we now have our full complement in place with eight House members and three senators.

[English]

Members all hold a top secret security clearance, have sworn an oath and are permanently bound to secrecy under the Security of Information Act. In the course of its work, the committee may review highly classified information with only a few narrow exceptions. The committee is not entitled to have access to cabinet confidences, to information protected by the Witness Protection Program Act, to information relating to the identity of confidential sources and to information relating directly to an ongoing law enforcement investigation.

We cannot claim parliamentary privilege in the case of unauthorized disclosure of classified information. That is a point I want to emphasize. Members of the committee, myself included, are necessarily circumspect in what we can say in Parliament and in public. It also means that NSICOP members are subject to prosecution under the Security of Information Act should they disclose information they learned in the course of their duties on the committee.

● (2040)

[Translation]

The National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians is mandated to review the legislative, regulatory, policy, financial and administrative frameworks for national security and intelligence. It may also review any activity carried out by a department that relates to national security or intelligence.

[English]

Finally, the committee may review any matter relating to national security or intelligence that a minister refers to the committee.

NSICOP reports are unanimous and non-partisan. The committee prepares and finalizes its reports through consensus, following painstaking deliberations, and all members agree on final content, assessments and recommendations. NSICOP's reports are informed by the documents that departments and agencies undertaking national security and intelligence activities must provide as well as by the committee's meetings with relevant officials, outside experts and members of civil society.

[Translation]

The workload is heavy. Normally, the committee meets for eight hours a week and sits extra hours when it needs to examine classified documents in a designated secure workspace. Committee members often meet during the weeks when the House is not sitting, as well as during the summer.

[English]

NSICOP provides an annual report to the Prime Minister that includes its substantive reviews as well as the committee's recommendations. The Prime Minister may then direct that the committee prepare a revised version of its report. The information to be revised is set out clearly in the act. It is information the disclosure of which would be injurious to national security, to national defence or to international relations, or is information that is protected by litigation privilege, or by solicitor-client privilege or the professional secrecy of advocates and notaries.

There are no other reasons under which a prime minister may direct the committee to remove information from its reports. Information cannot be redacted because it may be embarrassing to or critical of any government.

The redaction process is similar to the one used by the government when determining what information can be released in court proceedings, typically under section 38 of the Canada Evidence Act. The Prime Minister tables the revised report in Parliament, and the report is referred to parliamentary committees in both Houses, as required by our statute.

The committee may also submit a special report to the Prime Minister on any matter related to its mandate. Unless the committee has notified the Prime Minister of its intention to prepare a summary of the special report, it also is revised if necessary and tabled and referred in the same manner as the annual reports.

This is very similar to the process followed by—

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I appreciate the member's service on that committee, but we are here to debate a specific motion. He has yet to address this. He is giving us background of his committee, of which I am sure he is proud. Perhaps, Madam Speaker, you could get him to come to the motion.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I appreciate the hon. member's point of order. I want to remind members that when they are debating or presenting in the House, they have to be addressing the subject matter at hand, or mentioning the subject matter at hand or portions of it. I know there is some latitude in the speeches, but I want to remind the hon. member and all members that when they are making their speeches, to please ensure they keep in mind the subject matter they are actually debating.

The hon. member for Ottawa South.

• (2045)

Hon. David McQuinty: Madam Speaker, I was saying that this is very similar to the process followed by the United Kingdom's intelligence and security committee, which must submit its annual and special reports to the prime minister for consultation and review prior to tabling, identifying at that time any redactions that have been made on national security grounds.

[Translation]

Since 2017, we have completed seven studies and produced three annual reports and two special reports. Every member of Parliament and every senator recently received paper copies of our 2020 annual report. This report and the others are also available on our website.

[English]

The very important thing for the House to note is that in each instance, NSICOP members reviewed and assessed information up to the government's highest classification. The committee did so with the utmost discretion, arriving at its findings and recommendations independently. Those were then provided to the Prime Minister and responsible ministers.

In our 2018 inaugural annual report, we provided a functional overview of the security and intelligence community, including the most significant national security threats as described by key members of the security and intelligence community. These were terrorism, espionage and foreign interference, cyber-threats, major organized crime and weapons of mass destruction.

Also in 2018, the committee reviewed the government's process for setting intelligence priorities as well as the intelligence activities of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces.

Privilege

[Translation]

We recognized that defence intelligence activities are essential to the safety and security of our armed forces and the success of Canadian military missions, including overseas operations. The committee recommended, among other things, that the government seriously consider providing explicit legislative authority to the conduct of defence intelligence activities.

[English]

The committee also presented its first special report in 2018 regarding the allegations associated with the Prime Minister's official visit to India. One recommendation repeated in the subsequent review of the government response to foreign interference was that members of Parliament and senators be briefed upon being sworn in, and regularly thereafter, on the risks of foreign interference and extremism in Canada.

[Translation]

In 2019, the committee conducted a review of diversity and inclusion in the security and intelligence community. The review provided a baseline assessment of the diversity and inclusion of certain designated groups in the security and intelligence community. On the whole, it was revealed that there was not as much representation there as in the rest of the Canadian public service and that the rates of harassment and discrimination remained unacceptable. We recommended that the situation be re-examined in three to five years in order to assess progress. We also recommended improving data collection and analysis and developing a common performance measurement framework.

[English]

NSICOP also reviewed the government's response to the serious challenge of foreign interference. We found that the government's response to the threat was done on a case-by-case, even ad hoc, basis and that our engagement with other levels of government and the Canadian public was limited. In its review, the committee called for a whole-of-government strategy to counter foreign interference and build institutional and public resilience. We were specific in our recommendation about what such a strategy should include and we further recommended that the government support the strategy through sustained central leadership and coordination.

[Translation]

Finally, the committee reviewed the national security and intelligence activities of the Canada Border Services Agency. On the whole, we noticed that the powers that the CBSA has for conducting national security and intelligence activities are clear, well regulated and supported by several acts. However, the CBSA did not receive any instructions from the minister for conducting critical activities related to national security and intelligence. This situation was inconsistent with the practices of CSIS and the RCMP and, in the committee's view, represented a failure of ministerial accountability.

Privilege

● (2050)

The committee recommended that the Minister of Public Safety provide CBSA directions in writing with regard to sensitive national security and intelligence activities.

[*English*]

That same year, the committee also prepared a special report on the collection, use, retention and dissemination of information on Canadians in the context of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces defence intelligence—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola is rising on another point of order.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Five minutes ago I raised a point of order with you, and you asked the member to be relevant. He is basically reviewing the annual reports of his committee, which is not the subject of tonight's debate.

He is not a rookie. He certainly has a committee role that is important, but I would ask you to rule whether he is being relevant to the issue or simply disregarding your ruling and this House.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, on that same point of order, the entire premise of the government's position hinges on the committee the member represents. The entire argument from the government has to do specifically with this committee, so the member explaining why this committee is the important committee for this is extremely relevant to the argument that the government made.

I would encourage the Speaker to allow him to continue his speech.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Once again, I appreciate the points of order. I would like to remind members that the question of privilege hinges on the motion and, therefore, there is some latitude.

However, the hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola is correct that the hon. member for Ottawa South must ensure that his speech revolves around the question of privilege. That discussion needs to be there. I would suggest the hon. member ensure that his speech is relevant and that he references the motion on the question of privilege.

The hon. member for Ottawa South.

Hon. David McGuinty: Madam Speaker, I will not be long and the relevance will become quite evident.

Following our examination of the documents provided to the committee and our meetings with DND CAF officials, the committee formed an opinion that DND intelligence activities conducted as part of overseas operations may not be in compliance with the Privacy Act. The committee referred this matter to the Attorney General pursuant to its obligation under section 31.1 of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians Act, which requires it to make such referral when, in its opinion, an activity may not be in compliance with the law.

The review built on the committee's 2018 recommendation that the government give serious consideration to providing explicit leg-

islative authority to the conduct of defence intelligence activities and went further in recommending that the Minister of National Defence introduce legislation governing defence intelligence activities.

[*Translation*]

In 2020, members of the committee, like all Canadians, were faced with the unprecedented situation of the pandemic. As such, the committee decided to provide the Prime Minister the only consolidated overview of threats to Canada's national security.

[*English*]

The committee found that the threats posed by organized crime and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction did not fundamentally—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is a point of order from the hon. member for York—Simcoe.

Mr. Scot Davidson: Madam Speaker, I was wondering if the hon. member could table the report that he is reading, or go on to the report about the Lake Simcoe clean-up fund, which we are waiting for in York—Simcoe. We would love to hear that.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is not really a point of order. I would say it is debate.

I again want to remind the hon. member for Ottawa South that he should ensure his speech is relevant. I will read the motion on the question of privilege, which states:

That this House find the Public Health Agency of Canada to be in contempt for its failure to obey the Order of the House, adopted on June 2, 2021, as well as the orders of the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations, adopted on March 31 and May 10, 2021, and, accordingly, orders its President to attend at the Bar of the House....

Does the hon. member for Ottawa South want me to continue, or does he have the motion before him? Will he make sure that his speech is relevant to it?

● (2055)

Hon. David McGuinty: I have the motion, and as I was saying earlier—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Perfect. I would suggest he references it every once in a while during his speech.

The hon. member for Ottawa South has the floor.

Hon. David McGuinty: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your indulgence.

The committee, of course, has been reviewing the major threats for the country, such as terrorism, espionage, foreign interference and cyber actors, for example. We have reported very openly now for Canadians on the question of terrorism, the growth of ideologically motivated violent extremists, the rise of groups embracing xenophobic violence, anti-authority violence and gender-driven violence. We have seen a growing number of examples of neo-Nazis, white supremacists, misogynist groups and individuals planning or conducting attacks, a trend which is mirrored around the world.

Finally, while the restrictions imposed as part of the COVID lockdowns, such as limitations on travel, have disrupted terrorism facilitation efforts, the pandemic and the concurrent protests increased anti-government rhetoric connected to ideologically motivated violent extremism.

In conclusion, the point of this evening's speech is to illustrate there is a highly functioning committee composed of good members from all sides of the House of Commons and of course members from the other place as well. It has been working well now for over three and a half years, has produced seven fundamental reviews and three annual reports. I have tried to set out for members, colleagues and Canadians how we conduct reviews under the legislation, when we are asked to redact, how we are asked to redact and the limitations on being asked to redact.

The message I want to leave with all parliamentarians is the following: Committee members form a dedicated non-partisan group of parliamentarians from both houses who take pride in undertaking serious work on serious national security and intelligence issues.

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to correct the member. In his speech, he talked about the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians as a proxy of Parliament. I remind him that, unlike similar bodies in other Five Eyes countries, such as the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament in the U.K. or the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security in Australia, the NSICOP is not a special committee nor a standing committee of the Parliament of Canada.

It is, in fact, part of the executive of government. Therefore, it does not report to the House, it reports to the Prime Minister.

Hon. David McGuinty: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is partly correct and partly incorrect. NSICOP is located halfway between Parliament and the executive. The committee is housed within the executive body of government and does report to the Prime Minister, but it is composed of parliamentarians. It is not bound by the procedural rules of parliamentary committees and operates at arm's length.

However, the Five Eyes organizations the member refers to for comparative purposes have their own variations on structure. As I mentioned in my speech, the ISC in the United Kingdom has a very similar, if not identical, reporting relationship with its Prime Minister, who also is involved in redactions of reports before those reports are made public by being tabled in their house, just as our reports here are made public by tabling through the Prime Minister.

Committee members from all political stripes contribute their unique perspectives as legislators to national security and intelligence matters. They have a range of experience, but together they represent perspectives from across this country.

• (2100)

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Madam Speaker, the suggestion that this committee is appropriate was basically rejected by the Speaker in his ruling today. In reference to the National Security Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, he said:

However, as the members for Louis-Saint-Laurent and St. John's East have pointed out, the act also makes clear that, despite its composition, this body is not a committee of Parliament. It exists outside of Parliament. In these circumstances, the

Privilege

Chair cannot conclude that the documents submitted to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians fulfills an order of this House or of its committees.

That is very clear, and I invite you to refute that ruling.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am not going to refute it. I will ask the hon. member to do that.

However, before I ask the hon. member to do that, I am going to stop the clock and ask him to maybe unplug and then plug in his mike again. There seems to be an issue for the interpreters. If he could do that and then maybe give me a quick test.

We can continue, and if there is an issue, I will raise it again.

The hon. member for Ottawa South.

Hon. David McGuinty: Madam Speaker, as I have noted in my remarks, the NSICOP Act allows the committee to review any matter relating to national security or intelligence that a minister of the Crown refers to it. The committee carefully deliberates before beginning one of its reviews, and it undertakes them on a very consensus basis. Deliberations can include discussions with relevant officials or with other review agencies or open-source research. The committee, of course, posts the launch of each of its reviews on its website.

I can confirm this evening that the committee has received a letter of referral from the Minister of Health. I can also confirm that the committee has received documents forwarded by the Public Health Agency of Canada in unredacted form.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency), Lib.): Madam Speaker, given it is almost summer, I hope members will indulge me before I ask my question.

As this may be my last chance to speak before the break, I would like to thank my staff for their hard work over the years, especially during the pandemic, which has added additional stress for everyone. I thank my Whitehorse team, Susan Moorhead Mooney, Ellen MacDonald and Alisha Khalik, as well as my Ottawa team, Aaron Casselman and Brad Weston. Being the MP for Yukon has been the honour of my life, and I want to thank Yukoners for continuing to put their faith in me year after year.

My question is related to the point of privilege and on which committee this should go to.

Privilege

I was very excited when NSICOP was created, as I thought long before that we really needed it. I assume that previously many of the most serious safety issues for Canada and security issues for Canadians were not being dealt with by parliamentarians because they did not have the right security clearance. However, the member's report suggests that has been much improved since the committee was created. From the reports he outlined tonight, I would like the member to confirm that it is true, that these serious issues—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Ottawa South.

Hon. David McGuinty: Madam Speaker, to my colleague for Yukon, maybe I will take a moment to go back to a theme that I think is important to tonight's debate, and that is the question of whether the Prime Minister may direct a committee to revise its reports, and he may, but the discretion to do so is not unlimited.

The Prime Minister may only direct NSICOP to remove information that would be injurious to national security, national defence or international relations where that is a matter of solicitor-client privilege. The use of the word "would" in the legislation is a high bar. The process that determines which information qualifies is modelled on the process used by the Federal Court to redact information from public decisions. Finally, on that point, since the creation of the committee and throughout our seven comprehensive reviews, the government has never directed the committee to remove information from a report that was not legitimately injurious.

• (2105)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a quick comment and then two brief questions.

First of all, I want to congratulate the member for completely ignoring the question before the House today. He read his way right through it.

Second, the member did give a very good, non-partisan overview of his committee, and so I would ask if he would be willing to come to my rotary club to give that presentation. We do not talk politics at our rotary club.

Finally, in his capacity as the member of Parliament for Ottawa South, will he be voting yea or nay for the actual motion?

Hon. David McGuinty: Madam Speaker, the member's question gives me an opportunity to come back to an important theme that runs through the debate going on right now, which NSICOP members have been scrupulously careful not to directly participate in because of our special responsibilities. I mentioned the significant constraints that we all carry with respect to sharing information and the fact that our parliamentary privilege is waived in the context of the work we undertake. I know the member understands that and respects it.

I want to add to comments I made earlier, for his benefit and for the House's benefit, on government direction to the committee, a theme that has been raised in different places. The government has never pressured the committee to select or avoid a topic for review. It has never pressured the committee to change a finding or a recommendation. I think all members of our NSICOP committee

would agree that we jealously guard the integrity and independence of the committee because we are seized with such profoundly important responsibilities in the area of national security and intelligence.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will give our hon. colleague a second chance to answer my Conservative colleague's question, since he just failed to answer it.

Will he vote in favour of the motion, yes or no?

[*English*]

Hon. David McGuinty: Madam Speaker, I will wrap up my presence this evening in the House, which was for sharing the work of NSICOP: the membership, the act, the powers it possesses, the restrictions, its role and its mandate.

I really want to thank all of the members who have served on the committee since the committee was created three and a half years ago. I really want to welcome the new members from the Bloc Québécois, the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party, who are joining other members, including a member from the NDP, and three senators. I am anxious for us to come together to continue to serve the Canadian people by taking on this enormous responsibility and sharing our findings with parliamentarians from all sides of the House.

We think we have an important role to play, and we believe we are acquitting ourselves reasonably well. However, we are always open to suggestions for improvement. I would ask the House to consider that there is a mandatory five-year review of the legislation that created NSICOP. It will be up for review in 2022, and I know all members of the committee would very much appreciate good guidance and recommendations for improvement in the way we operate.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Madam Speaker, the motion on the floor of the House tonight asks the House to find the Public Health Agency of Canada to be in contempt for its failure to obey three orders, one being an order of the House and the other two being orders of the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations, and to order the president of the Public Health Agency of Canada to appear at the bar of the House to receive a formal admonishment and deliver the unredacted documents ordered by the House.

The issue in front of us today is simple. Has the government complied with the order made by the House on June 2 of this year and the two orders made by the special committee on March 31 and May 10 of this year, orders which mandated that the government provide the unredacted documents concerning the government's National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg, Manitoba? The answer is clearly no.

These three orders are binding. They are not resolutions of the House or its committees. They are not an expression of the opinion of the House or of its committee. They are orders that must be complied with, just as Canadians have been required to comply with the public health orders of the government during the last 15 months of the pandemic, orders that concerned quarantines, movement, mask-wearing and many other things.

Since the adoption of the order on June 2, the government has said it has given the unredacted documents to NSICOP. That is not where the House order specified the unredacted documents be delivered to. The House order was clear. In part (a) it states:

(a) these documents shall be deposited with the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel, in both official languages, within 48 hours of the adoption of this order

NSICOP is not the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel. It is that simple. The government does not get to decide what part of a binding House order it gets to comply with and what part of a binding House order it gets to ignore, just as Canadians do not get to decide what part of quarantine orders they get to comply with and what part of quarantine orders they get to ignore.

Let us set aside for a moment the fact that the House order compels the government to deliver the documents to the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel. Let us set aside for a moment that House order. Let us think about, in general terms, in the absence of these three orders, whether or not NSICOP is the appropriate place to hold the government accountable.

In our Constitution there is only one place to which the government is accountable and that is the House of Commons. We do not elect governments in Canada. We elect a legislature of 338 members, out of which a prime minister and government are appointed by the Governor General, on the assessment of the Governor General as to which member has the support of the majority of the members of the House. That is why this place is the only place in the land where the confidence convention exists.

The government's accountability to the House is not just a singular moment when it is appointed based on that assessment. The government's accountability to the House is not just the confidence convention. It is the daily and ongoing proceedings of the House and its committees, through question period, through committees, through debate, through votes and through so many other proceedings.

One reason that NSICOP is not the right place to hold the government accountable is that NSICOP is not a committee of this place. It is not a committee of the other place. It is not a committee of Parliament.

The act that governs NSICOP is the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians Act, and in subsection 4(3), under "Not a committee of Parliament", it states:

The Committee is not a committee of either House of Parliament or of both Houses.

• (2110)

Not only is it not a committee of Parliament, but MPs and senators on NSICOP actually give up their parliamentary rights. Subsection 12(1) of the act says:

Privilege

Despite any other law, no member or former member of the Committee may claim immunity based on parliamentary privilege in a proceeding against them in relation to a contravention of subsection 11(1) or of a provision of the Security of Information Act or in relation to any other proceeding arising from any disclosure of information that is prohibited under that subsection.

Furthermore, subsection 5(1) of the act governing the committee says:

The members of the Committee are to be appointed by the Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the Prime Minister, to hold office during pleasure until the dissolution of Parliament following their appointment.

In other words, members of NSICOP hold office at the pleasure of the Prime Minister.

Subsection 6(1) of the act says:

The Governor in Council is to designate the Chair of the Committee from among the members of the Committee, on the recommendation of the Prime Minister.

In other words, the Prime Minister decides who will chair the committee.

Subsection 16(1) gives the minister the authority to refuse information requested by the committee. Paragraph 8(1)(b) gives a minister the right to block the committee's review of any matter. Subsection 21(5) gives the Prime Minister the power to direct the committee to revise reports and remove information. It says:

If, after consulting the Chair of the Committee, the Prime Minister is of the opinion that information in an annual or special report is information the disclosure of which would be injurious to national security, national defence or international relations or is information that is protected by litigation privilege or by solicitor-client privilege or the professional secrecy of advocates and notaries, the Prime Minister may direct the Committee to submit to the Prime Minister a revised version of the annual or special report that does not contain that information.

These provisions allowing the Prime Minister to direct the committee to revise reports on the Prime Minister's opinion that information is injurious to national security, national defence, international relations or solicitor-client privilege are so broad and all-encompassing that they give the Prime Minister great latitude to see reports revised that might be embarrassing to the government.

NSICOP is not a committee of Parliament. Its members give up the rights they have as parliamentarians. Its members and its chair serve at the pleasure of the Prime Minister. Any minister has the broad latitude to refuse the committee information and to block a committee's review, and the Prime Minister has the broad power to change committee reports before they are made public.

All of this is not new. It is the exact criticism Information Commissioner Suzanne Legault gave in her testimony about Bill C-22, which passed in the last Parliament and now governs this committee. Clearly it is the wrong committee to hold the government accountable. It is like the fox guarding the henhouse, and that is why it is the wrong committee for the redacted documents to be sent to.

Privilege

The argument I have just made about NSICOP being the wrong committee is really beside the point, because the three orders of the House and its special committee are clear. The unredacted documents are to be sent to the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel, not to NSICOP.

I have heard the government make reference to the fact that NSICOP is similar to committees that exist in other democracies. That is not accurate. NSICOP is not similar to the U.K.'s Intelligence and Security Committee. Unlike NSICOP, the U.K.'s Intelligence and Security Committee is not under the control of the British prime minister. In addition, the U.K.'s Intelligence and Security Committee is a committee of Parliament. It consists of nine members, one of whom is the chair. While the prime minister nominates candidates for the committee, both houses of Parliament must confirm their respective parliamentarians, and both the House of Commons and the House of Lords have the power to reject the nominated candidates. Also, the chair of the committee is not appointed on the recommendation of the prime minister, but is elected by committee members at the first meeting of the committee.

• (2115)

As a result, the U.K.'s Intelligence and Security Committee has autonomy from the Prime Minister and the government. It is a committee of Parliament, with the ability to hold the British government accountable.

The government has said it will not hand over the documents because it is concerned about national security. That argument is not cogent, because in all three orders of the House and its special committee, a provision was made to protect national security or any details of an ongoing criminal investigation. In the order adopted by this House on June 2, paragraph (d) says:

(d) the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel shall confidentially review the documents with a view to redacting information which, in his opinion, could reasonably be expected to compromise national security or reveal details of an ongoing criminal investigation, other than the existence of an investigation;

There is a difference between the three orders with respect to the Winnipeg lab documents and the House order of December 2009 that required the previous Conservative government to hand over documents concerning Afghan detainees. The difference is this. All three orders of this House and its special committee in this Parliament regarding the Winnipeg lab documents have provisions to protect national security and any details of an ongoing criminal investigation. The House order of December 2009, which had been moved by Mr. Dosanjh on December 10, 2009, contained no such provisions. It simply ordered the government to hand over the documents about Afghan detainees in their original and uncensored form forthwith, which meant they would have to be immediately and publicly released without any redactions. We took great pains in the drafting of these three orders for the Winnipeg lab documents to address the national security concerns expressed by the government at that time.

Another point to make is this. The first two orders adopted by the special committee had the support of all members of the committee, including members of the ministerial party. That was not an oversight. The members of the ministerial party knew exactly what they were voting for and knew exactly what the order of the committee said. Therefore, even members of the ministerial party believed the

government must hand over these documents to the House and the special committee.

Since March 31, two and a half months ago, the government has ignored these orders, and now its ignorance has caught up to it. Initially, the government hid behind the Privacy Act, ignoring parliamentary supremacy and ignoring the fact that paragraph 8(2)(c) of the Privacy Act itself grants an exemption for personal information that is disclosed in compliance with an order made by a body with jurisdiction to compel the production of information.

After that argument did not seem to hold any more water, the government hid behind the excuse of national security, ignoring the fact that all three orders made provisions for the protection of national security. The reality is that one has to conclude that the government is doing nothing more than buying time to avoid providing this House and its special committee with information, hoping the clock will run out with the adjournment of the House next week on Wednesday.

My colleagues and I have not taken this decision lightly to pursue this motion of censure and to call the president of the Public Health Agency of Canada to the bar. We understand the constitutional implications of this and we understand the stress that public servants at the Public Health Agency of Canada must be feeling. However, there are bigger issues at stake here, including the strength of our parliamentary institutions, their rights and their privileges, which have been under immense pressure in the last year, some would even say in retreat because of the restrictions of the pandemic.

• (2120)

Since March 31, we have repeatedly urged the government to comply with the order. We have given the government ample time to comply with the orders, making clear the consequence of not doing so, including earlier this week at the special committee meeting on Monday evening. Despite all these admonitions, despite all these urgings, the government has chosen not to comply.

I make one last appeal to the government at this late hour. I urge the government to comply with the orders of this House and its special committee and deliver the unredacted documents to the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel of the House. I urge all my colleagues in the House to vote for this motion if the government continues to refuse to comply with these orders.

• (2125)

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for his very clear exposition of what took place at the Canada-China committee. We are both members of the committee. I am a vice-chair.

To reiterate, you tried to find an explanation as to why the government is refusing to make this information available. The Liberals claimed legal authority at one time by a lawyer who was brought to the committee.

Do you think they are acting upon legal advice, or do you think there is another reason?

Privilege

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member that he is to address all questions and comments through the chair and not to the individual member.

The hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

Hon. Michael Chong: Madam Speaker, I think it is clear that the government is delaying and obfuscating. It is clear the government is trying to cover this entire matter up and I base it on the following evidence. Initially, as the member for St. John's East pointed out, the government hid behind the excuse of the Privacy Act and the protection of personal information. Then it shifted its argument and started to make the argument that it was not about the protection of personal information under the Privacy Act, but rather about national security.

I have come to the conclusion, and I think anyone would have to come to the conclusion, that the government is delaying and obfuscating on this matter because there is information that it does not want to come to light because it would embarrass the government and demonstrate it was lax in its oversight of national security and policy at the Winnipeg lab.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills for his speech. He is someone I like, someone who works very hard and is very insightful.

Speaking of insight, on Monday, the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations heard from the hon. Minister of Health, and I know my hon. colleague was there. I would like to know whether he learned anything interesting during those three hours the committee met on Monday.

Hon. Michael Chong: Madam Speaker, I thank my Bloc Québécois colleague for his question. He also attended the meeting on Monday night, and over three hours we did not get any answers to our questions.

[*English*]

That we did not get any answers to our questions I think demonstrates a profound lack of respect for Parliament, a profound lack of respect for our parliamentary democracy.

If we watch committees of other legislatures around the world, parliamentarians get real answers about the questions they are asking. Through the Internet and through other media, we can see what happens in legislatures in Europe, the U.K. and the United States. When elected officials ask questions, they get answers.

It speaks to the government's profound lack of respect for this place the fact that after asking repeated serious questions about the Winnipeg lab, we continue to get stonewalled and we continue not to receive answers.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it has been a great pleasure for me to have the opportunity to work with the member on the Canada-China committee and various other fora. I know that fighting for democracy and parliamentary institutions has been a core part of what he has done, both in foreign affairs and domestically.

I would ask the member to expand on some of the very important comments he has made about the broader attacks that we are seeing on the ability of Parliament to do its job, this increasing pressure from the government to minimize the role of Parliament and minimize its real powers to hold the government accountable. What is the trend that he is observing in this respect? What do we need to do as parliamentarians from all parties to assert the privileges, the rights and, indeed, the important role that any Parliament should play in a democracy in the face of the approach of the current government?

• (2130)

Hon. Michael Chong: Madam Speaker, I am very worried about the future of our country. Our institutions have been weakened in recent years and all Canadians should be very alarmed at the state of these institutions. I have never seen institutions so weak in my lifetime and possibly never so weak in our history as they are now.

We do not have a governor general because the previous governor general resigned due to scandal. We do not have a permanent clerk of the Privy Council. The previous clerk resigned because of scandal. Eight senior members of the Canadian Armed Forces have resigned or have been removed from their posts in recent months. We have a Parliament that is unable to get documents about a serious matter that concerns the government's National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg, Manitoba. We have institutions that are failing Canadians and the government just snubs its nose at all of these issues.

We need to wake up. We are in trouble as a country. Our institutions are in trouble. It is—

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

The hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to get my hon. colleague's comments on an analogous situation. On October 26 in the House of Commons, members, also by majority, passed a motion requiring the government to produce documents to the health committee and it prescribed the process for doing that. The government had to produce unredacted documents to the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel, who would then redact those documents in accordance with prescribed criteria listed in that House order. The documents were to be delivered no later than December 7.

The Liberals said they had over a million documents. Here we are in June, the health committee has received about 8,500 documents, 990,000 undelivered, and the government has chosen not to send those documents to the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel in some cases and has redacted those documents in violation and with criteria beyond what the House ordered.

Does my hon. colleague see a parallel or similarity in the contempt that the Liberal government is showing Parliament and does he think that it is violating the very important concept of supremacy of Parliament?

Privilege

Hon. Michael Chong: Madam Speaker, I do believe there is a pattern here, a pattern of contempt for Parliament from the Government of Canada. I am often shocked at the lack of knowledge the government has about Parliament and its function within our system. The member notes the government's failure to provide the documents ordered to be given to the health committee. We are now seized with the issue of the documents the government has refused to give to the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations.

I can point to another example that came to my attention recently, which is the fact that someone in the government thought it appropriate in the 2021-22 departmental plans for the NSICOP Secretariat to list its core responsibility as parliamentary review when the act itself says it is not a committee of Parliament. On and on the list goes.

It speaks to institutions that are much weakened and that are struggling to keep up. It should be a wake-up call for all of us about the need to strengthen and reform these institutions so they can serve Canadians in a much stronger fashion than they have been in recent months.

• (2135)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour for me to participate in this important debate. Although I am rarely speechless, I must say it is a little intimidating to follow the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, with such powerful and historic words about the state of our institutions. I would encourage all members to reflect on those words. They go beyond any party. They go beyond any particular issue of the day. However, they do speak to particular problems that we see right now in our national life, particular problems that reflect actions and decisions of the government.

Prior to getting elected, the Prime Minister was asked which other regime or political system around the world he admired most. He said that he actually had some degree of admiration for China's basic dictatorship. This is what we are talking about. We are talking tonight about the fact that the Prime Minister has a problem with understanding democratic values, their importance, how they operate and how they constrain a Prime Minister. We are also dealing with the fact that as a result of his admiration for the Chinese regime, the Prime Minister has allowed our country to form dangerous associations, which threaten our values and our security, and which threaten global security.

I am going to talk about those two issues. I am going to talk about the rule of law and democratic values, and then I am going to talk about the particular issues raised by the associations that we have seen, in terms of Chinese military-affiliated scientists working at Canadian labs, and the fact that the health minister does not seem to see any problem with this.

On the issue of the rule of law, we are seeing, make no mistake, regular assaults on the rule of law by the Liberal government. Last year, at the beginning of the pandemic, under the pressure of very challenging circumstances, the government tried to pass a law that would have effectively given it unlimited law-making power for more than a year and a half. Conservatives stood up to that. We put a stop to that, thankfully.

It should never be forgotten that the government thought this was the appropriate thing to try to do in the face of a pandemic, that it wanted to seize on the very real fear and concern that Canadians were feeling to try to pass a law that would have given it unlimited law-making power for over a year and a half without Parliament.

We have a Prime Minister who has repeatedly been found in violation of ethics laws, multiple reports, multiple violations, according to the Ethics Commissioner. It has become clear that the Prime Minister who said he admired China's basic dictatorship simply does not feel that the laws apply to him. We are seeing that again tonight.

In the last week, we have had back-to-back rulings from the Speaker calling out the government for failing to respect the rules of Parliament and for failing to abide by them. The first ruling was on Bill C-10. After the government shut down committee debate, the committee then proceeded to vote on amendments without debate, without those amendments even being read. Thankfully, our Speaker recognized that that was a clear violation of the rules of this place.

Today we have a very clear ruling, a ruling that, while giving full credit to the Speaker for making, I think we should acknowledge came as no surprise to anyone. It was clearly aligned with all the past precedent, the well-established powers of Parliament to send for documents.

Why does Parliament, as the voice of the people, as the democratic representative of this country, have the right to send for documents in every case? It is because if we are to hold the executive accountable, if we are to do our job on behalf of the people who sent us, if we are to exercise our industry and our judgment, as Burke said, then we have to have the information available to us to consider what is going on and to consider the steps that need to be taken.

Speakers, since the beginning of Parliament, have recognized powers and privileges that must accord to Parliament in its role. Once again, the Speaker recognized that those precedents recognized those rights, and affirmed that Parliament has the right to request these documents and that the government has to hand them over.

• (2140)

Continuing this debate today, in spite of the Speaker's ruling, the government is not at all chastened, it seems. We have members like the member for Kingston and the Islands simply reverting back to the same old talking points that have been clearly rejected by the Speaker.

I do not think that NSICOP is the appropriate forum. I think the Canada-China committee had a right to look at these documents, but frankly, it does not matter whether or not one thinks that NSICOP should be the one looking at this. The point is that the Speaker, the lawful authority in this case, has ruled clearly based on the precedent, and the government must follow the law. Again, we have a Prime Minister who simply does not think the rules and the law apply to him and his consistent behaviour, since taking office, of breaking ethics laws, ignoring Parliament and, in back-to-back cases in the last week, being chastened by the Speaker. The Prime Minister is trying to behave as if the law does not apply to him.

I want, again, to go through the events at the Canada-China committee, where I have the honour of serving as vice-chair, to illustrate how this came about. The government had many, many opportunities, and we put in place very clear and reasonable checks. Because of the reasoned process through which we proceeded, there was substantial support throughout the committee to proceed in this fashion, but the government thinks it is in its political interest to try to make this all about the Conservatives: the Conservatives this, the Conservatives that. This is not about the Conservatives. This is about the fact that a parliamentary committee unanimously asked for those documents.

This process started when the president of the Public Health Agency, Iain Stewart, was before the committee and members started asking very simple questions about these two scientists who transferred deadly viruses to Wuhan and then were expelled. We were asking some very basic questions about what happened. The president of the Public Health Agency refused to answer. These questions were asked by Conservative, Bloc and NDP members consecutively.

We asked some very general questions as well: Has there ever been a case where somebody has been expelled for a policy breach? How many of these cases have taken place? Identifying numbers of cases in which there has been an expulsion for policy breaches certainly does not hurt anybody's privacy, as was claimed at the time. There was a complete refusal to answer these questions.

At that initial meeting, the committee agreed unanimously to give the president of the Public Health Agency until that Friday to provide additional information. No additional information was provided, so we used Standing Order 106(4) to summon the committee for a special meeting on March 31. That initial Standing Order 106(4) letter was signed by members of multiple parties already.

Then we had a motion adopted at that meeting to send for the unredacted documents. We did so in a collaborative way, involving the whole committee in the discussion. We compromised on the number of days. The Liberals at the committee agreed that we had the right to request the documents. They said we needed to give the Public Health Agency more time. We agreed to give the Public Health Agency more time, and it still refused to comply. As a result of its failure to comply, the consequence was that Iain Stewart, the president of the Public Health Agency of Canada, came back to the committee for further discussion in a three-hour meeting.

There are a few things that are very important about that subsequent meeting that happened on May 10. One of them is that the justice department shared that its legal advice to PHAC had been

Privilege

that PHAC did not have to provide these documents. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs directly told them, "You need a second opinion. Your legal advice is wrong." Actually, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, obviously a Liberal MP, went further than that. He said that the Department of Justice is often wrong. He cited a number of precedents of cases where he felt the justice department had given bad legal advice.

When I questioned the justice department lawyer, I said, "Look, we have the ruling from Speaker Milliken that says you have to hand over documents and that Parliament has an unfettered right of access. You are saying Parliament does not have an unfettered right of access, so that means you disagree with the Speaker's ruling." The justice department essentially said that, yes, it was hard to square the two. It was hard to square its position with the position of the Milliken ruling.

● (2145)

Then I asked if they thought that Speaker Milliken had the lawful authority to make the ruling, and there was acknowledgement that yes, Speaker Milliken had the lawful authority to make that ruling. He was the authority accountable for making this ruling. He made the ruling, and the ruling is different from the justice department's opinion.

Do members know what happens when we have a different opinion from the lawful authority about what the law should be? We have to comply with the lawful authority. That is how the rule of law works. In a rule of law society, there is an authority that is empowered to make determinations about law. We might disagree with that authority. We might disagree with the Speaker. We might disagree with the judge. We might disagree with the police officer on a given day. However, we have to adhere to that lawful authority and, where available, seek appeal. We cannot just say that our legal opinion is different from the lawful authority that made that decision, so we are just not going to listen.

That was the really strange testimony we heard from the justice department at the May 10 meeting. It was testimony that was directly called out by the Liberal Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. In the end, another Liberal member, the member for Cumberland—Colchester, moved a motion to order the unredacted documents again. That was the second motion to order the unredacted documents. It was not only supported by the Liberals, but it was actually moved in the first instance by a Liberal member, the member for Cumberland—Colchester. That motion was adopted unanimously, ordering the production of the documents. We compromised again with the Liberals on the timeline. We wanted seven days; they wanted 10 days, and we said okay. Then the report was tabled.

Privilege

We have two separate orders, very much driven by a collaborative process at the committee, one motion proposed by me, one motion proposed by the member for Cumberland—Colchester, and unanimous support. Then we have an opposition motion that says the government has to comply with this order and provide this information. Again, the government refuses. We have three consecutive orders, two by committee and one by the House, and the government refuses to comply. We have lawful authorities telling the government to follow the law, and the government is saying, effectively, that the rules do not apply to it.

On Monday, we had the Minister of Health before the committee. I was precise in asking her whether the decision not to provide the documents was made by Iain Stewart alone, or whether she was consulted on that decision. That was about the only question she responded to directly, but she told the committee that she met with Iain Stewart, they discussed it and she agreed that they should not hand over the documents.

This is not just a decision being made by public servants. Public servants need to be accountable for their decisions in terms of following the law. However, we see how the Minister of Health, in her position by the Prime Minister, does not feel that they have to follow the law.

What are the Liberals saying about these issues? Right now, they are saying this should be a matter for NSICOP. On the issue of NSICOP, I was very interested in the speech by the chair of NSICOP, the member for Ottawa South. Notably, the member for Ottawa South, who is the chair of NSICOP, did not discuss whether the committee had received the documents.

He did not discuss whether his committee was studying the documents, because he cannot talk about what the committee is working on. He can only share information with respect to the committee that the Prime Minister allows him to release. He made the argument that the Prime Minister's discretion in terms of limiting the release of information is constrained by law, but we have seen how the Prime Minister reacts when he is constrained by law. He does not believe himself to be constrained by law.

It was evident in the speech from the member for Ottawa South why NSICOP is not the appropriate body, because he, himself, was not able to address very basic questions. He could not even answer how he was voting on the motion. He cannot actually, because of his role in NSICOP, speak at all about this issue in a serious way in the House, because to do so might give some indication as to whether his committee is studying it.

We know that NSICOP is not a parliamentary committee, but the point is that the Speaker has ruled. These questions about NSICOP have been answered definitively by the Speaker in his ruling, the Speaker being the lawful authority to make these determinations.

We hear the government making arguments about national security issues. The reason these efforts to get documents got so much support throughout the committee, including from Liberal members, including the motion being proposed by the member for Cumberland—Colchester, is that we put in place those protections for national security.

• (2150)

Yes, Parliament should use its powers in a responsible way. Yes, with great power comes great responsibility. That is why we established a process by which the documents would be given to the law clerk and the parliamentary counsel and redactions would be made at that level, but we wanted an employee of Parliament, not of the executive, to make those determinations. That was a reasonable process that respected national security and, at the end of the day, it was our right as a parliamentary committee, it was our right as a collective Parliament in the context of the opposition motion to make these decisions.

The fundamental point is that in every case, the authorities with the constitutionally given powers to make these decisions made decisions. In every case, in three consecutive instances dealing with this issue alone, and in many others, as we have discussed, the government said that the rules did not apply to it.

We know now why the Prime Minister believes it would be so much better to have a basic dictatorship. We see how the Prime Minister treats our institutions as if we live in a basic dictatorship. Truly respecting the values of a parliamentary democracy means we do things as an executive that we might not want to do because we are accountable to the people's representatives. We do not get to do exactly what we want. We are bound by law.

At the Canada-China committee, we have discussed the distinction between rule of law and rule by law: rule of law characterizing our system where leaders are bound by law; and rule by law where by leaders use law to their advantage to get the kinds of outcomes they want. The Prime Minister is behaving as if he thinks this is a rule-by-law system instead of a rule-of-law system. The Prime Minister needs to know the rules apply to him.

On the issue of research co-operation with the Chinese military, we have a case where two scientists were involved in transferring deadly viruses to the Wuhan Institute of Virology. The head of the lab at the time, Matthew Gilmour, raised concerns about this. He raised the fact there was no materials transfer agreement in place. He raised other concerns about the credibility of what was to happen. His concerns were ignored and a few years later he resigned suddenly and left the country.

After these deadly viruses were transferred, even in a context, by the way, where security concerns had already been raised about the Wuhan lab, people were expelled who were involved in this transfer, but no explanation was given as to why they were expelled or what the context of the investigation was. We found out since that another person, Feihu Yan, was affiliated with the People's Liberation Army's Academy of Military Medical Sciences while working at the Winnipeg lab.

Some of these issues are complex but some of these issues are fairly simple. When we hear that somebody from the Academy of Military Medical Sciences is working and gathering information at a Canadian lab, it should not be difficult to identify that is a problem. The government of China is currently, as we speak, committing genocide. It is running concentration camps for Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims.

We know the government of China is deploying all of its most up-to-date technology in its suppression of minority communities like Uighurs. We know it is always trying to access new technology, the most sophisticated surveillance, to control and repress minority populations and indeed to inflict this ongoing genocide.

When we are engaged in research co-operation around virology with the military of a country that is involved in genocide, that should just horrify the basic moral sensibilities of Canadians. There are all these questions around what kinds of co-operation were happening between the Winnipeg lab and the Wuhan Institute for Virology. There are very serious questions that need to be investigated about the lab leak theory potentially being a cause of COVID-19. There are security questions. There are obviously intellectual property questions. There are human rights questions.

I posed these questions to the Minister of Health at committee on Monday. She just piled this in layers of complexity, saying that it was complicated, that the world worked together, that we needed to have this research co-operation, that this was the way the research system worked and everybody was working together on research co-operation.

I am in favour of research co-operation with like-minded countries, but I do not want us engaged in research co-operation when there is a very serious risk that research done in Canada contributes to repression of minorities, contributes to genocide and contributes to threats to our own security. These are questions of our fundamental values.

• (2155)

The government, in addition to talking about a basic dictatorship, is just so naive to the risks to our values. This privilege motion is critically important. We need to stand up for Canada, stand up for our values and hold the government to account.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in his intervention, the member specifically stated that this was not a decision just of the president of the Public Health Agency, but also a decision of the minister. Could he explain to me why the minister is not named in this motion? Why is it just the president of PHAC who is being called before the bar of Parliament in this motion? Is it perhaps that doing so would actually constitute not having confidence in the House?

These are the games the Conservatives will play when it comes to this issue. They are willing to sacrifice the career of a public servant for their own political gain. That is exactly what is happening here.

Could the member tell me why no one else is named in this motion other than a public servant?

Privilege

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, the member is accusing me of threatening the career of a public servant. I will simply say this. I would put at risk the careers of thousands of public servants if it were necessary to defend the rule of law, because the rule of law is important. The rule of law is critically important. It is more important than our comfort. It is more important than anyone's career. It is far more important than my career.

The minister told the committee that she had discussions with the president of the Public Health Agency of Canada and agreed with his decision. The president of the Public Health Agency of Canada is accountable for this decision and he must bring the documents to the committee.

The government also clearly bears responsibility for its own failures, and we hold it accountable every day in question period and other fora. The Minister of Health and the Prime Minister are part of this decision to refuse to hand over these documents.

Members can be sure that not just Conservatives, but multiple opposition parties, working together, will hold the government accountable, defend the rule of law in our country and demand that we not engage in the deeply troubling practice of research co-operation with a military committing genocide.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his impassioned speech. I was wondering whether he was in a tent just now. There was a rather interesting background on the screen.

I was listening to the member for Kingston and the Islands say that the Conservatives may be motivated by political interests in tonight's debate. In response, I might suggest that he take a long look in the mirror.

We get the impression that the Liberals, too, have a tendency to be driven by political considerations and that they are raising privacy and national security concerns for the sole purpose or never disclosing the information.

There were three instances. With CanSino, we were never able to learn any interesting or useful information to make up our own minds. It was the same thing with the WE scandal, and it is again the case today with the Winnipeg lab.

I do not know whether my colleague shares my view.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I do not have much to add to what my colleague said. In general, I agree with him.

I just want to say that I appreciated the Bloc Québécois's co-operation on the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations. We worked together very effectively to hold the government to account.

*Privilege**[English]*

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague knows, I disagree with him on many things, but he has made some important points tonight. Most specifically is the fact that you have ruled on this motion of privilege. This is something that all parliamentarians should view as a very serious subject. A breach of privilege is not something to be taken lightly. I know when you rule on something like this, you do not take it lightly. You investigate the precedents before you make your ruling, and now this is before Parliament.

I have been greatly disturbed by the slightly unhinged comments from the member for Kingston and the Islands, because it appears the government and government members are not taking this seriously. We heard similar comments with all the ethical violations the Prime Minister has made over the last few years, more than any other prime minister in Canadian history.

Why is the government not taking this serious breach of privilege and this debate tonight seriously?

• (2200)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, why is the government not taking these issues seriously? Let us distinguish between members like the member for Kingston and the Islands who, unfortunately, is likely simply being given a line to deliver. Why are the Prime Minister, the health minister and the powers that be repeatedly refusing orders of the House? I would suggest that they have decided there are things in these documents that they do not want to be subject to parliamentary scrutiny, and that should very much worry members. We know the government wants to move its legislative agenda forward. It has had many opportunities to simply hand over the documents, and then this whole thing goes away. It all would go away. It would all go away right now, if it hands over the documents. That is all the government has to do.

It would not be handing them over to the public; it would be handing them over to the law clerk, who would then review the redacted items and hand things over to a committee. The government could make all of this go away tomorrow, but it has repeatedly, knowing the consequences, refused to do that. This suggests that there is something in these documents that the government is so afraid of seeing any kind of light of day, even through the law clerk and a committee would be looking at them in camera.

Recognizing that fear in the government should just underline the urgency of continuing to push very hard on these issues.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first, I think it is pretty clear to everyone here that the member is speaking in support of this motion. In the motion, it actually calls for the president of PHAC to come with the documents. It says right in the motion, contrary to what some members of the Liberal Party have said, that there are safeguards to ensure that the confidentiality and the national security concerns that are raised will be addressed by the law clerk, who has experience ensuring those vital interests are maintained.

Does the member believe this is a good compromise that will protect national security and at the same time allow parliamentarians to do our job?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his excellent work previously on the Canada-China committee prior to the leadership transition.

The previous ruling of Speaker Milliken emphasized that Parliament had a right to unfettered access to documents, and also that Parliament was enjoined to exercise that right in a thoughtful and responsible way. In this case, Parliament has exercised its right and has put in place very judicious safeguards. The documents would be handed over to the law clerk and the parliamentary counsel. They could be redacted and then transmitted on to the committee, which would look at them in camera.

However, the critical difference between the government's procedure and our procedure is that in our procedure, it would be employees of Parliament, who understand and respect the privileges of Parliament, who would be making determinations about appropriate redactions rather than the executive having *carte blanche* to make its own determinations about redactions based on criteria that they are not sharing with us.

It is important to remember that on these issues of national security, the government did not even start invoking national security in its arguments until substantially into the process. At the beginning, the Liberals were not talking about national security; they were talking about privacy. However, when we clearly pointed out that there were exceptions in the Privacy Act that addressed the very issues they were talking about, exceptions in the Privacy Act that talk about the right of lawful authorities to request documents, then they changed tactics. They stopped talking about privacy and started talking about national security. The point is it was an invented excuse part way through.

When we are asking very general questions about whether there are Chinese military-affiliated scientists at Canadian labs, those questions should be answered, if not in public, then certainly in private.

• (2205)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

I am pleased to rise this evening to speak to our privilege motion, which I am going to take the time to reread for those who are watching at home. This is what we are calling for:

That the House find the Public Health Agency of Canada to be in contempt for its failure to obey the order of the House, adopted on June 2, 2021, as well as the orders of the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations, adopted on March 31 and May 10, 2021, and, accordingly, order its President to attend at the bar of the House, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions on the second sitting day following the adoption of this order, for the purposes of (a) receiving, on behalf of the Agency, an admonishment delivered by the Speaker; and (b) delivering up the documents ordered by the House, on June 2, 2021, to be produced, so that they may be deposited with the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel under the terms of that order.

As we can see from reading this privilege motion, this is an extremely important issue for democracy and respect for the authority of the House.

Today, sadly, we are not surprised by the way this government has acted over the last five, almost six, years. However, rarely in over 150 years have such events occurred in the House of Commons. Such a profound lack of respect for the institution will go down in history, but for the wrong reasons.

I would like to come back to the issue at hand. How did we get to where we are today? First of all, this all started with a CBC news story in July 2019 reporting that two Chinese scientists had been expelled from the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg, a level 4 facility. This news came as a surprise to us, but it was a bit nebulous as we were unsure, waiting for more information. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic began, and we went into “COVID mode” all through 2020.

During that time, the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations was doing a study on Hong Kong. Later, after passing a motion I presented to the committee, it undertook a study on national security in Canada-China relations. This study included evaluating various levels and aspects of security, like defence. One of the points studied just happened to be the relationship between China and the Public Health Agency of Canada, and that is where everything began to point to the problem we face today.

On March 22, the president of the Public Health Agency of Canada, Iain Stewart, appeared before the committee, only to tell us that he would say nothing. Committee members exchanged some glances and asked the usual questions about various files, but especially about Winnipeg. The agency remained secretive and we had no way of finding out anything at all. As a result, we became suspicious and questions were asked.

Then we asked for an emergency committee meeting on March 31 and summoned the House of Commons law clerk, Philippe Dufresne, and the deputy law clerk, Michel Bédard. We asked them for advice. We asked them to explain our rights and how to exercise those rights. They explained the procedure and said it was normal for a committee like the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations to ask questions and get the documents it sends for.

At that same meeting, we moved a motion calling on the Public Health Agency of Canada to turn the required documents over to the law clerks so they could redact personal information and anything to do with national security.

Several weeks later, we got another surprise. The agency produced documents, and those documents were redacted, but not by our House of Commons law clerks. The president of the agency and his team had taken it upon themselves to decide what should be redacted.

On May 10, the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations held another meeting, which was attended by the law clerks, who are officers of the House, and the president of the Public Health Agency of Canada with his lawyer. We asked them to explain the process to us, and the law clerks once again clarified that it was their job to analyze documents provided by a government agency because they had the authority and credentials to do that analysis.

Privilege

• (2210)

That is great, so why did they not proceed that way? At that same meeting on May 10, there was another surprise when the Liberal member for Cumberland—Colchester moved a motion calling for the documents to be provided, for the law clerks to do their job and, if that did not work, for the matter to be referred to the House of Commons. What was bound to happen did happen; once again, that did not work, and the matter was referred to House.

After the debate on the motion in the House on June 2, the House adopted an order requiring the Public Health Agency of Canada and its president to provide the documents, as requested, to the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations.

Someone, somewhere, then had the idea to send the documents to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, simply to get the job done and be able to say that the documents had been sent to a committee.

The order of the House called for the documents to be sent to the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations, which has law clerks in place who can do the work. Despite that, the documents were sent to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians in an effort to have Canadians believe that this committee could do the work because it included Conservative members and now Bloc members. This was done in the hope that everyone would be happy.

However, that is an ultra-secret committee. The two Conservative members and the one Bloc member who serve on it must keep quiet for the rest of their lives about anything they might learn, see or hear. They will eventually conduct an analysis and submit a report to the Prime Minister, although he will not learn anything new, since he already has the information and knows what happened in Winnipeg, as do all government members. Sending this to the committee of parliamentarians is a charade. Three opposition members who are sworn to secrecy for the rest of their lives will know what happened, but they can never tell, so nothing will ever come of it.

It is quite obvious that this is the government's plan. This is yet another affront to the House of Commons, because that committee of parliamentarians has nothing to do with this file and because it is not a parliamentary committee like other House of Commons committees. Furthermore, this violates the order given to submit the documents to the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations.

Not only is it an affront to parliamentarians, but it is also an affront to officers of Parliament, which shocks me. Law Clerk Philippe Dufresne and Deputy Law Clerk Michel Bédard are members of the House of Commons team, just like the clerks. They are not elected members or members of the opposition. They are members of the staff who were chosen on the basis of their skills and abilities to deal with information so as to ensure that security and personal information are protected. Why would we not trust our law clerks and submit the documents to them as requested? These documents would have been processed and submitted to the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations according to the rules. Why play around with that?

Privilege

This means that there is an even more serious problem and that something dangerous beyond our imagination happened between the Winnipeg lab, the Wuhan Institute of Virology and the Chinese army. There is something very serious going on. The Liberals' manoeuvres are only amplifying the problem, making the situation more sensitive and creating a huge issue.

The Conservatives do not want to fearmonger. We simply want to know what happened. There are ways to talk with the opposition. We are all Canadians, no matter our political allegiances. We all have the right to know what happens here in our country.

• (2215)

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to give the member an opportunity to answer the question that I asked the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

If the real subject of the debate tonight is the government and the way that the government handled matters, why is the government or any member of the government not named in the motion? Why did the motion go after a public servant?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. My answer will be the same as the one he got from my colleague from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

The individual in question is a public servant and is not responding to orders from the House. It does not matter if we are talking about one, 10, 20 or 100 employees; what matters here is the rule of law and the primacy of the House, and this individual must respond.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague from Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

I want to talk about what happened on Monday at the meeting of the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations we both attended. The minister came to committee to answer our questions. Every time she gave us an answer, or did not give us an answer, we found ourselves wondering how it was possible to say so little in response to so many questions.

Does my colleague think that the minister showed a lack of respect for the parliamentarians on the committee during her appearance on Monday?

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean for his question.

I do not want to be rude, but I have to say it turned my stomach to witness the Minister of Health's three-hour appearance at the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations.

Let us not forget that the House ordered the Minister of Health to appear before the committee to explain and answer our questions. Such orders are not uncommon. The answers we got were just like those we heard during this afternoon's question period: evasive and indicative of total ignorance of the situation.

What most impressed me were answers to questions like this one: Were you briefed on what happened at the lab?

The minister's answer went something like this: No, I was not briefed about it. Was she not Canada's Minister of Health? That was either blatant disrespect or utter incompetence.

[*English*]

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am going to ask this hon. member a question I asked a previous member. I am concerned, as a parliamentarian, that there is a disturbing pattern of a government that is simply refusing to recognize not only the democratic will of this chamber but the supremacy of Parliament. It appears that it is a government that thinks it is above the majority expression of the House of Commons.

I am referring to an order passed in this House on October 26, 2020, that ordered the government to produce documents on a variety of subjects to the health committee, which, to this day, the government has refused to do. It has violated the time limit. The government is refusing to send documents to the law clerk, as the order requires, and it is redacting when the order says it is not to redact; but the law clerk is, and then the government redacts according to criteria beyond the House order.

Does my hon. colleague think that this latest motion is simply a continuation of a pattern of disrespect for this House, by a government that seems to have forgotten that it is subject to the will of the majority of people in this place?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I would say that it is more than a pattern. This government's lack of respect for the institution of the House of Commons is a systematic pattern.

I remind members that a few years ago, the Prime Minister said that he admired the Chinese dictatorship and how the Chinese could turn the economy around on a dime, since they did not need to negotiate with a parliament and opposition parties. The Prime Minister said that he found that kind of system interesting.

Based on the things this government is doing, it is easy to see where it gets its inspiration.

• (2220)

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to this question of privilege, though not under happy circumstances as we find ourselves yet again with the Liberal government brazenly defying an order of the House in the name of a cover-up. The government operates in cover-ups, so we should not be surprised. Multiple times the Canada-China committee ordered documents from PHAC regarding the Winnipeg lab leak, and each time it was met with pages and pages of blacked-out documents that did not satisfy the order of the committee. Again, this was not much of a surprise. Blacked-out documents came nowhere close to satisfying the order of the committee, and that is why we find ourselves here today.

We have serious questions about what happened at the Winnipeg lab. This is a level 4, high-security lab. Scientists there were working with the Chinese military. To this point, foreign state actors were given access to some of the world's deadliest viruses, which were stored in the lab. We have seen the human rights violations that the CCP will publicly carry out on its own soil. The member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan detailed the problematic relationship involving scientific co-operation and information collection between our country and the Chinese government, which is frankly perpetrating a genocide on its own soil.

We have a situation where the Government of Canada is unwilling to provide answers about the access, samples and personnel involved in this case. The two scientists who were fired were locked out of the Winnipeg lab, and we know that their security clearances were revoked because of the concerns of our national intelligence agency, CSIS. This raises serious questions.

Now that the opposition has dialed in on this failure, the government is doing everything it can to hide from accountability. The documents were ordered twice by the Canada-China committee, and twice the government failed to provide the information. The House ordered the information to be provided and the government refused to do that.

We have seen it before, and I will speak to that because this is a disturbing pattern that we have seen from the government: It is willing to do anything to save its political skin. It will scream that the Conservatives are acting in some kind of hyper partisan way by exercising our function as the official opposition in this place; however, in this case the orders from committee were unanimous. Members sitting on the same side of the House as the cabinet voted unanimously for the order of these documents, unredacted, to be reviewed by appropriate independent authorities. It was not just the Conservatives. The Conservatives, the Bloc Québécois and the NDP voted to have the parliamentary Law Clerk review the unredacted documents and then make an assessment on what information needed to be protected on the grounds of national security. It is frankly quite troubling, and the member for Wellington—Halton Hills really laid out the case well.

This is a dangerous pattern and it threatens our democracy. It certainly threatens Canadians' confidence in our democracy. We have a Prime Minister who promised to do politics differently, and what he has done is not a record to be proud of. It is not open by default. It is not transparent. The government will say that this accountability mechanism that is being exercised, a check against the power of the executive, is some sort of delay, but we know that the government has not prioritized moving legislation through this place.

• (2225)

When the government sought it, it received the unanimous consent of all parties in the House to advance the necessary supports for people during the pandemic. This is not about that.

Let us talk about the record that the Prime Minister has. We have reports from the Ethics Commissioner, one titled the "Trudeau I Report," in which the Prime Minister was found guilty of contravening sections of the Conflict of Interest Act, namely sections 5, 11, 12 and 21. That was for his trip to billionaire island. We had the—

Privilege

The Speaker: I am going to interrupt the hon. member.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of points of order tonight with respect to relevance. Certainly I and the member for Ottawa South were called out on that. We are continually being asked to be brought back to relevance.

This motion before us today specifically has to do with the Public Health Agency of Canada and the president of the Public Health Agency. It certainly never once mentions the Prime Minister, nor does it even mention the government, for that matter. This member has gone way off topic to talk about the Prime Minister directly and issues that he foresees with the Prime Minister. He is not being relevant to the discussion that we are supposed to be having on this particular motion today.

It would be prudent of you, Mr. Speaker, to rein him in and ask him to stick to the motion. The previous Speaker who was sitting in your place started to read out the actual motion to the member for Ottawa South. Perhaps you need to do the same thing for this member so that he knows what we are talking about.

The Speaker: I want to remind the hon. members that the discussion, the debate, has to be relevant to what we are discussing this evening. I am sure the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes is probably making an argument and coming back. I am sure he will come back with an argument very quickly. I will leave it in his hands to continue.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, I will just ask that my time should reflect more than four minutes left on the clock, because I know that for five and a half full minutes I have talked exactly about this motion and did start to build the case for an additional 30 seconds. The point by the member for Kingston and the Islands is disingenuous at best.

What I am demonstrating is that the government, led by the Prime Minister who is named in those two reports, has a pattern of disregarding the rule of law. The Liberals believe that the rules do not apply to them. This is certainly germane to the subject of them defying an order of the House, and that is obviously why you, Mr. Speaker, found the prima facie case of privilege that we are debating this evening to be decided by this place.

As I was saying, in the Trudeau II Report tabled by the Ethics Commissioner, the Prime Minister was found guilty of contravening section 9 of the Conflict of Interest Act, again seeing him disregarding the rule of law as the government did in this case with the PHAC documents. That, of course, was when he attempted to politically interfere in the prosecution of his friends at SNC-Lavalin.

Privilege

Twice in a four-year term, that Prime Minister was found guilty of breaking ethics laws. In that same term, we saw a pattern of law-breaking in which the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada was found guilty of contravening sections 6 and 21 of the Conflict of Interest Act. We saw that same pattern with former finance minister Bill Morneau. He was found guilty of breaking the Ethics Act twice: first with his failure to disclose his directorship in a numbered company and his forgotten French villa, but also contravening sections 6, 7 and 21 of the act with respect to the WE scandal.

It goes on and on. The Liberal government went so far as to shut down Parliament to avoid scrutiny, again, when parliamentarians were looking to—

The Speaker: I will have to interrupt the hon. member. I think he is going off-line. Would he like me to read the motion?

Okay, I will let him continue. I am sure he will bring it around to the motion and will stay on topic.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the point of order raised by the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, again, I will speak to something he raised in his speech.

He raised the question of Conservatives looking to obstruct the business of the House. That was raised directly by that member. I would like to share with the House that the Liberals filibustered PROC for more than 73 hours, the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics for 43 hours—

• (2230)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. When I brought up that point, I was ruled out of order to speak to it. If I was not allowed to speak to it, you certainly should not be allowing the member to respond to what I was not even allowed to speak to.

The Speaker: I was not here when that was not allowed.

We have another point of order from the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member for Ottawa South did not refer to the motion once during the entire speech. I can understand that some Liberals are getting a little sensitive, but the member has clearly been talking to the motion. Yes, he has walked a wider field than perhaps the member for Kingston and the Islands would like, but I believe he is on target.

The Speaker: We will go back to the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes. I am sure he is going to hit the target right on. Is that correct?

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, absolutely. I noticed the member for Kingston and the Islands asked in his last two questions, for which no rulings were made by the Chair occupant at the time, who should be named in the motion. Of course, the president of PHAC is named because he signed the letters, but I am wondering this: Which ministers would he like to amend the motion to name to also have admonished or censured? Would that then bring him onside to vote in favour of this transparency mechanism?

In saying that, I would also remind the House that the Liberals filibustered the finance committee for 35 hours, the Standing Committee on National Defence for 16 hours and the foreign affairs committee for more than 10 hours. There were many other filibusters, including at the health committee, where there was also an issue with documents not being tabled in keeping with an order from parliamentarians.

We have this gross problem with the current government because it believes that if it provides a rationale, the laws do not apply to it anymore. That is not how this works. Canadians expect us to govern ourselves to the highest standard, and we have seen anything but with the government. This is a straight up-and-down issue. It is a question of whether the government believes the rules apply to it or not. If the Liberals do not believe the laws apply to them, frankly, that is an admission that they are not fit to govern, because the arguments they have put forward this evening are absolutely insufficient. Canadians deserve better than a government that is unwilling to follow the rule of law. The lawful authority has made decisions, with respect, and there is precedent that establishes that these documents can be ordered. We have confidence that the Law Clerk will exercise its function appropriately and provide these documents to parliamentarians in a way that provides consideration for national security interests. It is not a question of giving them to a group of parliamentarians who report to the Prime Minister: We are asking the government to demonstrate its ability, or a minimum willingness, to be accountable to Canadians.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member started to answer my question. I want to give him an opportunity to keep going. He said moments ago that the government did not follow the law. Why is the government not named in this motion? The government is not named in this motion. It is the president of the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Why was the government not named in this? This member's questions, and all Conservative and Bloc questions, have been with respect to the government this whole night. They did not even mention the government in the motion.

Will the member elaborate on why that is?

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, I have not had a conversation with the opposition House leader at this point, but I am confident that if the member for Kingston and the Islands would like to move an amendment to the motion to include a set of government ministers to be censured by this House, opposition parties would enter into a discussion with the government. I think that would be an important first step in the government recognizing that it has been complicit in damaging our democracy, and that would be a good first step in admitting it had done wrong.

In the meantime, the president of PHAC signed the letters that acknowledged he was in breach of a lawful order to tender those documents, so he will be called to the bar should it be the will of the House. Again, if the member for Kingston and the Islands would like to name some of his colleagues or individuals from the ministry, I would certainly be willing to broker those discussions to have them added to the motion, and would of course enjoy his support in voting for this motion and for transparency for Canadians.

• (2235)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, earlier my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean asked the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles a question about the Liberals' transparency. He asked four times how such a lack of transparency was possible. When I think about the redacted documents that were sent to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, I feel like asking two more times how this is possible.

Not so long ago, I mentioned that this committee had no Bloc Québécois members. Miraculously, we found out this morning that there would finally be a Bloc Québécois MP on the committee. Is all this rushing about not symptomatic of the approach of the Liberals, who, in my opinion, have a big problem with transparency? I would like my colleague's thoughts on that.

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have been on full display for six years as being unwilling to do what they promised Canadians in 2015 and 2019, which was to be the most open government in history and to let the sun shine in, as it is the best disinfectant.

It is disingenuous and demonstrative of the issue when NSICOP is the committee that this issue would be sent to and the nominations from the official opposition for the changes in membership were made in October. To have the third party in the House, the Bloc Québécois, not have its member added until this morning, on the eve of this ruling from the Speaker, is disingenuous. We have seen the Liberals shut down Parliament. We have heard them threaten to go to an election during the pandemic. We have heard hours and hours of filibustering from them. They seem allergic to being transparent and accountable, and that is why we cannot count on them to do the right thing.

It looks like an order of this House may be needed and that individuals may need to be censured. If that is the will of this place, I am confident that it will bolster Canadians' sense of confidence in this institution.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I start, I want to advise you that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

I want to begin my comments by saying thank you for the ruling today. I know that the opposition requested you to deliberate over what had happened with respect to the redacted documents, and you came back with a very fair ruling that respects the democratic principles of this institution. You ruled that Parliament does in fact reign supreme and that the committees do have significant powers.

Privilege

It was a very respectful ruling and one that leads us to this evening and this debate.

I will remind you of what you said this afternoon as you ruled that the government breached parliamentary privileges by failing to provide the parliamentary body with secret documents that would explain the firing of two scientists at Canada's top infectious disease lab in Winnipeg.

You went further, Mr. Speaker, as you know, to say that it is up to the opposition House leader who asked for the ruling to decide on a follow-up motion that might censure the government or refer the matter for more study. That is precisely where we are this evening.

The motion that was put forward by the opposition House leader speaks to the fact that the House finds the Public Health Agency of Canada to be in contempt for its failure to obey the order of the House adopted on June 2, 2021, as well as the orders of the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations adopted on March 31 and May 10.

That is a very important issue here, because there have been three orders, two by committee and one by this body, for those documents to be provided to the parliamentary law clerk and to House administration officials. The order is for the president to:

attend the Bar of the House, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions on the second sitting day following the adoption of this Order, for the purposes of (a) receiving, on behalf of the Agency, an admonishment delivered by the Speaker; and (b) delivering up the documents ordered by this House on June 2, 2021 to be produced, so that they may be deposited with the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel under the terms of that Order.

For any Canadian who is watching this debate tonight, and I have sat here for most of it, it is rather disturbing to see the government trying to not provide the information that has been ordered by Parliament or by these committees. This is a systemic problem that has been going on for as long as I and many members on the opposition side have been in this Parliament. We see a government that really, despite the words of openness and transparency that the Liberals ran on in 2015, is anything but open and transparent.

What the government would prefer more than anything, especially given the time that we are in right now, would be to have an audience rather than an opposition. All parties in opposition in this House have effectively done what they are mandated to do, and that is to hold the government to account.

When the facts of this case came out, they were disturbing. I will remind the House again, for the sake of Canadians who are watching, how we got to this point. This is critically important.

There were two scientists who were dismissed in January from the Winnipeg lab after their security clearances were revoked in July 2019, and the RCMP was called in to investigate. Xiangguo Qiu, the former head of a key program at the lab, and her biologist husband, Keding Cheng, had been the focus of parliamentary debate for weeks as opposition members became aware and had sought information about this situation.

Privilege

In May, Canada's spy agency had urged the removal of security clearances for the two scientists and an unknown number of Dr. Qiu's students from China relating to the Wuhan facility and other national security matters.

• (2240)

For months before the couple were expelled from the lab in 2019, access to information documents show that Dr. Qiu played a key role in shipping two exceptionally virulent viruses, Ebola and Henipah, to China's Wuhan Institute. When this became public, the first response from the government was that it was an issue of privacy. It even sprinkled a little racism in there as the opposition, as a result of these published reports coming out and the fact that the RCMP and Canada's spy agency were involved, tried to get answers about what was going on. Then it went into national security issues. As I said earlier, two committees of Parliament, plus this body itself, ordered the government to provide those unredacted documents to the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel so that they could be studied by, as you said, Mr. Speaker, a body that is supreme in this place, yet those documents were not provided in the manner in which they were requested.

It is somewhat disturbing that we have seen this systemic pattern, as I said earlier, of a government that has failed in many cases over the last six years to be transparent and accountable to what ultimately reigns supreme in this place, and that is Parliament. It is quite disturbing that we have come to this point.

We have seen that this is the government that ran in 2015 on the issue of transparency and accountability. Over the course of the government being in power, we have seen the WE situation. We have seen the Prime Minister charged with ethics violations and found guilty. The list of the government's violations of accountability and transparency is as long as the day. This has caused me as a parliamentarian, my constituents and Canadians in general to be extremely cynical about what the government is doing by not being transparent.

I know the government's argument and I have listened to some of the arguments tonight. The argument has been that this information would be provided to the national security committee, but as the Speaker ruled, it is not a committee of Parliament. I think it was important to make the distinction that it serves at the whim of the Prime Minister and the executive branch of the government, which, by virtue of that association, makes it unaccountable to this Parliament. The information that the committee can create and develop is only given to the Prime Minister. That means that Canadians run the risk of not having that information available to them.

We do not naively think that national security is not important. We all know that the first and primary role of government, any level of government, is to make sure that its citizens are secure. That is why, in the best interests of our national security, both the committee and Parliament itself in its order made sure that there would be processes in place to protect information.

Mr. Speaker, this motion that we are debating tonight as a result of your ruling today is a critical one to indicate to the government that it cannot just run roughshod over parliamentary authority.

There have been examples of that in the past. An example that occurred when this pandemic first started was brought up earlier tonight. One of the first pieces of legislation that the government tried to introduce was an attempt to impose unreserved, unconditional tax and spending powers that would have effectively made Parliament irrelevant until January 2022. If it were not for the opposition, all of us, and if it were not for Canadians and journalists pushing back on this power grab by the government, I would hate to think where we would be today. It is not surprising to me and it should not surprise any Canadian when the Prime Minister says that there is something about China's basic dictatorship that he likes and admires. He was not kidding. We have seen this pattern over and over again over the course of the last six years.

• (2245)

Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude by thanking you for protecting this institution, for being the last line of defence in our democracy and for being there for Canadians.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague touched on a number of important points, and a number of Conservative speeches over the last couple of hours have emphasized a couple of very important things. One specific and unprecedented thing is twofold. First, opposition parties and the majority of parliamentarians are united in the belief that the actions of the government are contemptuous. Second, this is once again a demonstration of the serious need to ensure that all aspects, agencies and institutions of government are accountable to Parliament, given the supremacy of Parliament within our democratic system. These are two unprecedented things that have been demonstrated here today.

I ask the member to comment on how unfortunate it is to see the Liberals using this as an opportunity to try to play politics and pivot away from being found in contempt of Canadian democracy.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, the member for Wellington—Halton Hills said it best: It is up to all of us to protect the democratic institutions that we hold so dear, Parliament being one of them, obviously. We have seen, as I said earlier in my speech, a systemic pattern of what I would call abuse, on the part of the government, of the parliamentary privilege of members. We have seen it over and over in committees and in Parliament. We saw a prorogation of Parliament to take the heat off of the Liberals for a pretty significant issue that was happening with the WE scandal.

It is incumbent on all of us to protect this institution, and we must do so because we are privileged to sit in this place. I have said it many times, and I feel this way as the critic for veterans affairs and in all that I am as a Canadian. Lives have been lost, blood has been spilled and families have been decimated by war to allow us the privilege to sit in this place, and we must defend it, as they did.

• (2250)

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a question about consequences.

Privilege

I was present in the House when the Conservatives were in power and were found in contempt for not producing documents to the House. I remember when Conservative ministers, like Paul Calandra, refused to ever answer a direct question. Now I hear the Conservatives in this House speaking of the absolute need for transparency and accountability. I hope that represents a change in tone and a lesson learned.

I also heard the Liberals, when they were in opposition, similarly proclaim that they had seen a new day and that if they were in government, they would be transparent and accountable. Now we see them in government and they are not doing this.

Calling the president of the Public Health Agency to the bar and admonishing him is a consequence. Ordering him to bring documents is a consequence. Does the member feel that this is necessary so that political parties that claim allegiance to these high-minded principles when in opposition will not forget them when they are in government?

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member makes a very important point, because we have seen, over the course of several Parliaments, a lack of consequences. We have certainly seen it in the ethical violations of the Prime Minister, who effectively got a slap on the wrist. Some of the other consequences we have seen are the resignations of ministers.

This is why I know, as my party does, how important it is, for the sake of protecting democratic institutions, public trust and confidence among our fellow Canadians, to bring in measures of accountability, as we will be proposing in the next election, that have real consequences if members of Parliament act in a manner that is not respectful, breaks the law or amounts to ethics violations. This is the type of thing we can do to improve the confidence of our public institutions, of those who represent us and certainly of this Parliament.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise on behalf of the good people of Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola and join this serious debate. Obviously, the privilege motion and the finding by the Speaker mean that all business needs to stop so that we can discuss this issue, because there are some critical things at stake.

I will quickly read the motion so that people who are just joining in can hear it. It reads:

That this House find the Public Health Agency of Canada to be in contempt for its failure to obey the Order of the House, adopted on June 2, 2021, as well as the orders of the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations, adopted on March 31 and May 10, 2021, and, accordingly, orders its President to attend at the Bar of the House, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions on the second sitting day following the adoption of this Order, for the purposes of (a) receiving, on behalf of the Agency, an admonishment delivered by the Speaker; and (b) delivering up the documents ordered by this House, on June 2, 2021, to be produced, so that they may be deposited with the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel under the terms of that Order.

I would like to share my thoughts with the House tonight, and I hope members will indulge me, because I will be relevant.

First of all, I believe that any government in Canada, regardless of its stripe, should have the following three qualities: (a) it should try to be ambitious; (b) it should be competent in carrying out its duties; and (c) it needs to be accountable.

With respect to ambition, the Conservatives might say that we love this country as it is, we want to keep the country moving and we just want to be excellent at delivering public services. I certainly saw a lot of that during the Harper government. However, this government decided it would do things differently, and with hand on heart said it was going to be open and transparent.

Then Bill C-58 came along. Members and many people will know that it changed the Access to Information Act. However, it did not achieve the goal that was stated in 2015, which was opening up ministers' offices to access to information. Now, today, I hear more criticisms of it because of COVID, as access to information is not there.

Then we heard, "Let's plant two billion trees." Well, we have lost a number of seasons already since that promise was made in 2019, and the Liberals said this year that they were going to plant 30 million trees, which is 1.5% of the total amount. To put that in context, in British Columbia last year we planted over 314 million trees. Again, words and actions are not in line.

Lastly, on electoral reform, many people in my riding still remember that the Liberals made a promise, hand on heart, that the 2015 election would be the last one under first past the post.

The reason I raise those things is twofold. First of all, it gives people a sense of where they are going. Second, as parliamentarians, we really want to be able to engage with people, and people want to be engaged. They want us to tell them what we are going to do.

Now let us move to the competence side.

I share an office with MLA Dan Ashton in Summerland, and when people come in, there is one thing I hear most often from them. When we found out that the government, through the Canadian Armed Forces, was going to be doing joint military exercises for winter training with the Chinese military, people got really upset. They came in huffing and puffing. The same goes for the CanSino Biologics vaccination orders. When the government said in May 2020 that it was going to be doing this, people asked, "Why would the government work with a country like that?" This has nothing to do with nationality or ethnicity; it is just about working with the Communist Chinese government, which is known for breaking international norms.

This brings me to what has happened at the Winnipeg lab. It is a world-class facility, but there are some serious problems there. People have asked what is going on.

Privilege

This leads us from ambition to competence and now to accountability. This is where I come in, because my role is to hold the government to account. In fact, anyone who is not part of the executive, the cabinet or the government, and is a member of Parliament, must hold the government to account. That is responsible government. If the government cannot maintain the majority of support in the House, it falls and a new government comes in. Maybe it is after an election, maybe not; maybe a new government will form. However, that is the key point of accountability.

● (2255)

People ask these questions, but when we come to this place or go to a committee like the Canada-China relations committee or the health committee and ask questions of ministers, the ministers will not give substantive answers. In fact, they give answers that seem totally unrelated. They might be talking points, but the problem we have is that we cannot take those talking points back to our citizens, tell them these things and have them take us seriously.

Tonight, we heard from the member for Kingston and the Islands and the member for Ottawa South. The member for Ottawa South totally disregarded the motion. However, I asked the member for Kingston and the Islands something specific during debate: Does the member have knowledge of what is in the confidential documents that we are asking to look at so we can hold the government to account? He said no.

The ministers are not talking, but the members of Parliament who carry the government's water say there is no story here, there is nothing to see here and we are barking up the wrong tree. What are we supposed to take to our constituents? Multiple committees were stonewalled by the Public Health Agency of Canada. Maybe it was by order of the government. It sounds like there were some discussions back and forth, but ultimately we deserve the answers.

The government originally put out arguments about privacy. We know that the law clerk has a means to deal with that. The process is established and well done. I do not think anyone here would say that the law clerk has not done a spectacular job when it comes to monitoring privacy.

Then the Liberals spun off about national security. I take national security incredibly seriously, but by the same token, as a parliamentarian and an opposition member I want to hold the government to account. The ministers will not say anything, and the members who we debate with tell us that everything is magically fine and not to worry. They say we are barking up the wrong tree.

Where do we go now? How do we get these things done? We settle this by democracy. As Speaker Milliken pointed out, it is the right of Parliament to get unfettered documents.

We have put in place a process to make sure that national security and privacy risks are dealt with, but the Liberal government tried to slide this issue off to the NSICOP committee. It is a committee of parliamentarians, yes, but it is not of this chamber. It is not run in such a way that we, or even backbench Liberal MPs, can find out the information so we can judge for ourselves whether the government is doing a competent job regarding national security.

There may be serious breaches at the lab, where people need a very high security clearance. We have heard that the president resigned unexpectedly and that two members were fired. However, we cannot get basic answers about it. Then we found out that Ebola and other serious viruses were transferred with no material transfer agreement in place. We need those answers.

I do not know what is in the documents, but what I do know is that we have questions that need to be answered, and we will get answers. If we do not, what then? With a Prime Minister who has shown very little regard for Parliament as an institution, where will we go? This is what I always worry about.

We have been given a very special trust by Canadians. They basically tell us to hold the government to account and make sure it does good things so they can be proud of our institutions. That is a tall order. We will do that, but we will only be able to do it if we get the correct information. All members in this place want to be proud of being in this country. We want to know that our government is doing all it can to protect national security, and that it is doing so in a competent way.

● (2300)

Asking questions is not anti-patriotic. In fact, it is patriotic for us to say that we expect the best of our government. I do hope members will vote in favour of this motion.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier I asked the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan why it was a public servant and not the government that was named in this motion, and why he was willing to sacrifice the career of a public servant for political gain. In response to that question, I heard the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan say that he would sacrifice the careers of 1,000 public servants if necessary.

Notwithstanding the fact that I am very surprised that the NDP and the Bloc would go along with the motion, given the fact that the Conservatives are willing to sacrifice the careers of public servants over it, would the member like to indicate if he, too, shares the sentiments of the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan? Is he willing to sacrifice the careers of thousands of public servants over this?

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I like to stay rooted in practical reality and not let overheated rhetoric rule the day.

What I will say is that the Public Health Agency of Canada is the trustee of those documents. We want to have those documents. We would like to call them to this place so they can be deposited, and to send a signal from Parliament that we have asked for the information and that we and this institution will be respected. That is protecting the integrity of this House.

Privilege

The second thing I would say is that we would look at the documents, and we would be careful with them because obviously we want to be sensitive to both privacy and national security. Then we would make our judgment on whether or not a further censure of the government, the Prime Minister, or perhaps the Minister of Health, needs to be carried forward.

However, we do not need overheated rhetoric. We need a better sense of what is going on, please.

• (2305)

[*Translation*]

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

In all honesty, I would have preferred to talk about the environment this evening, but maybe it is because of the Liberal government's lack of transparency that we are here. How is it possible? We do not have an answer to that question.

Why does my colleague think that the documents were sent to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, contrary to what was ordered?

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Prime Minister has set a tone from the top down in his government. Quite honestly, that tone is one of disregard for Parliament. I do not take it as being personally against parliamentarians in general. I believe he simply thinks that this is the way he would like it, so this is the way it should be.

NSICOP may be valuable for our national security agencies and our intelligence committees to be able to see what the values of parliamentarians are based on the context of their operations. The Prime Minister could also learn from those as well.

However, that is not accountability. That is a form of checking in with the values of parliamentarians that are on that committee. It is not the accountability of this House, and it is not a committee of this House. As has been said before, NSICOP could actually be ordered by a minister or the Prime Minister to stop reviewing a particular file. That is not what we are asking for here.

We need more light and less deflection from the government.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have seen the government routinely defy ethical codes. The Prime Minister has violated the ethical code more times than any other prime minister in Canadian history. Liberals do not take seriously the fact that this is a breach of privilege.

I would like to ask my colleague from Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola why he thinks the Liberals are refusing to take what is a breach of an order of the House, a very important thing, as the Speaker has indicated, and this debate seriously.

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, if one is not part of the cabinet, the executive, then one has the responsibility to hold the government to account. Maybe that happens in the government caucus. However, I imagine that there are many people who just kind of raise their eyebrows.

The member for Cumberland—Colchester made the motion for the production of documents on the Canada-China committee. There are members, backbench Liberals who want to know. What we need from the government, as I said, is more light, more clarity and less deflection.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start, as I have started a number of speeches throughout my career, by talking a bit about one of my favourite political philosophers and building on what the previous member said. He talked about more light. To me, that brought up one of the greatest allegories in the history of political philosophy, which is *The Allegory of the Cave*.

The Allegory of the Cave is of course foundational to political philosophy. It has been cited literally millions of times in the preceding 2,000 years. *The Allegory of the Cave* says to imagine children who, nearly since birth, instead of being raised in the sunlight of day, are put in front of a wall with a flame behind them, so the only thing they see are shadows on the wall. Because it is all they have ever seen, they believe that is reality. They have no possible way of knowing there is a great big world outside. All they see are these shadows of these puppets on the wall, and so they believe that what reality is.

As the story goes, as Socrates tells the story, one individual gets up and sees the outside world. He sees it is amazing and that there is so much more than just shadows on the wall. The tragedy of the story is that, when he comes back, because his eyes have difficulty seeing in the dark, all the other prisoners think he has been blinded, so they never want to go outside in the world.

The relevance, as I am sure the member for Kingston and the Islands is about ready to raise a point of order, is that this is directly relevant to what is happening here, as we are just seeing the shadows. We have newspaper reports and little bits of the story. The Prime Minister is willing to explain and give the unredacted documents to a committee of parliamentarians but not a committee of Parliament. This is the very definition of seeing the shadows on the wall but not actually getting to see the reality.

With that, I would like to go through some of the chronology of what has happened here. This has not been a rush to order. This has not been any type of parliamentary tactic. The evidence being that the first issue occurred on March 31 when with the committee of Canada-China relations adopted a motion ordering the Public Health Agency of Canada to produce within 20 days unredacted copies of all the records of dismissal of the two individuals in question.

Privilege

On April 26, what PHAC finally provided was heavily redacted. This goes against parliamentary sovereignty and parliamentary supremacy. Speaker Milliken ruled that Parliament has the absolute unmitigated right to demand whichever documents they have. It should also be noted Parliament did not demand these documents be publicly disclosed, but that they go to an officer of Parliament, the law clerk, an individual in whom I am sure all parliamentarians have the highest level of confidence, for review.

On May 10, the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations adopted a second motion ordering the production within 10 days of the unredacted copies of all documents related to the dismissal of Dr. Xiangguo Qiu and her husband Dr. Keding Cheng relating to the transfer of deadly viruses to the Wuhan Institute of Virology. The motion called for the documents to be reviewed in camera by the special committee with the law clerk of the House to determine what information was to be made public.

After the committee failed to receive that, on May 20, the Public Health Agency of Canada provided heavily redacted documents, which did not satisfy the order of May 10. On May 26, this matter was of course reported to the House, at which point we brought a motion for those additional documents. The motion of censure that is in question today—

• (2310)

The Speaker: I have to interrupt the hon. member. We have a point of order from the hon. member Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

Mr. Alex Ruff: Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. member forgot to mention that he intends to split his time with the member for Calgary Nose Hill.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, I was honestly getting to that. I would never forget the fabulous member for Calgary Nose Hill, who, I am sure everyone will agree, is one of the best parliamentarians in all of Canada. I would certainly never ever forget about her or any others, although the reminder is greatly appreciated.

I will read the motion into the record. We went through a series of steps, and we asked over and over again for the documents. Unfortunately, the government failed to provide them. The motion reads:

That this House find the Public Health Agency of Canada to be in contempt for its failure to obey the Order of the House, adopted on June 2, 2021, as well as the orders of the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations, adopted on March 31 and May 10, 2021, and, accordingly, orders its President to attend at the Bar of the House, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions on the second sitting day following the adoption of this Order, for the purposes of (a) receiving, on behalf of the Agency, an admonishment delivered by the Speaker, and (b) delivering up the documents ordered by this House, on June 2, 2021, to be produced, so that they may be deposited with the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel under the terms of that Order.

The Speaker made an excellent ruling on this. If we were to follow the rules of criminal justice, and I am not saying this is criminal, but using it as an analogy, once we got to the realm of deciding what the punishment should be, we would look at a suspect's former conduct. We cannot decide guilt or innocence on this, but we can use the Liberals' previous conduct to decide what type of censure or penalty we should focus on.

We look at the SNC-Lavalin affair, which was a significant potential interference in our judiciary system, and we look at the WE scandal, or the numerous other ethical breaches of the government, and we have to take this seriously. We have to review the past indiscretions when we see this indiscretion, which is disobeying the supremacy of Parliament.

Another great political philosopher Edmund Burke said, "The greater the power, the more dangerous the abuse." When we know there is no more powerful office in the land than that of the Prime Minister and there are no concerns more important than that of national security, we have to take this with the utmost seriousness. I am sure that all parliamentarians will agree and look forward to unanimous support for this censure motion.

I continue to be extremely disappointed. As I said at the outset, I want to wake up from looking at the shadows and seeing the bits and pieces to see the outside world and the real threat posed by the Communist regime in Beijing.

• (2315)

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, I take national security very seriously, and I agree that we need to hold the government to account. There have been a number of serious ethical breaches.

In 1949, China became a Communist country. It has not changed. We know it is still a Communist country. On August 22, 2013, Conservative defence minister Rob Nicholson signed an agreement to deepen military co-operation with China. We had the Canada-China FIPA, signed in 2012, which gives Chinese state-owned corporations a great degree of power to challenge our laws and policies.

I would ask the hon. member when Chinese scientists started working at this level 4 National Microbiology Lab in Winnipeg. We know there was a similar breach in 2009 when samples were taken from the lab. Was the Harper Conservative government complicit in having Chinese scientists working at this lab?

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his concern with respect to national security.

Let us look at what is in front of us today. There was a serious breach and we need to focus like a laser on making sure that what happened does not happen again. We do not even know what happened because once again we are looking at just the shadows on the wall.

Sunlight, as the Prime Minister famously said, is the best disinfectant. We need to get transparency while balancing that with the confidentiality required for national security. Clearly, Parliament has spoken. We want those documents.

Privilege

• (2320)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like many, I have been listening carefully to what the official opposition is up to and their mischief.

We have a few days left: Thursday, Friday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. We have important legislation. We are supposed to be debating the budget today, not to mention conversion therapy, net zero and other very important pieces of legislation.

Does the member believe that we are maximizing the benefits for Canadians by having this debate this evening to the degree that the Conservative Party members want to continue to filibuster the government's legislation?

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his prolonged service and many words in the House.

Clearly this is not mischief and I would take great offence to that. This is national security. There is nothing more important than protecting the citizens of this great land. To call that mischief is just ridiculous.

On top of that, it was the member's government that prorogued Parliament. We could have passed Bill C-10 and other bills already passed if the Liberals were not so busy trying to avoid the WE scandal by proroguing Parliament.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on an earlier question I asked about consequences and what the long-term impact of this matter is.

Governments come and go, but what has happened to this government over the last 18 months is a pattern has developed of Liberals simply flouting democratically passed motions in this House of Commons. They have done it with the production of health documents, refusing to deliver them, ignoring the instructions of redacting, and they are doing it with impunity. Documents were supposed to be presented to the health committee on December 7. It is now June and they simply have not done it.

I am wondering if my hon. colleague has any concerns about the future of Canadian government when a particular administration simply ignores a validly passed democratic resolution of Parliament and gets away with it. Is this something that he thinks is in the service of the long-term interests of the Canadian people and Canadian democracy?

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank the member for his excellent advocacy. Quite frankly, what upsets me is not that the Liberals flouted Parliament. We are the representatives of the people, so the people of Northumberland—Peterborough South, the great people decided to send me here and I am their representative. When the government says no, we cannot have that, it is saying no to the people who are our ultimate bosses and it is that connection to people that separates us from so many despotic regimes around the world.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am going to start my speech by saying that the ultimate role of any member of Parliament is to hold the government to ac-

count. If a member of Parliament does not hold a government appointment, such as parliamentary secretary or minister, and is not part of the executive branch of government, the member's job is to hold the government to account regardless of political stripe.

What we are debating here tonight is an issue of Parliament holding the government to account on a very serious issue. Parliament heard of a potentially very serious national security issue that occurred at the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg, involving two scientists who may have ties to the Chinese Communist Party and also be involved in the transfer of very serious biological materials that could have public health consequences.

In terms of the role of Parliament holding the government to account, there was a pretty obvious question which ensued, which was what happened here. Were national security protocols followed? Are the national security protocols that are in place to prevent this type of situation adequate? Do we need to fix it? That is actually the role of Parliament to address.

On June 2, there was a House of Commons order which passed. Parliament debated and passed a motion that would require the government to hand over to the House of Commons documents about what happened in this situation. Again, this is the role of Parliament holding the government to account.

The government elected to defy this House order and proper procedure was followed. A question of privilege was raised in the House of Commons. Mr. Speaker, you ruled that privilege was broken because the government had an obligation to follow the order of the House so that it could be held to account.

What we are debating here tonight is a motion to address the consequence of that breach of privilege. This is very important because when the government chooses to defy the will of Parliament, it is choosing to defy the will of the Canadian people. Each of us here represents a group of Canadians. There need to be consequences for that action in order for democratic principles to be upheld, but, more important, to ensure that we can get to the bottom of this and that good public policy is applied.

This matter is not a light one that we are addressing here tonight. It is a very serious potential national security issue. It is our role to ask those questions of adequacy of procedure and then also to determine measures of censure for those who were involved in defying the House order. That is actually our job, and that is what we are here to do tonight.

The motion that we are debating tonight, in terms of censure, would require the president of the Public Health Agency of Canada to attend the bar of the House for the purposes of receiving an admonishment delivered by you, Mr. Speaker, and to also deliver up the documents as passed by the House order.

Why is this an appropriate censure? I want to debunk a few of the Liberal talking points tonight. I am actually hoping that Liberal members of Parliament will understand that their role is to first hold the government to account, not to be partisan. Let me debunk the three Liberal talking points that I have heard in debate tonight.

Privilege

The first is that some documents were handed over to a committee, NSICOP. I want to be very clear. This is not a committee of Parliament. For the government to hand over documents to a committee that was not specified in the House order that meets in secrecy is not meeting the terms of the House order, so that is a bunk talking point. The government is factually not in compliance with the House order and requires to be censured on that point alone. The Liberals do not get to choose where it goes. To take the acronym out would be like the government saying it decided to send the documents to any other committee of their choosing. That is not how it works. It was a House order. The government has to be compliant with the House order. That is debunked Liberal talking point number one.

• (2325)

Number two is another one that I heard, which was that if the House decided to it, it would be trying to destroy a public servant's career, but that is also bunk. The president of the Public Health Agency of Canada serves at the pleasure of the people of Canada, not the Liberal Party of Canada. In choosing to be complicit in the Liberal Party's decision to not hand these documents over, he is also complicit in violating this House order. He had a role. His salary is paid by the taxpayers of Canada. He had a role to actually advise the minister and government that they have to be compliant with this or resign. He had a choice and he chose to be complicit in this, so he should be admonished.

I could list a variety of other issues where the Public Health Agency of Canada has failed Canadians over the last year. We are debating a matter at the health committee right now about the government being in violation of the order to hand over vaccine contracts in an unredacted format. We will be addressing that at health committee. I could also address his flippancy or his lack of understanding of the gravity of the situation of sexual assaults at quarantine hotels and the response that he gave to me at committee. I could address the fact that today there were reports that the former president of the Public Health Agency of Canada spent close to \$19,000 on a personal toilet at the agency. Clearly, something is amiss there.

To the matter at hand, defying an order of Parliament is something that a public servant should think twice about. We are not a dictatorship, yet, I hope, and public servants do not get to just defy the will of Parliament. That is not what we pay them to do, so censure in this matter for him is important because it sends a message to the rest of the public servants to understand who they are accountable to.

The third point that I heard tonight was that this is not about mischief. Let us think about that for a second. This is a very serious matter. There was an order from the House to the government to hand over documents and it was not complied with. This is a very serious matter. The government members also talked about using up time with House debate for other matters. This is a matter of privilege. It takes precedence in the House.

My colleague who just spoke and graciously shared his time with me talked about the fact that the government prorogued Parliament and used a lot of time up that it could have used for a legislative agenda. It is not Parliament's problem that the government House

leader cannot figure out how to schedule legislation. That is not my problem nor of the people I represent. A breach of privilege surely is and there needs to be consequences for that.

There is no talking point on which this stands. We are either a democracy or we are not. Getting to the bottom of what happened with a potential major and national security issue is fairly important, but understanding that the will of Parliament is supreme is equally as important, as are my privileges in the House. There is no talking point on which the government stands.

I think what I am hearing tonight in debate is that there is consensus emerging certainly among opposition parties that, in the interest of democracy, this censure motion should be supported. I certainly think it should be supported.

As was said in debate by other members tonight, it does not matter what flavour of government is in power. There has to be some consequence for this sort of an issue. We have outlined that tonight.

I will just make one more point as well. The original order actually talked about the ability to address matters of national security right in it. I will just say this. This is a very important issue. I feel that the censure that is provided in this motion is well addressed and well aimed. There should be consequences for violating the will of Parliament and breaching the privilege of members like myself. I encourage all of my colleagues, including members of the Liberal Party, to support this motion in support of democracy and in support of the primacy of Parliament.

• (2330)

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to state for the record what a privilege it has been to work with my hon. colleague on the health committee and how I could not agree with her more when she states the fundamental obligation of opposition, and frankly all members of Parliament, is to hold a government accountable.

I want to state that, at its most basic, what this is about. Of course, there are facts and issues that every government prefers not to see the light of date because they do not suit its narrative, may show it has mishandled a situation or just make it look incompetent. That is precisely the work of opposition, to ferret those issues out so the Canadian public has a full view of the entire record of a government so they can cast a meaningful ballot during an election, which everybody in this country seems to think is going to happen in the fall.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague this. How important is it that the Canadian people get accurate information about what happened in the Winnipeg lab and how the current federal government has handled it in order for Canadians to cast a meaningful ballot at the next federal election?

Privilege

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I would like to echo my colleague's compliment back at him. It has been a pleasure to serve with him and work with him on the health committee over the last several months. He has a shared commitment to serving the interests of Canadians in the best way possible and to work across party lines to get that done in a time of need.

His question relates to the severity of the situation at hand. In a prior life, I worked with the intellectual property management part of the University of Manitoba. We did work with the National Microbiology Lab. I understand the types of materials that are transferred through there in a very intimate way. They need to be treated with a great degree of security and safety. It is up to Parliament to ensure those protocols are adequate and are followed. We cannot do that unless we have the information that was requested in the House. That is why this order must be completed and this motion tonight should be adopted.

• (2335)

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was doing a little research today and on November 27, 2015, there was a document posted on the Prime Minister of Canada website. It is a 107-page document entitled, "Open and Accountable Government". I want to quote a couple of lines from there.

It states:

The trust of Canadians will also rest on the accountability of our government. In our system, the highest manifestation of democratic accountability is the forum of Parliament.

My question for my hon. colleague is this. She has been here many years more than me. I am a relatively new member and she has much experience. Is she surprised or shocked at all at how far the current government will go to cover up the details of the transfer of these dangerous viruses to China?

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, "sunshine is the best disinfectant". Parliament should review what happened because we need to understand what happened and how to fix this problem to ensure it never happens again. That is our duty to the Canadian people.

We need these documents so we can propose policy to move forward, ensure that if protocols were not followed those who were in charge of that are censured and not put in positions of responsibility, so the Canadian public can be assured of their public safety. That is the role of Parliament and the government should not be preventing Parliament from undertaking its role in that regard.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I feel like we are seriously getting gaslit on this, especially around the accusation of mischief. The whole point of this is the government is failing to answer to Parliament and the Liberals are accusing us of holding up this place. We have seen this not only with these documents, but also with the recognition of the Uighur genocide and calling the IRG a terrorist organization. The current government completely ignores Parliament, but when Parliament does not do exactly what it wants, it accuses us of mischief. I wonder if my colleague has any comments around that.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, Parliament is supreme. I would love to get the vaccine contracts that were

promised under a House order and a subsequent order of the health committee. We have spent billions of taxpayer dollars on them and we do not understand what recourse is available to us regarding the contractual obligations that have clearly not been followed up. The Canadian public has the right to know that so they can make decisions on who is governing them in the future and whether or not the policy is adequate. This is how democracy functions and it is not functioning right now, which is why the Speaker made this ruling and why we need a censure in place. I certainly hope all colleagues will support this motion so we can get on with the business of making adjustments to ensure Canadian public safety is put in place.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to stand in this House to address the pressing issues facing this country, but the subject we are debating here tonight is unfortunate. It is a very serious question that has been brought forward to all parliamentarians about the actions of the government, specifically an agency of government, that has truly called into question some of the very basic democratic principles that our nation is built on.

In the Speaker's Ruling earlier today, it very specifically outlined why this debate needs to take place, that the actions of the government are contemptuous and violate the privileges of who we are as a democracy. I want to touch on that word "privilege" for all of those, and I am sure there are many folks watching these proceedings, who need to understand.

Privilege is a word that is often referred to as something that has to do with status. Parliamentary privilege is a little different. It speaks to the primacy of what democracy is in our country, the fact that our democratic system elevates Parliament, the House of Commons, the lower chamber of Canada's Parliament, to be the voice of its people. Every square inch of this nation is represented by the 338 seats within this chamber.

I do find it very interesting. A question I ask students when I am speaking to classes is simply this, "What is the highest elected office in our land?" Many students think it is a trick question. They point out a number of things. Sometimes they will refer to the executive, the Prime Minister and the Governor General on occasion. It kind of depends on where they are in the social studies curriculum. There are a few students who do understand the reality of the member of Parliament, and the primacy of Parliament, the role that Parliament plays in our nation.

It is absolutely key to the discussion that we are having here tonight, and how fundamental it is for the future of our country. I want to thank the Speaker for being that custodian of this House, that custodian of Canada's democracy in so thoughtfully addressing such an important issue, and for the opposition House leader to bring forward a motion that outlined some specific action items that would be an adequate response to the contemptuous behaviour of government, and specifically an agency of government that is called to the bar.

Privilege

Again, this is kind of a parliamentary term. Most people out there would not understand the history behind the bar of Parliament, what that represents and the strong millennia of tradition associated with that dating back centuries in the United Kingdom. To call an individual to the bar is a significant thing with significant symbolism, which bears out how significant this debate is. Further, the action item of calling upon the government to actually do what Parliament has said that it needs to do.

I find it tragic that we have to have this debate, that the Liberals have taken it upon themselves and developed a culture where they refuse to acknowledge that Canada is even a democracy. That is troubling on every level. I often hear from constituents about how absolutely fundamental it is that we steward our democracy well, especially at a time where we see so many aspects of that being challenged.

I would note how this particular motion has done something that is quite unprecedented. It has united the majority of members of Parliament, representing a number of different opposition parties, the official opposition being one of them. I have heard very thoughtful speeches from members representing all opposition parties this evening that acknowledge the significance of what we are debating here tonight.

● (2340)

It is fascinating and unprecedented, I think, to see how united all opposition parties and a majority of members of Parliament are in acknowledging how serious this is. Further, the second thing that is unprecedented is to see the flippant attitude that the government has used to approach such a serious issue.

I find it incredible and disappointing beyond belief that the government would take such an unserious approach and contemptuous approach to this. In fact, I find it interesting. A number of the speeches from the governing Liberals emphasized why this debate is even necessary with the ignorance and arrogance they approached Canada's democratic institutions with.

This has to be met with a serious tone and it is so unfortunate that has not been the case. I would note this motion that came from the committee that started this whole process included Liberal support. I would simply ask, where those members are now? Why are they not taking this seriously? Is it possible that the executive branch of our government, the Prime Minister and cabinet ministers, have demanded silence on such an important issue?

It is a national shame; those members stood up in committee, to much political risk, I would suggest, especially with how the government has responded to the motion here today. It is a significant political risk. They have been silenced or are silent here tonight, and that is incredibly unfortunate and chips away at the strength of Canada's democracy.

When we look at this, we need to expand the context a bit. This is not a singular event. That is a key part of what we are discussing here. This motion and the actions leading up to it are not a singular event. I know some of my colleagues who have spoken before me have outlined aspects of that.

From the position of being on Zoom, we kind of have an interesting window into the perspectives of Liberal members. Whenever things are brought up about the Prime Minister, specifically his record, they are often shaking their heads. They are dismissing the seriousness of what some of his actions, or actions of the cabinet ministers, will have and the serious implications that will have on Canadian democracy.

The trust for what our democratic system is needs to be at the very forefront of everything we do. Democracy is fragile and the failure to recognize that could have disastrous consequences for the future of our country.

We see numerous examples from the Prime Minister's conduct, whether it be the numerous ethics violations, or the contemptuous way he treats Parliament and the will of Parliament, especially during a minority. It was not bad when the government was in the majority status because there was a level of control exerted, but ever since losing that, there has been a massive deterioration that has taken place.

We have seen time and time again the disregard for ethics, disregard for effective leadership and the absolute disregard for morals and ethics through cabinet decisions. It has been incredibly tragic and an erosion of trust within government.

There have been international embarrassments. Even this past weekend, when Bloomberg reported that the Prime Minister piped up and said he could be the dean of the G7 to help negotiate between the United Kingdom and Europe. The sense that I got when reading the response of international players was one that clearly shows that Canada is not taken seriously on the international stage. We see examples of judicial interference, and cabinet ministers being—

● (2345)

The Deputy Speaker: We have a point of order from the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the member can explain to you what the relevance of a G7 summit is to the motion that is before us today. We have heard numerous times today, in particular when the member for Ottawa South and I stood, about the importance of relevance. It has been ruled on a number of times today. Perhaps, you can encourage the member to come back to the discussion at hand, which is the motion that is before us.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands with respect to his point of order. Members know that they have to address their arguments in a way that is relevant to the motion before the House. I was listening to the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot and while, yes, he has been on this tangent, he opened with framing that as an example for the point he was making.

In these cases, when members choose to use these kinds of examples, it is relevant to the topic at hand as long as they tie those two elements together. I note the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot is halfway through his remarks and I am sure he will keep his remarks germane to the question at hand.

The hon. member.

Privilege

• (2350)

Mr. Damien Kurek: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. I did preface some of these examples by saying that this debate tonight was not without context, the larger context of what has been six years of failure, contempt for Canada's democratic principles.

I know there is also other important business that the House has to get to and I will simply bring my speech to a conclusion. I know I have articulated a number of concerns as have other members from all parties, especially the opposition parties, which have articulated very well some of the concerns our nation and our democratic infrastructure are facing. This motion strikes to the heart of what Canadian democracy is about.

I would call upon all members elected to this esteemed chamber to take seriously the need to support the motion in order to steward that democracy, which we all have the responsibility to do, to ensure that our democratic institutions are protected, not only for today but that they do not simply become a footnote in history, that the supremacy of Parliament and all that means is ensured for us today, tomorrow and for future generations of Canadians.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, right now, various cabinet ministers and MPs from the government are characterizing tonight's debate as a filibuster of the government's budget. Given the gravity of the issues we are dealing with this evening, essentially a motion finding the government in contempt of Parliament, I wonder if the member could comment on whether the characterization of this as a filibuster bodes well for the government respecting Parliament in the future.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, the member touches on an important issue. I have noted in question period over the last number of weeks and throughout the Liberals' history that whenever something starts not going their way, they simply pivot and blame everyone else. They yell and scream at the top of their lungs and concoct, manufacture, fabricate, in many cases, a story that has little resemblance to the truth. That is what we see here today.

Members have said that this is somehow delaying things that could have been passed months ago. Parliament did not have to be adjourned for so many months, especially when other democratic countries figured out a way to make their parliaments work. In fact, provinces in this country figured out a way to make their legislatures work in the midst of the pandemic.

I see members of the Liberal Party shaking their heads. They must not like the democratic accountability aspect of what parliamentarians are calling for and demand, and what Canadians need.

There is a lot more that I could say on this, but absolutely, it is a national shame that the Liberals would suggest this is somehow a filibuster when it touches the very heart of what Canadians—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I really enjoyed listening to the debate tonight and the intervention from the member for Battle River—Crowfoot as well as many thoughtful interventions from many members from all the opposition parties.

There is a simple solution for government members who did not want this privilege debate to happen: They could hand over the documents. It is not as if the government defied one order of the House; there were three consecutive orders that repeated the same demand. In at least one of those cases, Liberal members of the Canada-China committee joined us in making that demand.

Therefore, if the Liberals are frustrated that we are having this conversation tonight, they only have themselves to blame. All they had to do and all they have to do now is say that they will abide by the ruling of the Speaker, that they will recognize the authority of Parliament and that they will hand over the documents in a secure way to the law clerk and parliamentary counsel.

I will implore the government again. None of this has to happen. None of this is what anybody here wanted. We are imposing necessary consequences to defend the rights of Parliament. All the government has to do is hand over the documents and if it refuses to hand over the documents, the real question is, what is it hiding? What is so important to hide that the government brought us to this point?

• (2355)

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely true. We would not be here today if the Liberal government had a shred of respect for Canada's democratic institutions. Again, it is a national shame that there is such disregard for Canada's institutions, members of Parliament and the will of Parliament, that the Liberals would play games, putting our very democracy at risk.

The answer is quite simple. Canadians deserve better, full stop. The mandate given to this Parliament after the last election was very clear. A majority of the House is not Liberals, and we have, as members of Parliament, as a Parliament as whole, the ability to make decisions accordingly.

Our traditions and history have shown that there is a Liberal minority government and the Prime Minister is leader of the executive. That is fair and that is fine. However, opposition parties are the majority in the House, and we see a tremendous amount of unity—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have asked this question of several Conservative members today and none of them seem to want to answer it. They try to deflect and they try to suggest why it is still the government's fault.

In the member's speech, he never once spoke about the president of the Public Health Agency of Canada despite the fact that he is the one who is being called before the bar to be properly lectured to by the Speaker. He is the one who is being summoned before Parliament should this motion pass.

Government Orders

Could the member explain to the House why he focused his entire speech talking about the failings of the government with respect to this, yet the motion that is before the House does not reference calling the government, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Health, any government official or cabinet minister before the bar? Could he explain to us why the motion has been crafted in such a way as to not hold those accountable that every single Conservative speech today has said are accountable?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, I find it very unfortunate that the member obviously did not listen to my speech, and I would encourage him to simply go back and read carefully or watch the video of what I said. I think he would find that he has become so blinded by partisanship and the inability to respect the institutions of Parliament, that the Liberals will to turn a blind eye to actions of contempt.

When it comes to protecting and stewarding the democratic principle of our country, every member of Parliament needs to take that incredibly seriously. The fact that Liberals, and that member in particular, many times this evening have dismissed that with such utter disregard, speaks to the attitude that obviously comes from the top, of an admiration for a basic dictatorship that would bring democracy down in our country. As I have said a number of times, it is a national shame that it has come to this point in our country.

• (2400)

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I came to the House I was a lawyer. When trained in the law, one understands and learns about debate with respect, treating our institutions with respect and treating our courts with respect. Therefore, when I became a member of Parliament, I actually thought I had elevated myself to a place where the rule of law, the decorum and the credibility of the institution were even higher. Unfortunately, I do not always find my colleagues have that same viewpoint.

What kind of precedent does my colleague feel this sets? If this is allowed to go without sanction, if there is a purposeful and open contempt for an order of Parliament, where does that leave us as a governing body to go forward? Then what rules would apply? I am interested in what the member might say about that.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, although I am not a lawyer but a student of Canadian politics, the member strikes on such an important issue: the need and the demand that we have as parliamentarians to steward the processes, what this institution represents, and to ensure that it is done with the utmost respect for the benefit of Canadians.

I spoke often in the last election, from when I first announced my nomination all the way up to referencing it often to my staff and constituents about the need for good governance. We see at the very heart of so many of the challenges we face that this is a symptom of a failure of good governance. We need to return this country to a point where there is good governance once again, that Canadians, regardless of their political affiliation, can at least trust the government that is in power and although they may not like the decisions, trust the institutions and the fact that their government is working for the best interests of the nation.

We need a return to good governance in our country. The precedent that is being set time and again by the government is troubling and is eroding the trust that is necessary to sustain democracy in Canada.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is as follows. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

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

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, I believe it is critically important that all members of Parliament stand to be counted on this important matter of government democratic accountability. Therefore, I request a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, pursuant to an order made on Monday, January 25, the division stands deferred until later this day at the expiry of the time for Oral Questions.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (2405)

[*English*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2021, NO. 1

The House resumed from June 14 consideration of Bill C-30, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 19, 2021 and other measures, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of Motion No. 2.

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is great to rise virtually in the House today to speak to such an important topic, a topic that is of interest to all Canadians: jobs and the economy.

First, I would like to point out that here we go again with another omnibus bill by the Liberals. Let me remind the Liberals what their leader, the Prime Minister, said about omnibus legislation: “I wouldn't use them, period.” It is not surprising they are breaking yet another one of their promises. After all, that is the rule for the Liberal government, not the exception. Canadians are tired of their broken promises and poor performance, especially when it comes to creating jobs and growing our economy. Their tenure in the past six years has been a massive economic letdown.

They will try to respond with well-crafted talking points after I am done with my speech, I am sure of that. I must admit that they are pretty good at the rhetoric. In fact, they are probably the best at it. Unfortunately for them, Canadians see what Conservatives see: The Liberals' rhetoric is just that, words, rarely any actions. The same is also true of their record on the economy. The government's philosophy of growing the economy and creating jobs is by doing everything it can to get in the way.

Government Orders

Unemployed Canadians were hoping that the government would put forward a plan to create new jobs and economic opportunities. These families are going to feel let down by this budget. Workers who have had their wages cut and hours slashed, hoping to see a plan to reopen the economy, are also going to feel let down. Families that cannot afford more taxes and are struggling to save more money for their children's education or to buy a home are going to feel let down by this legislation.

Speaking of buying a home, it is becoming more and more out of reach for far too many Canadians. The cost of housing continues to rise, making it nearly impossible for first-time homebuyers to enter the market. That is why last week Conservatives demanded that the Prime Minister take immediate action to address the housing crisis in Canada. It does not seem like the Liberals are taking it seriously, however. In fact, they voted against addressing the growing housing affordability crisis.

On a larger scale, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has noted that a significant amount of Liberal spending in the budget will not stimulate jobs or create economic growth, as is always the case with that side of the House. It is very clear that the Prime Minister's stimulus fund was more about spending on Liberal partisan priorities than anything else. The Prime Minister will add more to our national debt than all previous prime ministers combined.

What has the Prime Minister achieved with all this spending? For one, Canada has consistently had one of the highest unemployment rates in the G7 and a record economic decline. In fact, the Liberal government has spent more and delivered less than any other G7 country. This bears repeating, considering the Liberals come up with all sorts of talking points on excuses for their failures. The government and the Prime Minister have spent unprecedented amounts of money, more than all previous Canadian governments combined. The Edmonton Sun writes, "Canadian babies born on federal budget day 2021 had more than \$28,000 of debt the moment they open their eyes." That is each Canadian's share of the federal government's \$1-trillion debt, and it is only going to go up.

The Liberal government has delivered less than any other G7 country and is responsible for one of the highest unemployment rates in the G7, along with a record economic decline. Last week, Statistics Canada reported that Canada's unemployment rate climbed to 8.2%. It also reported that 68,000 jobs were lost in the month of May alone. We lost 68,000 jobs while our American cousins added 559,000 jobs. What is more, businesses in the U.S. are hiring at such speed that they cannot find enough workers to fill vacant positions.

Yes, it is also important to keep things in perspective. I cannot say this enough. We support getting help to those who have been hit hard by the pandemic, and to the government's credit, programs rolled out and have helped many people. Conservatives were there with the government, working together to extend emergency support programs during the crisis. We have worked tirelessly to make these programs more effective, and I think my hon. colleagues across the aisle would agree.

We are also fully aware that the jobs lost in May were, in large part, due to provincial restrictions put in place as a result of the third wave of the pandemic. That is a fact, but why did the third

wave come with such ferocity, forcing provincial governments to implement yet another lockdown? Why did Sean, a small business owner in my riding, in business for the past 30 years, have to take on \$160,000 in additional debt just to stay afloat, and that is after he spent his life savings?

● (2410)

The answer is the government's delays in procuring vaccines, the government's delays in closing the border and the government's ineffective rapid-testing strategy. Why did the travel and tourism industry and so many other sectors have to suffer so badly and for so long? By the way, many of those businesses are not coming back. The answer, once again, is the government's delays in procuring vaccines, its delays in closing the border and its ineffective rapid-testing strategy.

I do not think I am exaggerating when I say that the travel and tourism industry has been nearly crushed. It is terrible, what has happened to those businesses. I have heard many of the sector's concerns in the tourism recovery caucus, headed by my colleagues from Niagara Falls and Banff—Airdrie. My two colleagues have done an incredible job staying connected to stakeholders, listening to industry challenges and taking action where they can. These are two great members of Parliament, and I commend them on their efforts, as we all try to deal with the fallout of this pandemic in its hardest-hit areas.

Back to my question, why are so many small businesses hurting to this extent at this time? The answer is simple. For the most part, they were not allowed to stay open, because of the government's and the Prime Minister's failures to act on vaccines, the border and rapid testing. Furthermore, this is what the National Post had to say about the Liberal government's pandemic response: "The Liberals' most galling pandemic failure—they couldn't even master basic inventory control". That is a pretty accurate statement.

Last year, the Prime Minister was denied vaccines by the Chinese communist regime, and, most importantly, he did not sign contracts with other companies until it was too late. That is a classic example of putting all eggs in one basket. In this situation, the Prime Minister relied on a Chinese-based company, which basically means that he relied on the Chinese communist regime. What could possibly go wrong? In doing so, he neglected other companies working on the vaccine, which delayed procuring vaccines from them.

Government Orders

This failure to act is why we are seeing many countries, including our neighbours to the south, ahead of us by at least three months in their vaccination efforts and reopening plans. I think we have all seen the packed sports events on TV in many U.S. cities, but here in Canada we are still on lockdowns.

It is important to mention that Conservatives were first to call for strong and clear border measures at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, the Liberals dragged their heels, going as far as to say that border control measures do not work, while calling us racist for suggesting that border measures are necessary to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

We also fought hard to get Canadians better tools to stop the spread of COVID-19, like vaccines, therapeutics, rapid tests and better data. Those tools now exist; however, the government has not come up with a comprehensive and effective plan to use them to safely lift the restrictions. The government loves to blame provincial premiers, but let us face it, the Liberals do not provide the necessary tools for the premiers to defend their provinces properly against the virus. They left premiers scrambling. Without the responses, the resources or proper action by the federal government, the premiers implemented the only tool they thought would work: lockdowns.

At this time, as we hopefully see the last of this pandemic, the government needs to start thinking of ways to secure the future of Canadians. This could be done by creating jobs, introducing policies that result in better wages, and introducing policies that help small businesses, especially now when so many are struggling, to get back on their feet.

In conclusion, this is not a growth budget. It fails to put forward a plan to encourage Canada's long-term prosperity and leaves millions of Canadians behind. We were very clear that we wanted to see a plan to return to normal that would safely reopen the economy and get Canadians back to work, and that is not what this legislation would do. We were also looking for a plan to create jobs and boost economic growth. Once again, that is not what this legislation would do. For those reasons, I cannot support it.

I would also like to say, to those watching at home, that Canada's Conservatives got us out of the last recession. We can, and we will, do it again. We are ready, we have a plan and we will get it done.

• (2415)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have not had a chance to say it yet, but I congratulate you on your retirement as a tremendous Speaker of the House. I do not think people know about the tremendous work you are also doing for the downtrodden people of Myanmar. You have been a wonderful MP and representative, and we all have great respect for you.

I would like to thank the hon. member for his speech and remind him that all budget implementation bills are omnibus bills, because every budget deals with a number of federal departments. I am glad he wanted a plan and support for tourism, because there is over \$1 billion, a record amount, for tourism in the budget, for festivals, cultural events, heritage celebrations and local museums. On top of

that, there is \$700 million more for small business, green, inclusive, enhancing competitiveness and creating jobs.

There is an over 700-page plan that deals with indigenous and women entrepreneurs, an AI strategy, the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, a quantum strategy, the Canadian Photonics Fabrication Centre, business R and D, Mitacs, CanCode, net-zero accelerator, clean growth hub, the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, the strategic innovation fund, IRAP expansion, Elevate IP, innovation superclusters—

The Deputy Speaker: We will need to go to the hon. member for Niagara West for a response.

Mr. Dean Allison: Mr. Speaker, the member talks about the tourism industry. I come from Niagara. My riding is Niagara West. I am a couple of ridings over from Niagara Falls.

The tourism industry has been devastated, absolutely devastated, in this country, because of a failure of the government to get things we need, like vaccines and rapid testing. There was a perfectly decent program happening in Calgary with rapid tests as people returned to the country.

What did the Liberal government do? It implemented a worse plan that took more time. It failed to use rapid testing.

Our tourism industry continues to be crushed. It is unbelievable, the amount of negligence the government shows when it comes to tourism and small business. Small businesses are in lockdown after lockdown because of the government's failure to act. We need a plan to reopen the economy.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I always appreciate hearing from my colleague and friend from Niagara West. He knows I have a lot of respect for him.

I have two questions that I think are very relevant. The member spoke of the tourism industry. We know that the pandemic continues to have economic impacts, yet the Liberal government is cutting the CRB within a matter of weeks, from \$500 a week to \$300 a week, which is far below the poverty line.

What does the member think the impact of that will be, when people are trying to put food on the table and have almost 50% less to do it with, even though they still cannot get back to their jobs because of the ongoing impacts of the pandemic?

Also, many profitable companies used the wage subsidies for dividends and for big executive bonuses. Does the member believe that those profitable companies should be paying back the wage subsidy? In that way, we could afford to make sure that the CRB continues at the rate of \$500 a week.

Mr. Dean Allison: Mr. Speaker, I have had the pleasure of working with the member over the years, on trade in particular. We have not always agreed, but the member is a huge champion for his constituents, and I have always appreciated that.

Originally, how fast the programs came out was a good thing. There was a lot of discussion amongst all opposition parties about how things and people had fallen through the cracks. People are still falling through the cracks, as the member mentioned.

It is important for the government to listen and realize that small businesses and people who are dependent on some of these programs still need them when the only option is lockdown and these people cannot actually go to work, through no fault of their own.

I believe we need to constantly push the government to do better when they are rolling out programs. I know there has been lots of great input from all opposition parties here in the House.

● (2420)

The Deputy Speaker: I would like to thank the hon. member for Yukon for his kind comments.

Resuming debate, we will go to the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if I could add to the glowing comments on your forthcoming retirement, it has been a pleasure to get to know you these last several years in the House of Commons. You have always been kind. It has always been a pleasure to chat and I wish you the best. I am sure your family will be very happy to have you home on a much more full-time basis.

Good evening to all my colleagues and to all Canadians who are watching, including the wonderful residents I have the privilege to represent here in Vaughan—Woodbridge.

This evening's debate on Bill C-30 is not only to ensure that Canadians who remain impacted by the pandemic are supported but also to put in place a number of measures that grow our economy and ensure that the economy is inclusive and lifts all individuals. Prior to the pandemic, we knew Canada's unemployment rate was at a multi-decade low and that literally hundreds of thousands of Canadians had been lifted out of poverty. We were, and we are, going in the right direction.

I would like to take a moment to thank the residents of Vaughan—Woodbridge and all residents of York Region for their desire to get vaccinated and allow us to safely return to normalcy. As of today, 76.8% of York Region residents above age 18 have received a single dose of a vaccine and over 22.7% a second dose, including me. I am happy to report that this afternoon I received my second dose of vaccine from Moderna. Millions of vaccines are arriving, and Canadians can rest assured that our government is laser focused on protecting them and their families and on ensuring a strong economic recovery.

Government Orders

I am pleased to rise tonight to participate in the continuing debate on Bill C-30, the government's budget implementation act. Budget 2021 is a historic investment to address the specific wounds of the COVID-19 recession and to grow the middle class. The bill is therefore an important one. It would enact the government's plan to finish the fight against COVID-19, create jobs, grow the economy and ensure a robust economic recovery that brings all Canadians along. We truly want an economy that works for all Canadians and that is inclusive.

Among other important measures, the bill would enable funding to establish a Canada-wide early learning and child care system. It would extend the Canada emergency wage subsidy, the Canada emergency rent subsidy and lockdown support for businesses until September 25, which would keep an important lifeline available. It would extend important income support for individuals, such as the Canada recovery benefit and the Canada recovery caregiving benefit, and it would enhance employment insurance sickness benefits from 15 weeks to 26 weeks.

The bill also proposes to establish a \$15 federal minimum wage and to increase old age security for seniors aged 75 and older to provide them with better financial security. It would significantly expand the Canada workers benefit and invest \$8.9 billion over six years in additional support for low-wage workers, extending top-ups to about a million more Canadians and lifting nearly an additional 100,000 Canadians out of poverty.

I have been a great proponent of the Canada workers benefit since day one, when I arrived on Parliament Hill in 2015. I am seeing it expanded for the third time since we have been in office. It is great to see we are ensuring more Canadians are lifted out of poverty while incentivizing Canadians to remain in the labour force and increase their number of hours of work.

Bill C-30 would also provide an emergency top-up of \$5 billion for provinces and territories. Specifically, \$4 billion would go to the Canada health transfer to help provinces and territories address immediate health care system pressures, and \$1 billion would support vaccine rollout campaigns across the country. As well, the bill proposes to provide \$2.2 billion to address short-term infrastructure priorities in municipalities and first nations communities. The funds would flow through the federal gas tax fund, which is proposed to be renamed the Canada community building fund.

Government Orders

There is one aspect of Bill C-30 I would like to discuss in particular. It is a clause that would amend the Canadian Securities Regulation Regime Transition Office Act. This clause would authorize the government to provide an additional \$12 million to fund the continuation of the Canadian Securities Transition Office, or CSTO, for a further two years. For those who may not be familiar with this body, the CSTO is a small federal office that was established in July 2009.

● (2425)

Since 2013, the CSTO has supported federal efforts to establish the co-operative capital markets regulatory system. Today, the principal focus of this office is to support the government with analysis and advice on preparing for the successful administration of the proposed federal capital market stability act in a collaborative manner that respects provincial jurisdiction.

A well-functioning and resilient financial system that instills confidence in domestic and international businesses, in addition to individual Canadians, is paramount to growing Canada's economy. Canada's financial system demonstrated resilience in weathering both the shocks of the global financial crisis more than a decade ago and, most recently, the considerable economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Importantly underpinning this resilient financial system is a regulatory framework with legislative mandates and authorities, world-class leadership and years of preparation, planning and experience. While the regulatory authorities work in a coordinated system, the federal financial stability oversight framework does not include management of systemic risk across Canadian capital markets. This is a critical gap given the current global risk environment and is an area that the Supreme Court has opined is a federal responsibility. Some steps have been taken in this field by provincial securities regulators. However, no Canadian authority has the ability to monitor capital markets' systemic risks across the Canadian financial system, nor to act on a national basis to address them.

This is what the federal government wants to strengthen in collaboration with provinces. The federal government is also committed to strengthening authorities to combat capital markets crime and protect Canadians' hard-earned savings and investments from fraud. These are targeted areas that CSTO is assessing and providing advice on. Before moving forward, more work is required by federal officials, including identifying opportunities and developing processes for administering a systemic risk oversight regime in collaboration with provincial securities regulators. This work would be undertaken in consultation with the provinces.

The additional funding contained in Bill C-30 is needed for the CSTO to continue its important work on systemic risk in criminal enforcement in Canada's capital markets. The CSTO has already made excellent progress. It should receive the funding to continue this important work. I encourage all my colleagues from all sides of the aisle to pass Bill C-30 not only to support Canadians during this pandemic, but also to strengthen our CSTO and move forward in growing our economy once again.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during the second reading stage of debate on this bill, I asked the parliamentary secretary for revenue why this

bill fails to address issues on direction and control. These are issues that the international development sector and the rest of the charitable sector have been raising for a very long time. "Direction and control" is about needless red tape piled on charitable organizations. It relates to them spending more money on lawyer fees and sending less money to the front lines. When I raised this issue on March 6 during second reading debate, the parliamentary secretary did not give me a very specific answer. He told me he would love to learn about this further. Again, this bill is a missed opportunity to address the direction and control regime that needs to be changed to strengthen opportunities for the charitable sector.

Has the member had a chance, since our last exchange on this issue, to do more research on it? He could update the House on what, if anything, the finance department is prepared to do in subsequent bills to address direction and control.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, it was our government that put in place the advisory council on the charitable sector, which has a volunteer base. I thank the members who have volunteered countless hours in delivering two very substantive reports not only to the CRA, but to all of government. We have looked at those reports. We have implemented some of those measures and we continue to work with the advisory council on the charitable sector in doing the good work that it does, day in and day out. We are also reflective of how important the charitable sector is to the Canadian economy and to how many countless hours the millions of volunteers put in here in Canada to help out their neighbours and friends.

● (2430)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. colleague the following question. There is still a desperate need for support, especially in the tourism sector. If the bill does not pass by the end of the parliamentary session, what will the consequences be for our artists, the hotel industry, restaurants and everything that goes along with tourism?

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, it is very important that we get Bill C-30 passed. We need to continue to support all sectors of the economy, all individuals and all businesses, including the tourism sector and hotels through the rent subsidy. That can only happen with Bill C-30 and the measures it will put in place: the extension of the programs being run by the Canada Revenue Agency and the wonderful individuals who are implementing eight out of the nine programs we brought forward to help Canadian businesses and workers during this most extraordinary period of time.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am concerned and perplexed by the reduction in the Canada emergency response benefit from \$500 per week to \$300 per week starting in July.

Could the parliamentary secretary walk us through the rationale for that reduction from the perspective of someone who is self-employed or is a gig worker, and still does not have income? They lost their income because of the pandemic and are not going to have it in July, August or September. Could he provide the rationale for cutting those benefits for people who need them more than ever?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, which is where I was born and raised. My hometown is Prince Rupert.

I will say this. Our government has been steadfast in its support of all Canadians since day one. We continue to provide the benefits they need so they do not have to choose between putting bread on their tables or paying their rent, and we will continue to be there for Canadians.

Our economy is recovering. We have recovered approximately 81% of all jobs. I expect in the next one to two months we will see further job gains as the Ontario economy specifically recovers. We have seen full-time employment in a number of sectors actually improve and be at higher levels than pre-pandemic.

We know there is much work to be done. Our government will continue to be there for all Canadians. At one time, almost nine million Canadians collected the CERB, and 5.5 million Canadians were benefiting, through their employers, from the CEWS. We will continue to be there for Canadians. We will have their backs during this most extraordinary period of time.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate you and your family on your 15 years of public service. You have been a leader in our caucus for many decades. Last night, I caught your retirement speech, whenever that retirement comes. You reflected very well on your years of service. You have done our country very proud and I want to wish you all the best when you do leave that chair and you leave this place. On behalf of me and my family, thank you very much for your years of service.

Now to the topic of the budget implementation act, 2021. It was one of the most important budgets in recent memory. Canadians were waiting for it. Why do I say that? We waited over two years for the budget. The pandemic started last March and the Liberals continued to delay the budget and the numbers went higher and higher. Then we found out we are \$600 billion, or so, down over a

trillion, in debt in this country. It was interesting when the numbers started popping out and Canadians from coast to coast to coast were surprised at the big numbers.

As we see a little inflation here in the last while, they are really going to be surprised at the results. We all know workers faced a year and a half of uncertainty about their employment, about their wages. In fact, now the question is when they will be able to return to work and whether a job will be there for them in the coming weeks.

Business owners continue to face uncertainty whether they have a small, medium or large company. Tonight while I was listening to the speeches, I received a text from Allan who owns SaskWest Mechanical in Saskatoon. He told me the costs are skyrocketing in his business. Sheet metals are going sky-high. He said that last August they were \$24 a sheet. Today, suppliers are charging him \$49.21 and they will not even hold pricing for more than 24 hours. Think of the uncertainty even quoting a job for the employees that he has. I cannot imagine quoting a job. It was nice to hear from Allan today. He has been in my office a couple of times. There is uncertainty with his business. He employs a lot of people. Heating is his business. He does a lot of commercial jobs and he faces the rise in costs as he quotes for jobs.

Prices are going up, for food, meat, lumber, almost everything that we have talked about. I hope I do not jinx it, but I think we are seeing the end of the light. I look at my province of Saskatchewan and I am going to give some kudos here tonight. Saskatchewan wants to be fully open by July 11. I have had my second dose of vaccine, so I am happy. I had the first one in April and my second one last week, so we are pretty good. I arrived in Ottawa on Sunday, and here in Ontario it is night and day. Shops are still closed. People can only go to restaurant patios. In my province of Saskatchewan we are almost wide open right now. I credit that to the Saskatchewan Health Authority and Premier Scott Moe.

The goal is to have everyone age 12 and over completely vaccinated. Right now the goal is to get to 70% of people having at least one vaccine. Today, we are at 67% in Saskatchewan. We are only 3% below that goal. In fact, Saskatchewan officials said today we only need 28,000 more people to get their first shot and then we are going to open things up. Is that not a great story in the province of Saskatchewan.

Government Orders

● (2435)

However, for the last 14 months, the province could not get the vaccines it needed, especially up in northern Saskatchewan where vulnerable situations exist. The first thing the Province of Saskatchewan tried to do was work with the indigenous communities. In fact, I am so proud of Saskatoon Tribal Council Chief Mark Arcand who took it upon himself to have vaccines made available at the SaskTel Centre for indigenous people and everybody else in the Saskatoon area. It has been a wonderful outreach by the Tribal Chief of Saskatoon. People in the community have been able to get their vaccine.

Today, for football fans, it was announced that Saskatchewan's premier wanted to see 33,350 people at the Mosaic Stadium for the home opener on August 6 against the B.C. Lions. That is now a goal in the province of Saskatchewan. However, the last 14 months have been devastating in Saskatchewan and across the country. We are all asking ourselves, "When are we going to reopen? How are we going to manage the debt. How much debt will there be?"

I talked about inflation, which is at its highest point in over a decade. We are up 3.6% this year alone. The declining state of the Canadian economy is a major concern. The member from Niagara talked about a baby born in Canada today is already \$28,000 in debt. My daughter will deliver our second grandchild next Thursday in Saskatoon. We should be celebrating. I will now have two grandchildren. One is five and a half years old and the other will be born next Thursday, but with a \$28,000 debt. That is what we have done to our kids. When the baby comes next Thursday, June 24, we will celebrate, but I also have to tell my daughter and son-in-law that is \$28,000 in debt. How are they going to pay for that?

Canadians are resilient. They have faced uncertainty about the stability of our health care system. Thankfully, it has held up so far. We have had hiccups all over the country, but I think everyone would agree that we are coming out of it now, some faster than others. We are a little concerned about Ontario and Manitoba, but they are coming out of it as we speak.

Therefore, we need a plan to secure the future of our country, to secure the future of my daughter's child who will be born next Thursday. We also need a plan that secures good jobs for Canadians; that secures accountability in governments, and we have talked a lot about that tonight; that will secure mental health for Canadians and supports for those who are really struggling.

Over the last 14 months, we have seen a decline in mental health. We all know someone who is struggling; some openly and others sit at home and say nothing. We see it in the House of Commons. Many of our staff have not been in the office. How are they doing at home? They get their work done, but when we come back to Ottawa and have a chance to see them, that is when we will know if things have changed in the last 14 months.

We need to secure our country against the next pandemic. We must get prepared for that. We need to secure our economy in the long term. The government is woefully unprepared to implement such a plan, and budget 2021 missed the mark in providing one.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer even noted that the significant amount of Liberal spending would not stimulate jobs, and we saw

massive job losses in the last two months alone. In April, 129,000 jobs were lost. We had another decline in May. That cannot happen anymore, because mom and dad coming home without a job does not sit well in the family.

● (2440)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his speech, for a couple of reasons. One is that he mentioned the very important item of mental health, and we really appreciate that and agree with him because of our large contributions to that area before the budget and in the budget, but I basically want to thank him for his support of business. I know he would appreciate that we have provided over 27,000 CEWS loans worth \$1.4 billion to Saskatchewan and protected 98,000 jobs in Saskatchewan with \$1.28 billion, as well as putting \$50 million into 731 RRRF projects.

I am hoping the member will support the budget, because some of these business owners, as he heard in an earlier speech tonight, said they will not be quite ready to get back, and without this budget the rent subsidy and the wage subsidy will expire in June, at the end of this month. This budget would extend them to September and also add a billion dollars for tourism and \$700 million for small businesses, so I hope the member will quickly support the budget implementation act, Bill C-30, so that we can get these things in place to continue to support Saskatchewan businesses.

● (2445)

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. parliamentary secretary; he has been a great spokesman for northern Canada.

In my province of Saskatchewan, the hospitality industry has really been hit in the last 14 months. We have hotels that had opened, and the operators have phoned my office in the last couple of months saying that they missed the timing when they opened last April. Twelve or 13 months later, there is no business.

The other one is the tourism industry. The member is from northern Canada. The tourism industry is very important up north, but it is also very important in our province.

[*Translation*]

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

I often hear the Conservatives say that we must secure the future. In my opinion, this can only be achieved by fighting climate change. I know that our views are diametrically opposed, but, when I review the budget, I see that the government has invested \$17.6 billion in the green recovery. That is a few million dollars shy of what has been shelled out to the oil industry in public subsidies, or \$18 billion to be exact, since the start of the pandemic.

Even though we have opposing views, does my colleague agree that the recovery we are talking about is not green, and that more must be done for the environment with the amounts that have been announced?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is an innovation leader. Carbon sequestering in the city of Estevan was the first of its kind in Canada, and we are hoping that Alberta joins Saskatchewan. The government has talked about billions of dollars maybe in the next little while to get the carbon into the ground.

Our farmers in Saskatchewan are the best. I know that when they are drying grain in the fall, carbon capture and all that is expensive, but there is zero tillage. We are on the cusp and have been for decades in our province. We are world leaders. I am very proud of Saskatchewan's innovation. Saskatchewan will beat the curve. Saskatchewan will far exceed the green economy from other regions in this country. I know that for a fact.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for raising the plight of students. He mentioned the crushing debt that students have to incur now to get a post-secondary education.

The history of education in this country over the last 150 years has been one of extension. At one time, having primary school education was enough. In the 1950s and 1960s it was high school. Now, let us face it: People really cannot participate in our society unless they have some form of post-secondary education, whether that is a trade, a community college or a university.

Does the member agree that it is time that we extended our concept of public education to include at least the first two years of post-secondary education so that we can make it accessible to all Canadian students, not only to help them get the education they need to succeed but also to help our economy meet its full potential by having free tuition for students in post-secondary education?

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, it is funny that the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway asks that question, because my wife is a former teacher and both my kids are teaching, one in Saskatoon and one in Lethbridge, and I spent 10 years as a school board trustee.

Yes, education is first and foremost in our province of Saskatchewan. In fact, it should be in Canada. It is funny that we do not even have an education minister, and yet we control education on reserves. When I asked two or three years ago what the attendance figures are on reserves, the government did not have any answers.

As parliamentarians, we have to do a better job in this House. We have to ask the questions about grades and attendance. I totally agree with the hon. member.

Government Orders

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Before resuming debate, I would advise the hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue that he currently has about three and a half minutes left for his remarks. The hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, thank you for your generosity with regard to my time. By the way, I would like to offer you my congratulations. I had the privilege of witnessing your speech yesterday. It was a great lesson in democracy. I was pleased to hear it.

With Bill C-30, the federal government is demonstrating a flagrant lack of consideration for Quebec, its choices and the will of Quebecers. I wish to remind members that the Bloc Québécois voted against budget 2021 because the federal government did not respond to our two main requests, namely to permanently and significantly increase the Canada health transfers by raising them from 22% to 35%, a demand shared by the National Assembly and unanimously supported by the provinces, and to increase old age security by \$110 a month for people aged 65 and over.

Despite our reservations, the Bloc Québécois recognizes that budget 2021 is geared towards the post-COVID recovery. It will make it easier for Quebec's small businesses to access credit. It was essential that Bill C-30 include an increase in credit-related funding for small businesses, especially start-ups, which have been struggling during the pandemic. Bill C-30 encourages innovation and the potential for a greener economic recovery through its expanded lending against intellectual property.

However, access to credit is not the only way to help businesses recover, as credit often leads to debt, which can push businesses into bankruptcy. Credit becomes harmful when it is used to cover fixed and recurring business costs. In some cases, it merely postpones bankruptcy. What has the government done to revitalize businesses and reduce their administrative burden? Little or nothing.

The government could take action. It has no excuse not to. With a deficit of over \$1 trillion, I think it has some leeway. The federal government is not doing enough to help businesses take advantage of opportunities arising from international agreements. These agreements are so complicated and hard to understand, involving so many laws, regulations, measures, norms and provisions, that it is hard for business owners to properly assess them and see all of the possibilities. There needs to be communication. What is the federal government waiting for? When will it reduce this burden in order to better support businesses in getting their goods to market internationally and strengthen the ability of Quebec and Canadian industries and businesses to compete globally?

Routine Proceedings

I care about Quebec businesses, particularly agricultural businesses, so I find it troubling that the government is doing so little to reduce the tax burden on agricultural business owners. What is more, one of the simplest solutions for reducing the administrative burden on businesses in Quebec is to implement a single tax return administered by Quebec. That is something that has been repeatedly called for by the Premier of Quebec, François Legault, and it reflects the unanimous will of the Quebec National Assembly.

I will point out that the Government of Quebec already collects the GST on Ottawa's behalf. That means the Government of Quebec has everything it needs to collect all taxes in Quebec. Direct access to foreign tax information would also give the Government of Quebec the power to fight tax havens. Ottawa has no credibility on that front. If Revenu Québec acquires that expertise, it will be in a better position to ensure tax fairness for all Quebec taxpayers.

● (2450)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue will have another six and a half minutes to finish his speech when the House resumes debate on this motion, plus another five minutes for questions and comments.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The House resumed from June 2 consideration of the motion.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to speak in this chamber. I will start by saying that I will be splitting my time with my colleague from Battle River—Crowfoot, so I look forward to his comments at the conclusion of mine. As indicated, this current debate is regarding the concurring report from the foreign affairs committee, which condemns the imposition of sanctions by the Government of China on the member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

I will start off by saying that I am actually quite shocked that there was concurrence with this decision and with this report, because this certainly does not match the legacy of foreign affairs and foreign affairs strategy, or lack thereof, and direction from the government. From the top, it would seem that this concurrence report is about China, and, yes, it certainly is about China, so let us talk about China for a moment and its atrocities on Canada, Canadians and the world.

Of course, there is the horrible genocide of the Uighurs, and it was the member for Wellington—Halton Hills speaking up about this and taking a principled stand in the House that earned him these sanctions, but in addition to that, we have more than two years of the arbitrary incarceration of Kovrig and Spavor. That is something that we can be disgusted about, regarding the People's Republic of China.

In addition, there is the banning of imports. In particular, with pulses, we saw the terrible trickle-down effect this had for our agriculture and for our farmers, but Canadians have not been alone, in

terms of the effects felt from China. Schellenberg remains on death row. Taiwan has faced horror as China's next-door neighbour under constant threat, but my point here tonight is not that.

This concurrence report is not about China. This concurrence report is about the types of leaders in the world who are willing to stand up to the world's dictators and determine the direction that the world will go in. There are two types of leaders. There is the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, who I will go back to, and there is the Prime Minister, who has praised the dictatorship of China; the Prime Minister, who wrote a tearful eulogy for the passing of one of the greatest dictators Latin America has known; the Prime Minister, who has donated more than \$50 million to the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank to contribute to the Belt and Road Initiative around the world that keeps developing nations captive.

That is one type of leader, the Prime Minister that this world has, but it is not the type of leader the world needs. The type of leader the world needs is the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, who said that he would wear these sanctions like a badge of honour. He went further than that. He said in the House:

The sanctions imposed on me and others have brought us together. They have backfired. I have met with elected parliamentarians who have been sanctioned in the United Kingdom, the European Union and members of national parliaments throughout Europe. The sanctions have brought us together and have brought us together in action.

He continued:

The sanctions imposed on me and others are a clumsy effort by the People's Republic of China to silence the free speech and open debate at the heart of Liberal democracies. They will work if we are silent. We cannot be silent. We cannot lose the hard-won and hard-fought-for ideals that underpin our democracies: a belief in liberty and freedom, a belief in human rights, a belief in democratic institutions and a belief in the rule of law. For if we are silent, we will let these hard-won and cherished beliefs be lost to a new ascendant model of authoritarianism, repression and fear.

I will add that the member for Wellington—Halton Hills was in good company in the last administration of the Canadian government with Harper, John Baird and my predecessor in Calgary Midnapore, Jason Kenney, because they were a government that was governed by the values of democracy, the rule of law and human rights, all of which have been lost by the current government.

● (2455)

I am pleased to see concurrence in this report. However, this report is not about China. It is about the types of leaders in the world who are willing to stand up for the values that will put the world forward, and one of those leaders is the member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

● (2500)

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in this chamber, albeit virtually this time, to address such an important matter that strikes at the very heart of the democratic principles that I would hope all Canadian parliamentarians represent.

Routine Proceedings

We have an authoritarian state actor, the Chinese Communist Party, that has repeatedly demonstrated disdain for modern democratic values. This is something that all Canadians need to take seriously. I would note this follows a very important debate where we discussed at length the importance of respect for democracy and the rule of law.

I want to read into the record the motion we are debating concurrence on:

That the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development strongly condemn the unacceptable sanctions imposed by the People's Republic of China against one of the Committee's Vice Chairs, the Member of Parliament for Wellington—Halton Hills, and the House of Commons Subcommittee on International Human Rights which represent an affront to Canada's democracy and parliamentary system; as parliamentarians, we will continue to actively denounce human rights violations and breaches of international law in keeping with our respect for basic human rights; and that this motion be reported to the House.

This is an opportunity for all parliamentarians to demonstrate how important it is that we take the democratic values of our country very seriously. It is unprecedented to see these sorts of sanctions against a committee and against a particular member of that committee.

The speaker before me, my hon. colleague from Calgary Midnapore, referenced the comments of the shadow minister from the official opposition in his statement when he learned of these sanctions. He said he would wear it as a badge of honour. That is the attitude that all of us should take seriously. We should defend, at all costs, human rights and the dignity of life and our democratic principles that define us.

We are doing what we are supposed to do. The fact that the member and the subcommittee were denounced should clearly state that the committee is getting to the root and is threatening the tyrants who are, in some cases, taking lives in the People's Republic of China.

I am proud to be a Conservative who is taking a stand, but I would note that this shows a clear contrast. It was not the Minister of Foreign Affairs who was sanctioned by name. It was not a Liberal member. It was not an NDP member. It was not a Bloc member. It was a Conservative member. I think it shows that the Conservatives, even from the opposition benches, are demonstrating to the world that we are leading on issues like standing up for human rights. The talking points we hear from the members opposite would suggest something very different, but there are very clear examples like this where a communist regime would sanction by name a member of the official opposition, it is clear that the Conservatives are doing something right, and I am proud to be a member of that party.

This contrasts very clearly with some of the actions of the current government. I have no doubt when I mention the statement the Prime Minister made at a fundraiser prior to getting elected, where I do not think he knew he was being recorded, he said he admired China's basic dictatorship that there will be head-shaking by the members of the Liberal Party who do not seem to like to remember that he said that. There is contempt for Canada's Parliament and aspects of our democratic institution. If we look at some of the specific examples with respect to our relationship with China, many of those issues are being studied before the special committee. We see

the unprecedented movement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs abstaining on behalf of the Government of Canada and breaking parliamentary protocol on a motion to condemn a genocide. It is unbelievable that would be the legacy of the Liberals.

Most recently, we heard the Prime Minister parrot communist talking points that asking tough questions about Chinese state interference would somehow be an issue of racism, not to mention the many economic impacts that have been felt, and with the Minister of Foreign Affairs coming from a largely rural riding, certainly the impacts on agriculture and trade have been significant.

● (2505)

It is clear that Canadians need to be able to trust that their government stands for the core values of what Canada is. I call upon this entire House to concur with this motion and demand respect for the rule of law and the democratic principles that define what Canada is.

Mr. Kenny Chiu (Steveston—Richmond East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, I want to join my colleagues in wishing you a happy retirement. Thank you for the role model you have been for many of us freshmen MPs in this House.

In the speech my colleague just made, he mentioned the sanction on the Conservative shadow minister for foreign affairs. It has been observed that many Chinese countermeasures or sanctions have been levelled on government officials, those who have power. It is rather an exception that in this particular case, China has sanctioned an opposition shadow minister, as well as an entire parliamentary subcommittee.

Would the member have any insight into why China would do that? Of course nobody would actually know exactly why, but what are the member's thoughts on that?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, let me take a brief moment to thank you for your service to this House as Deputy Speaker. It has been a pleasure getting to know you. Your efforts and service to stewarding democratic discourse in this country will be remembered. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate the member's question because it touches on something that is very important. The fact that the shadow minister of foreign affairs, an opposition member of Parliament, would be the one who is sanctioned speaks to how absolutely effective a leadership the Conservatives are demonstrating, not just in Canada but around the world, when it comes to standing up for Canadian principles at home and abroad.

It further speaks to the sanctioning of a committee that there is good work being done, and I will give credit where credit is due, by all members of that committee. It is encouraging to see that the principles of Canada, principles that I would hope we all hold dear are being stood up for. That these sanctions were levelled means that we are asking the right, tough questions to demand accountability from a foreign state actor that is perpetuating injustices around the world and upon its own people. It is absolutely essential that there be accountability for that.

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from Alberta for his great speech on this topic and for coming to the defence of our colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills. He has been a long-time member of the House of Commons and one who really stands up for democracy. If there is anything that sums up the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, it is his hawkish attention to democracy and also his heritage from Hong Kong.

I noticed in his speech the member referenced the fact that it is the member for Wellington—Halton Hills who is under sanction from the Chinese and not the foreign affairs minister. Could the member elaborate on that?

• (2510)

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, as a member of Parliament in my first term, I was astounded when a Conservative opposition day motion was brought forward to deal with an issue of foreign affairs, which is not overly common, dealing with the genocide being brought against Uighur Muslims, which is especially significant in light of some of actions that have rocked this country with the London attack this past week and that the entire executive of a government would not only abstain but then that the Minister of Foreign Affairs would break with parliamentary protocol, break with the standard rules and procedures of this House, and announce he was abstaining on behalf of the Government of Canada.

That is not leadership, it is an absolute failure to stand up for the values Canada needs to represent around the world. I am proud to be part of a party that has a member like the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, who makes it clear that no matter the cost, we will continue to stand up for those democratic principles and the rule of law and justice around the world.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am standing up in the House of Commons in these wee hours to speak to the concurrence of the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. The committee, in a unanimous vote, strongly condemned the sanctions put in place by the People's Republic of China on my colleague, the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, as well as the members of the Subcommittee on International Human Rights.

My colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills has been a strong advocate for human rights for those in China and across the world who are at risk or face persecution as a result of actions by the Communist regime in China. He has fiercely defended the rights of the people of Hong Kong, who are fighting the dissolution of democracy, and of Taiwan, where people faced intimidation from the Chinese regime.

In addition, he has stood up for Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims who are facing genocide, as recognized in this House by a motion presented by my colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills, and being placed in forced labour. We still have not seen effective measures from our Canadian government on that motion.

My colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills has been relentless and consistent in his fight against the Communist regime in China and reporting abuses. Now the Communist regime has placed sanctions on him. These sanctions show, as my colleague from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan said when debate first started on

this report earlier this month, “The stands that we take in this place have an impact on what happens in China, on the global tenor of the discussion.”

Where are we now? While the government may say one thing about the Chinese Communist regime, we have not seen actions to back it up. The Liberal cabinet abstained from recognizing the genocide of Uighurs. We still do not have any concrete action from the government to make a decision on Huawei's involvement in Canada's 5G network. In 2020, the Conservatives called on the government again to make a decision.

The public safety minister, back in May 2019, said they would make a decision before the 2019 election, yet here we are two years later still waiting. Canada is the only Five Eyes ally to not bar or restrict Huawei from its 5G network.

June 18, 2020, at the study of the Investment Canada Act I was part of at the industry, science and technology committee, testimony was heard by the assistant director on the requirements of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. In his opening statement, he said:

Corporate acquisition is not the only way through which hostile actors can threaten Canada's economic security. Threat actors can also access proprietary government information through cyber-attacks, espionage and insider threats. Insiders are individuals with direct access to the systems and intellectual property in corporate and research environments. This could potentially include business people, scientists and researchers. Put another way, today's spies also wear lab coats, not just trench coats.

Those comments are very relevant considering the debate that occurred in this place this evening. As I said earlier in my speech, the government put in place ineffective trade measures to stop the import of goods made with the forced labour of Uighurs. My colleagues in the Conservative caucus and I have been raising the issue of products made with Uighur forced labour getting into our supply chains now for several months.

There are measures on forced labour in CUSMA and the government signed onto a joint integrity declaration on doing business in Xinjiang to tackle this forced labour earlier this year. A Conservative motion at the trade committee to study if and how these measures were working was voted down.

Since then I have asked the international trade minister numerous times if these measures have stopped one shipment of products made with Uighur forced labour. Every single time I have asked, recently about parts of solar panels, we have received not an answer, but deflection.

How is it that the government cannot say if even one shipment has been stopped? Could it be because the answer is zero? After all, the Minister of International Trade told me during recent questioning that these measures are still being operationalized. Well “operationalized” sounds like either these measures are still not in place or no imports have been stopped.

Routine Proceedings

It is not just Conservatives on this issue. The Toronto Star reported in March 2021 that despite government measures, products made with alleged Uighur forced labour, such as train parts and textiles, were still entering Canada. In May, Global News reported our solar panel supply chains might be tainted with Uighur forced labour from Xinjiang. We hear time after time about different products potentially made with Uighur forced labour coming into Canada and the government doing nothing to stop it.

• (2515)

This is why my colleague, the MP for Wellington—Halton Hills, stands in the House to put pressure on the government to act and is now facing sanctions from the Chinese regime because of it.

The government is constantly failing to report on human rights abuses by the Chinese communist regime. On this side of the House we will continue to stand up for human rights and we will ask questions that need to be asked, because the government is failing to do so.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague on the excellent work she is doing on the issue of Uighur forced labour. She is doing such a good job that I am sure she will have the honour of being added to the sanctions list at some point as well.

It is so disappointing to see that the government seemed to want to be able to make some kind of an announcement on Uighur forced labour, yet after putting out an announcement it has been telling us it is not ready and is still working out details or backfilling things. By all indications, no shipments have been stopped. It seems to me that we need to see something modelled after the United States' Uighur forced labour prevention act: a bipartisan legislative initiative that recognizes the reality that so many of the products that come out of Xinjiang are at risk of involving forced labour.

It is more of a comment than a question. I want to congratulate my colleague on the work she is doing on this front at the trade committee. It is too bad she was not able to get the support for a study on that from other members, but hopefully we can continue to put pressure on the government to move this forward.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Speaker, this is definitely a team effort. There are many on this side of the House who are asking very difficult questions at various committees and in the House of Commons. Many of our colleagues are definitely very concerned about these issues and continually press the government, asking the questions and looking for answers. We have not received any of the answers to the questions that we have been asking. We will continue to press.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to tell my hon. colleague that the all-party group to end modern day slavery and human trafficking heard yesterday from experts on whether Canada Border Services had stopped any shipments. Yesterday, they had not heard of any shipments being stopped.

Could my hon. colleague comment on that?

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his update to the House. Those are the types of questions that we need to continue to ask, and to ask what is not working. If we cannot get

answers, then there are some processes that are not working or there are some policies that are not working. Is there something to hide? Those are the kinds of questions that we need to keep pressing.

• (2520)

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, congratulations and thank you for all your years of service. There has never been a more honourable gentleman or lady in that chair. Thank you very much.

I am wondering this: Could the hon. member comment more on the impact of the Uighur genocide and the human rights violations that are going on there? What actions should be taken to protect vulnerable people in China and elsewhere in the world?

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Speaker, before I continue, I would be remiss in not also congratulating you on your retirement and for the good work that you do here. On a personal note, you were one of the first people who came to me when I was newly elected and you gave me some really great advice, so I will always cherish that. Thank you.

To answer my hon. colleague's question, this is absolutely very important. Human rights are something that we, as Canadians, have stood up for as part of our history and part of our heritage. It is very important that we stand against abuses and, in particular in this case, against products that are being produced by forced labour. It is important that we have processes in place to make sure that these products are not coming into Canada. Surely Canadians would want to know if some of these products might be tied to forced labour. These are the types of questions that we are asking and we are looking for answers.

Mr. Kenny Chiu (Steveston—Richmond East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the House, my hon. colleague and I stand in the opposition, on the opposing side, so I will try to be the devil's advocate and think about what the government would be asking.

One point that I think the Liberals would make is that it is a complicated world, and the supply chain is not easily differentiated from one country to another. Is symbolism not enough? Is virtual signalling not enough? That is the first question I have.

Second, it is easy for the official opposition to keep criticizing. Does the member have anything positive to provide in this situation, maybe something about securing our future?

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Speaker, in our platform we have five pillars for economic recovery and one of them is securing our future. This definitely falls into that.

As part of this issue, there are some procedures in place, but they do not appear to be functioning. As one example, at the committee we wanted to study one of those features, the integrity declaration, to see if it is even working and what can be amended. We did not even have the opportunity to do that. Every time we asked a question about that, we did not get any answers. This is just one example of something that appears as if it is not functioning.

Adjournment Proceedings

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments.

[*Translation*]

Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

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 Kelowna—Lake Country.

[*English*]

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, pursuant to an order made on Monday, January 25, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 23, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

• (2525)

[*English*]

HOUSING

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the COVID-19 pandemic has only amplified existing vulnerabilities of the homeless and those who are precariously housed. With REITs and capital funds poised to sweep up older apartment buildings as distressed assets, the older and often lower-rent market rental stock in our community is at serious risk, and the people who call these buildings home at severe risk of displacement.

I have raised this repeatedly in the House, including in December 2020, when it was reported in *The Globe and Mail* that private buyers were lining up to try to get their hands on rental towers, especially the older buildings, which tend to have lower rents.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, people have continued to face skyrocketing rents, ballooning home prices, renovations and demovictions. The urgency for action is more acute than ever.

The last time the importance of housing was backed up with serious action federally was after the Second World War, when hundreds of thousands of affordable supportive housing units were built by the government to make sure soldiers returning from the war had a place to live. Now veterans who served our country increasingly find themselves without a roof over their head.

Clearly, the Liberals do not feel the sense of urgency to act that at-risk renters, housing providers and housing advocates do. While the Liberals have declared that adequate housing is a basic human right, their actions do not come close to matching their words.

I raised in question period the criticisms of the Parliamentary Budget Officer and housing policy experts of the complete inade-

quacy of the affordability criteria in the largest parts of the Liberal government's housing strategy, pointing to the announcement of a project in Ottawa providing 65 units at only 21% of median income. This makes the housing sound affordable, but in reality, it is \$1,900 a month, nearly 50% higher than Ottawa's average market rent. It is clear to anyone who is honest about the grim reality of the housing crisis that the Liberals' national housing strategy will not achieve what the Liberals claim they are committed to.

Over 40 housing organizations and advocates from across Canada jointly signed a letter to the housing minister listing 11 concrete actions the government must take to address the housing affordability crisis. The NDP fully supports these calls, such as the need to limit the ability of the REITs and large capital funds in the fuelling of the rising costs of housing and rent. This includes the creation of a housing acquisition fund that provides non-profits quick access to capital for acquiring properties that are at risk of going to these funds.

Former UN special rapporteur on housing, Leilani Farha, wrote to the federal government in the early months of the pandemic highlighting the importance of supporting the non-profit sector with such a fund. It was subsequently called for by the Recovery for All campaign and by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities as a separate piece from the rapid housing initiative. As of yet, the government has not responded to this call.

My constituents are rightfully asking why these predatory landlords should make hundreds of millions of dollars tax-free when working Canadians often have to spend over 50% of their income on their rent. I ask the government this question.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the national housing strategy responds to every single one of the issues just raised by the member for Vancouver East. I am very proud to be part of a government that, for the first time in about 25 years, has returned leadership on the federal stage to the national government and has delivered a \$72-billion national housing strategy, which is building in all sectors and in all parts of the spectrum of the housing challenges that this country faces.

Adjournment Proceedings

The member dismisses the rapid housing initiative as not being an important initiative. However, the rapid housing initiative, in the last six months, has spent \$1 billion to acquire close to 5,000 units of housing. We have just invested in the last budget, which is about to be voted on by this Parliament, another \$1.5 billion to further extend that program. This program allows non-profits, cities, housing providers across the country and primarily indigenous housing providers, who have been a beneficiary of the last round of funding, to acquire those distressed properties. It was precisely in response to calls from the former UN rapporteur on housing and from different housing activists across the country that we built this program.

We have also taken the reaching home program from \$50 million a year to \$500 million a year to make sure that when we purchase these buildings, we end up with a program that also provides supports for people who are homeless, and makes sure that the housing works for them. On top of that, in the recent budget, we have also added \$315 million in rent supports.

When the member opposite complains about the housing that we are building inside the market rental program and the co-investment fund and says that they are coming online at the wrong price point, she fails to understand that when we build housing we buy labour in the market, we buy land in the market and we buy supplies in the market. The only way to make it affordable, and deeply affordable, is to provide subsidies. That is why our program does all three things that a national housing strategy should do: It builds housing, repairs housing and subsidizes housing.

I will take the member back to her campaign platform and the commitment to build 500,000 units of housing. However, if members read the small print, it required cities to come up with one-third of the money. Now, if we take the national housing strategy's rapid housing initiative, \$1 billion created 5,000 units of housing. To create 500,000 units, we would need about \$100 billion based on the current price point. Asking cities at this time to come up with \$33.3 billion to fund housing is an astonishing demand to make on cities when she knows they cannot afford that. What is really amazing is that she has absolutely no plan to subsidize to make that housing affordable, and no plan in her party platform to actually repair and maintain the housing that is going to be acquired through this fund. The NDP makes all kinds of grandiose statements and expects everybody else to pay for them, and when their programs do not get support, sits back and complains about the housing we do provide.

The national housing strategy has provided hundreds of thousands of new investments right across the country to provide housing that is both new and repaired and brought back online, and is subsidized into affordability. We are not done yet, there is more to come, there is more to do, and we are committed to making sure that we deliver on all of these fronts.

The \$72-billion national housing strategy is the start. We are not finished yet. We have announced \$40 billion, there was already \$72 billion and there is more on the way, because we are committed to making sure that Canadians achieve their right to housing, as we have legislated. We are the first government in the history of this country to legislate the right to housing.

• (2530)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, if the government will not listen to me, perhaps it will listen to Tim Richter who basically said that even with this budget the government tabled, it is not going to achieve the goals that it has set out to end homelessness. That is the reality. The parliamentary secretary may not like it, but that is the reality.

I have been strongly advocating for a human-rights-based approach to housing where everyone has the right to safe housing, and where the federal government meaningfully implements the right to housing as well. The government is failing to deliver on that. The faster the Liberals admit it, the faster they get on with it, the faster they acknowledge what needs to be done to address this crisis, the better it is for Canadians. That is what I am advocating for.

I know that the parliamentary secretary would not like to hear any words of criticism, but the reality is that the Liberals are failing the people on the ground. The member does not have to go far, just walk the streets and he will see for himself that the people in the community who need housing are not getting access to it.

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Mr. Speaker, while the member advocates for policy, I am part of the government that has actually delivered it. We delivered the right to housing. We have delivered additional units and additional investments, and we continue to add more investments, more components and more chapters to the national housing strategy.

The member referenced the comments of Tim Richter, the head of the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness. Yes, this one single budget has not fundamentally ended homelessness overnight in Canada. That is a challenge that several budgets will be required to achieve. However, our budgets are lined up and are achieving those results.

The 5,000 units in the rapid housing initiative was not something the NDP asked for; it was something our government worked with the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness on to deliver. It is something that our government worked with housing providers to deliver. Now that we have the first \$1 billion out the door, \$1.5 billion is now on the way, and those housing programs will house a further cohort of homeless Canadians.

We know that it is a large challenge. We know of the inactivity of the previous federal government. We inherited a government that was spending \$250 million a year on housing. We have put \$72 billion into the housing strategy; \$26 billion has been spent so far. There are hundreds of thousands of units across the country, and \$1.3 billion alone in the city of Toronto to repair public housing. However, when we talked about repairing public housing, the House leader for the NDP said that repairing housing should not be part of the national housing strategy.

Adjournment Proceedings

I can assure the member opposite that if we do not repair housing, if we do not subsidize housing and if we do not build housing, we do not solve the chronic housing crisis in this country. If we do not do all of those things—

The Deputy Speaker: We will have to leave it there.

The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

● (2535)

[*Translation*]

SENIORS

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here in the middle of the night to talk about something that is very important and needs to be talked about, no matter what time of day it is, specifically this government's capacity for creating division and creating different classes of Canadians, particularly when it comes to seniors.

Not only did the government choose to create two classes of compensation for damages created by the Phoenix system, but it also attacked seniors by not doing right by them. What it should have done was allow them to access compensation for all the problems they had with Phoenix along with everyone else.

This is not complicated. This is about a retired public servant who wants compensation because he had problems with Phoenix—

The Deputy Speaker: I apologize for interrupting the hon. member but I must ask him to change his headset, because the sound quality is not good enough for the interpreters.

The issue seems to be resolved. The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I think it is much better now.

I am not exactly sure where I was, but I was most likely criticizing the federal government for creating two classes of seniors, especially retirees in the Phoenix system.

When one retiree tried to claim his benefits, he was told there was no form to claim them. That form would not be available until the fall. That is not surprising because, in its latest budget, the government also created two classes of seniors: those aged 65 to 75, which we will call young seniors, and those 75 and up, which we will call seniors.

This budget is problematic for them for one simple reason. People who were 75 or older in June 2020 will get a single \$500 payment in August 2021 and, starting next year, their guaranteed income supplement will go up by 10%.

Why did this government choose to help only some seniors, not all seniors including those aged 65 to 75?

That is what we want to know, what everyone wants to know. That is certainly what seniors want to know, and what seniors' groups in my riding want to know. I have never received so many emails as I did after this budget announcement. People are shocked, and rightfully so. There is no reason why people 65 to 75 years of age should not also receive government assistance, because the cost of living is going up for everyone, especially the cost of gas and groceries.

Am I to believe that people 65 to 75 years of age spend less than people 75 and up? Absolutely not, that would be ridiculous. It is difficult to imagine how disappointed these people are with the government's most recent budget.

Gisèle Tassé-Goodman, president of the FADOQ network, which is the largest network of seniors organizations in Canada, said that providing financial assistance to seniors was a good gesture, but that those under 75 who are eligible for old age security receive absolutely nothing, zilch. She simply cannot understand why that distinction was made and why the Liberal government chose to create two classes of seniors.

These people were also victims of the pandemic. They were isolated, sometimes mistreated because they were unable to see their loved ones who, in turn, could not help them during the pandemic. They literally feel abandoned by the Liberal government.

Here is the question I would like to ask tonight: Why are the Liberals so hell-bent on dividing seniors into two classes so that those who just retired, or the younger seniors, receive less than seniors aged 75 and over?

● (2540)

Mr. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, to the President of the Treasury Board and to the Minister of Digital Government, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I begin my remarks, I would like to take a moment to congratulate you on your distinguished career in Parliament. You are an honourable man. You have conducted yourself with great dignity as a member here and you will be greatly missed.

It is a pleasure for me to answer the question from the member for Mégantic—L'Érable about the harm the Phoenix system caused to retired federal public servants.

[*English*]

First, let me say that the government has the greatest respect for its dedicated and hard-working public servants, both retirees and those who are currently employed. All current and former public servants—

The Deputy Speaker: I have to interrupt the hon. parliamentary secretary.

I thank him for his kind words, by the way.

We are having a slight problem with the audio. The member's headset looks to be the correct standard, but I wonder if the microphone in use is the one on the device.

[*Translation*]

The problem seems to be resolved.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, to the President of the Treasury Board and to the Minister of Digital Government.

*Adjournment Proceedings**[English]*

Mr. Greg Fergus: Mr. Speaker, first, let me say that the government has the greatest respect for its dedicated and hard-working public servants, both retirees and those who are currently employed. All current and former public servants deserve to be paid in an accurate and timely manner for their work on behalf of Canadians.

[Translation]

We recognize that the implementation of the Phoenix pay system had direct and indirect impacts on many current and former employees.

In June 2019, we reached an agreement with several public service unions to compensate current and former employees for the negative impacts caused by the system. Several elements of this agreement were implemented in 2019 and 2020. The process for claiming compensation for severe impacts and personal hardship was launched in January 2021, to be precise. The processes are now available to approximately 146,000 eligible current and former public servants.

[English]

In addition, in October 2020, we finalized an agreement with the Public Service Alliance of Canada for damages caused by Phoenix, as well as the late implementation of the 2014 collective agreements. This agreement with PSAC, like the 2019 agreement with the other unions, provides general damages to current and former employees. Most employees represented by PSAC received a payment up to \$2,500 on March 3 for general damages and compensation for the late implementation of the 2014 collective agreements. Government officials are working collaboratively with their Public Service Alliance of Canada colleagues to implement the terms of the agreement.

There are a number of components to the agreement and we all want to make the process as easy as possible for those who wish to make a claim. Of course, this includes retirees and all former public servants.

[Translation]

We have learned from our past experience. One of the lessons we learned is that rushing does not always yield the best results. We want to get this right.

Former employees who were represented by PSAC will have to submit a claim to receive compensation. More information about when and how to do that will be provided in the months to come.

In the meantime, former PSAC members can still submit claims under the process in place for out-of-pocket expenses, reimbursement for tax advice, and impacts on income taxes and government benefits.

- (2545)

[English]

Let me assure my hon. colleague that we are working hard on behalf of retired and former public servants to get them the compensation they deserve.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I will repeat what a retired public servant wrote to me when he learned that he could not get his compensation because he would have to wait for a form that does not yet exist and will be available only in the fall.

This retired public servant served our country to the best of his ability for many years and, unfortunately, for a certain time, he was deprived of his income because of Phoenix. He said he was “furious”.

I hope the parliamentary secretary will hear this retiree's heartfelt message. He is furious over having to wait for a form that could help him access the compensation he is entitled to.

That is why, tonight, I wanted to rise on his behalf and on behalf of all the retirees who are being told that the form does not yet exist. They are all people who are furious and who are waiting for someone to finally listen and respond to them quickly.

Mr. Greg Fergus: Mr. Speaker, I did indeed hear the message from my hon. colleague's constituent. Canadians can rest assured that public servants will have the government's unconditional support.

We believe in and support all of our federal public servants, including retirees. Retired public servants like my hon. colleague's constituent deserve a retirement free from financial worry after spending their careers serving Canadians.

[English]

We understand the concerns of some retirees, and we are working hard, in collaboration with the unions, to make sure that eligible public service retirees are paid what they are owed in a timely manner. We are fully committed to fair and timely compensation for out-of-pocket expenses brought on by Phoenix-related compensation issues.

We are moving forward with the damages process to look after all our retired public servants as quickly as we can. We will get there together, in co-operation with unions and current and former public servants.

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity at this very late hour to stand up today for workers in forestry, contracting and home renovations in Kelowna—Lake Country, British Columbia, and across Canada, and, most importantly, the opportunity to stand up for everyday families.

Adjournment Proceedings

Softwood lumber plays a critical role in Canada's economy, and thousands of families rely on its production to supply our domestic markets and our exports. A softwood lumber agreement is critical to providing that certainty and stability. With lumber being a North American commodity, Liberal inaction has led to higher prices in Canada. The last agreement Canada had with the United States was negotiated with the previous Conservative government and expired in October of 2015. Leading up to that expiration, the current Prime Minister promised to negotiate a new agreement within his first 100 days in office. There have been three U.S. administrations and over 2,000 days since then, and we have heard of no formal negotiations.

The Liberals were also outmanoeuvred during CUSMA negotiations by failing to include softwood lumber in that agreement. On February 27, 2020, the Conservative members from the trade committee wrote the Deputy Prime Minister, outlining the “adverse impacts of CUSMA” on softwood lumber and warning that CUSMA “does not prevent the United States from applying antidumping and countervailing duties to Canadian softwood lumber.” They gave many recommendations, none of which have been acted on. Taking the easy way out and failing to negotiate softwood lumber into CUSMA put Canadian businesses and workers at risk. Simply put, the Liberals keep getting outmanoeuvred.

There is clear evidence that jobs and investment are going south. The charts of North America production of softwood lumber show that as of 2015, Canadian production has fallen, while it has been steadily rising in the U.S.. We have heard from within the industry that this is due to so much uncertainty over the past almost six years. Lumber production and exports to the United States are key to the industry's long-term stability and viability, as our supply chains are integrated. This situation was further exacerbated when the U.S. commerce department announced that it intended to double the tariffs on our lumber exports on May 21, 2021.

That is why I, along with my Conservative colleagues on the international trade committee, called for an emergency meeting to address this potentially devastating issue. At the June 4 meeting, the minister stated during her testimony, “I think the tariffs that have been imposed are certainly causing concern for home builders and for consumers.” The minister postured, as she was unable to point to any meetings or calls that had taken place with any of her U.S. counterparts in the nearly two weeks it had been at that time since the commerce department's announcement. We have had no negotiations since the last agreement expired that we have heard of, and there are no upcoming scheduled negotiations.

Prior to that meeting, I also had the opportunity to question the minister during debates on the main estimates on May 31, when I wanted to clarify conflicting comments. The U.S. trade representative, Ambassador Tai, had testified during U.S. congressional hearings that Canada has “not expressed interest in engaging” when it came to softwood lumber. Several days later, the Canadian Minister of Natural Resources implied at a natural resources committee meeting that it was in fact the U.S. that was not willing.

My question to the minister is simple. When will the government quit hiding its failures behind a wall of opaque talking points and finger pointing and start getting to work for my constituents in Kelowna—Lake Country, British Columbia and Canada, and when

will the government get serious and start negotiations on a new softwood lumber agreement?

● (2550)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, to the President of the Treasury Board and to the Minister of Digital Government, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the forestry industry is one of Canada's main economic pillars. We recognize the huge contribution made by the more than 200,000 forestry workers who play a key role in Canada's production of high-quality wood products, which are prized around the world and generate economic spinoffs for all Canadians.

I want to start this morning by unequivocally stating that the tariffs on softwood lumber imposed by the United States are unfair and unjust, and they are hurting workers and the industry on both sides of the border. The minister has raised this question at every opportunity with President Biden, with Katherine Tai, the U.S. trade representative, and with Gina Raimondo, the U.S. secretary of commerce.

[*English*]

As we have always done, our government will continue to vigorously defend Canada's forestry sector, which supports hundreds of thousands of good middle-class jobs for Canadians across the country. We are taking a team Canada approach, working hand in hand with the softwood lumber industry, labour unions and provincial and territorial partners on all fronts.

We have launched a series of challenges against the initial U.S. duties on softwood lumber through both the WTO and the new NAFTA. Over the years, we have consistently been awarded legal victories that clearly demonstrate that our softwood lumber industry is in full compliance with international trade rules and that Canada is a trading partner in good standing in the multilateral rules-based system.

Our support for the softwood lumber industry and its workers is unequivocal. In 2017, our government announced the softwood lumber action plan, providing \$867 million in measures to support forestry industry workers and their communities. During the pandemic, we supported around 8,500 forestry firms with a total of nearly \$600 million from our government's emergency wage subsidy program.

We know that market diversification for our wood products will create Canadian jobs and benefit the communities that rely on the forestry industry. That is why, in 2019, we made an additional investment of over \$250 million for action plan programs to help producers tap into new markets and diversify production.

[*Translation*]

Budget 2021 includes \$54.8 million over two years to enhance investments in forestry industry transformation, including working with municipalities and community organizations ready for new forest-based economic opportunities.

Forestry industry workers can rest assured that we will always be there to stand up for their interests, their families and their communities. Our government is working hard to achieve a result that benefits all Canadians. However, we will only accept an agreement that is good for our softwood lumber industry and protects Canadian jobs.

• (2555)

[*English*]

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Speaker, it is not just the livelihoods of the workers in the softwood lumber industry that are under threat. Baseless tariffs also have the added bite of increasing costs to Canadians because of integrated markets. The cost of living and the increased cost of housing are the number one concerns for my constituents in Kelowna—Lake Country and across the country.

Our relationship with the U.S. continues to diminish on all fronts because of the mismanagement of our trading relationship. That is why the official opposition put forth a motion, which I tabled and was supported, to create a new Canada-U.S. economic relations committee.

There are 11,000 lost jobs in the forestry sector, over \$100 billion of lost investment in oil and gas, and concerns over lost business

Adjournment Proceedings

because of buy American policies. The Prime Minister talks big, yet he all but shrugs at these issues. The minister says softwood lumber is her top priority, but she could not point to any actions or conversations, since the announcement of tariffs, that she has had with any of her U.S. counterparts when she testified at the trade committee.

When is the government going to get off its hands and start taking any concrete actions on a new softwood lumber agreement?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Greg Fergus: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to my hon. colleague, she is wrong. Canada has always vigorously defended the Canadian softwood lumber industry, and it continues to stand up for our forestry workers and our communities in every way possible.

Our government raises the softwood lumber file with the United States every chance it gets. We firmly believe that a resolution is in the best interest of both countries, and we remain ready to talk about it with the United States. We will continue to legally defend our industry through every means, including the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, the North American Free Trade Agreement and the World Trade Organization.

[*English*]

This government has had and will continue to have as a priority the challenges faced by the softwood lumber industry. We have won before; we will win again.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to an order made on Monday, June 14, the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until later this day at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 1:57 a.m.)

CONTENTS

Wednesday, June 16, 2021

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Kings—Hants Olympic Athlete	
Mr. Blois	8517
Israeli Prime Minister	
Mr. Williamson	8517
Oakville Deputy Fire Chief	
Ms. Damoff	8517
Tree Planters	
Mr. Fortin	8517
Orléans Graduates	
Mrs. Lalonde	8518
Construction Zone Road Safety	
Mr. Albas	8518
Saleh Hafejee	
Mrs. Zahid	8518
Gurdial Kaur Oppal	
Mr. Sarai	8518
Liberal Party of Canada	
Mr. Baldinelli	8519
Islamophobia	
Ms. Duncan (Etobicoke North)	8519
Lucie Côté	
Mr. Gourde	8519
National Defence	
Mr. Benzen	8519
Jane Bigelow	
Ms. Mathysen	8519
High School Graduates in Quebec	
Mr. Perron	8520
The Economy	
Ms. Dancho	8520
Class of 2021	
Mr. Morrissey	8520

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Economy	
Mr. O'Toole	8520
Ms. Freeland	8520
Mr. O'Toole	8520
Ms. Freeland	8521
Mr. O'Toole	8521
Ms. Freeland	8521

National Defence	
Mr. O'Toole	8521
Mr. Sajjan	8521
Mr. O'Toole	8521
Mr. Sajjan	8521
Official Languages	
Mr. Blanchet	8521
Ms. Joly	8521
Mr. Blanchet	8522
Ms. Joly	8522
COVID-19 Emergency Response	
Mr. Singh	8522
Ms. Freeland	8522
Mr. Singh	8522
Ms. Freeland	8522
National Defence	
Ms. Bergen	8522
Mr. Sajjan	8522
Ms. Bergen	8522
Mr. Sajjan	8523
Ms. Bergen	8523
Mr. Sajjan	8523
Mr. Martel	8523
Mr. Sajjan	8523
Mr. Martel	8523
Mr. Sajjan	8523
Mr. Martel	8523
Mr. Sajjan	8523
Official Languages	
Ms. Normandin	8524
Ms. Joly	8524
Ms. Normandin	8524
Ms. Joly	8524
National Defence	
Mr. Bezan	8524
Mr. Sajjan	8524
Mr. Bezan	8524
Mr. Sajjan	8524
Ms. Dancho	8525
Mr. Sajjan	8525
Ms. Dancho	8525
Mr. Sajjan	8525
Indigenous Affairs	
Mr. Angus	8525
Mr. Miller	8525
Fisheries and Oceans	
Mr. Johns	8525
Mrs. Jordan	8525

Seniors	
Mr. Kelloway	8525
Mrs. Schulte	8526

The Economy	
Mr. Fast	8526
Ms. Freeland	8526
Mr. Fast	8526
Ms. Freeland	8526
Mr. Poilievre	8526
Ms. Freeland	8526
Mr. Poilievre	8526
Ms. Freeland	8526

Official Languages	
Mr. Beaulieu	8527
Ms. Joly	8527
Mr. Beaulieu	8527
Ms. Joly	8527

Public Safety	
Mr. Chong	8527
Mr. Garneau	8527
Mr. Chong	8527
Ms. Hajdu	8527
Mr. Chong	8527
Ms. Hajdu	8527

Small Business	
Mrs. Shanahan	8528
Mrs. Fortier	8528

Public Safety	
Mr. Paul-Hus	8528
Ms. Hajdu	8528
Mr. Paul-Hus	8528
Ms. Hajdu	8528
Mr. Paul-Hus	8528
Ms. Hajdu	8529

The Environment	
Mr. Baker	8529
Mrs. Fortier	8529

Indigenous Affairs	
Ms. Ashton	8529
Ms. Bennett	8529

Indigenous Languages	
Mr. Boulerice	8529
Motion	8529
(Motion agreed to)	8529

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Canada Labour Code	
Bill C-254. Second reading	8530
Motion agreed to	8531
(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee) ..	8531

Governor General's Act	
Bill C-271. Second reading	8531

Motion negated	8532
----------------------	------

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Business of Supply	
Opposition Motion—Amendment to Section 45 of the Constitution and Quebec, a French-speaking Nation	
Motion	8532
Motion agreed to	8533

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Federal Dental Care Plan	
Motion	8534
Motion negated	8535

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Government Response to Petitions	
Mr. Lamoureux	8535

Interparliamentary Delegations	
Ms. Fry	8535

Committees of the House

Foreign Affairs and International Development	
Mr. Fonseca	8535
Mr. Chong	8535

Economic Relationship between Canada and the United States	
Mr. Saini	8536

Government Operations and Estimates	
Mr. Kitchen	8536
Mr. Paul-Hus	8536

Transport, Infrastructure and Communities	
Mr. Badawey	8536

Indigenous and Northern Affairs	
Mr. Bratina	8536

Industry, Science and Technology	
Mrs. Romanado	8536

Early Learning and Child Care Act	
Ms. Mathysen	8537
Bill C-311. Introduction and first reading	8537
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	8537

Petitions

Freedom of Speech	
Mr. Epp	8537

Forestry Industry	
Mr. Davies	8537

CERB Eligibility	
Mr. Davies	8537

Farmers' Protests in India	
Mr. Fast	8537
Human Organ Trafficking	
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe	8538
Opioids	
Mr. Angus	8538
Conversion Therapy	
Mr. Lewis	8538
Forestry Industry	
Mr. Manly	8538
Fisheries and Oceans	
Mr. Blois	8538
Public Safety	
Mr. Vis	8539
Human Rights	
Mr. Genuis	8539
Human Organ Trafficking	
Mr. Genuis	8539
Conversion Therapy	
Mr. Genuis	8539
Ethiopia	
Mr. Genuis	8539
Human Rights	
Mr. Genuis	8539
Questions on the Order Paper	
Mr. Lamoureux	8539
Questions Passed as Orders for Returns	
Mr. Lamoureux	8545

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Fisheries Act	
Bill C-269. Second reading	8555
Mr. Angus	8555
Ms. Shin	8557
Mr. Duguid	8559
Ms. Michaud	8560
Mr. Albas	8561
Mrs. Gill	8563
Mr. Scheer	8563
Division on motion deferred	8564

Privilege	
Government's Alleged Non-compliance with an Order of the House	
Mr. Deltell	8565
Motion	8565
Mr. Lamoureux	8567
Mr. Julian	8568
Ms. Larouche	8568
Mr. Brassard	8568
Mr. Gerretsen	8569
Mr. Gerretsen	8569
Mr. Kurek	8573
Ms. Larouche	8573
Mr. Harris	8573
Mr. Albas	8573
Mr. Genuis	8574
Mr. Savard-Tremblay	8574
Mr. Brassard	8576
Mr. Harris	8577
Ms. Larouche	8577
Mr. Albas	8577
Mr. Julian	8577
Mr. Genuis	8577
Mr. Harris	8578
Mr. Albas	8580
Ms. Larouche	8580
Mr. Cannings	8581
Mr. Kurek	8581
Mr. McGuinty	8581
Mr. Ruff	8585
Mr. Harris	8585
Mr. Bagnell	8585
Mr. Albas	8586
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe	8586
Mr. Chong	8586
Mr. Harris	8588
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe	8589
Mr. Genuis	8589
Mr. Davies	8589
Mr. Genuis	8590
Mr. Gerretsen	8593
Mr. Simard	8593
Mr. Julian	8594
Mr. Albas	8594
Mr. Paul-Hus	8594
Mr. Gerretsen	8596
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe	8596
Mr. Davies	8596
Mr. Barrett	8596
Mr. Gerretsen	8598
Mr. Simard	8599
Mr. Brassard	8599
Mr. Kurek	8600
Mr. Davies	8600
Mr. Albas	8601
Mr. Gerretsen	8602
Ms. Michaud	8603

Mr. Julian	8603
Mr. Lawrence	8603
Mr. Manly	8604
Mr. Lamoureux	8605
Mr. Davies	8605
Ms. Rempel Garner	8605
Mr. Davies	8606
Mr. Vidal	8607
Mr. Viersen	8607
Mr. Kurek	8607
Mr. Bachrach	8609
Mr. Genuis	8609
Mr. Gerretsen	8609
Ms. Findlay	8610
Division deferred	8610

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Budget Implementation Act, 2021, No. 1

Bill C-30. Report stage	8610
Mr. Allison	8610
Mr. Bagnell	8612
Mr. Julian	8612
Mr. Sorbara	8613
Mr. Genuis	8614
Mrs. Vignola	8614
Mr. Bachrach	8615
Mr. Waugh	8615
Mr. Bagnell	8616
Ms. Michaud	8616
Mr. Davies	8617

Mr. Lemire	8617
------------------	------

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Committees of the House

Foreign Affairs and International Development

Motion for concurrence	8618
Mrs. Kusie	8618
Mr. Kurek	8618
Mr. Chiu	8619
Mr. Viersen	8620
Mrs. Gray	8620
Mr. Genuis	8621
Mr. Viersen	8621
Mr. Lawrence	8621
Mr. Chiu	8621
Division on motion deferred	8622

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Housing

Ms. Kwan	8622
Mr. Vaughan	8622

Seniors

Mr. Berthold	8624
Mr. Fergus	8624

Forestry Industry

Mrs. Gray	8625
Mr. Fergus	8626

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>