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Tuesday, March 28, 2023

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, March 28, 2023

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*Translation*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table the report of a Canadian parliamentary delegation concerning its visit to the Republic of Malta and the Republic of Albania from October 10 to 14, 2022.

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[*English*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), and consistent with the current policy on the tabling of treaties in Parliament, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the treaties entitled “Decision No 1/2022 of the Canada-European Union Joint Customs Cooperation Committee Concerning the Mutual Recognition of the Partners in Protection Programme of Canada and the Authorised Economic Operator Programme of the European Union”, done at Brussels on October 28, 2022; “Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Republic of Cameroon on Air Transport”, done at Yaoundé on June 1, 2022; and “Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Republic of Rwanda on Air Transport”, done at Kigali on June 25, 2022.

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[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 32nd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of committees of the House.

[*English*]

If the House gives its consent, I move that the 32nd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House earlier this day, be concurred in.

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

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

(Motion agreed to)

• (1005)

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I move that the 11th report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, presented on Monday, October 17, 2022, be concurred in.

It is a pleasure for me to rise to speak on the important subject of the freedom movement in Iran. While I do so, I will be sharing my time with my excellent colleague from Calgary Shepard, who is our lead on the immigration file. This is a report from the immigration committee, so I want to recognize the work he does. He was engaged with the struggle for freedom, justice and human rights around the world even prior to taking on his current role.

Many Canadians of all backgrounds have become aware in recent days of the horrific oppression being visited on the people of Iran by the current regime, and in particular by the IRGC, which is the Iranian regime's instrument of terror. We see how the IRGC is inflicting violence on people beyond the borders of Iran and how the Iranian regime, through the IRGC and other organizations, is causing human rights violations and upsetting the peace and security in neighbouring Iraq, in Lebanon, in Yemen and even much further afield.

That is why the Conservatives have been unapologetic and clear in calling for freedom, democracy, human rights and genuine respect for the rule of law in Iran. We have supported the freedom movements that have existed in Iran, not just in the present and not just the freedom movement that rose following the killing of Mahsa Amini. We have been supporting movements for freedom in Iran going back much further than that.

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Four and a half years ago, it was Conservatives who put forward a motion in my name that called for the listing of the IRGC as a terrorist organization. This was before the killing of Mahsa Amini and before the downing of flight PS752. It was already clear four and a half years ago that the Iranian regime, through the IRGC, was inflicting terror on its own people and people around the world, and it was therefore important to list the IRGC as a terrorist organization.

Why did we feel that was important? When an organization is listed as a terrorist organization, it allows us to completely shut down its operations in Canada. In the absence of a terrorist listing, this organization can continue to be present here in Canada to intimidate Canadians, to fundraise, to recruit and to engage in other activities that facilitate the implementation of its vile terrorist agenda around the world.

We have said from the beginning that it is important to shut down IRGC operations in Canada, and the case was clear for that four and a half years ago. Four and a half years ago, members of the government caucus, in fact all present members of the government caucus, including the Prime Minister and ministers, voted in favour of the motion to list the IRGC as a terrorist organization. The NDP voted against it, but the government voted in favour of it, and that led to the motion passing.

The House of Commons voted to list the IRGC as a terrorist organization, but in four and a half years, the Liberals have done nothing. Notably, they were never willing to own up to the fact that they were not going to proceed with the policy they voted for. Government members continually said that it was under discussion, it was being studied and they were thinking about it. That wore thinner and thinner as year after year passed and the government still had not done anything.

We know the process of terrorist listing takes some time, but eventually that excuse wore thin. There have been other cases where motions like this have passed in the House. I think in particular of the Proud Boys, where a motion passed in the House calling for the listing of that organization as a terrorist group, and that terrorist listing was completed within less than two months.

It has been four and a half years, and the government has not acted to list the IRGC. However, in four and a half years, other events have happened that have underlined just how horrific the approach of the Iranian regime is.

Another event that hit home for many Canadians was the downing of flight PS752. It was the shooting down by the IRGC of a plane carrying many Canadians and others who had close connections to Canada. I commend the families of victims that have spoken out about what has happened and that have been playing an instrumental role in advocating for the freedom movement, moving this issue forward.

Family members of the victims of flight PS752 have faced harassment by the IRGC in Canada, which, again, underlines the need to shut down IRGC operations here in Canada by listing it as a terrorist organization. Not only did the IRGC kill Canadians when it shot down the flight, but it has continued to try to cover its tracks

by threatening Canadians who are involved in advocating for justice and human rights.

• (1010)

Most recently, of course, we have the “Woman, Life, Freedom” movement that followed the murder of Mahsa Amini, and we have seen others murdered. Another event that hit home for me was the murder of a nine-year-old boy who was at a protest event with members of his family. He was killed by the IRGC terrorist organization.

Up until the start of this latest freedom movement, the government had done virtually nothing. However, now we hear more statements from the government. We see that at this late stage, the government is starting to apply some sanctions, but it is still refusing to list the IRGC as a terrorist organization. If it was not clear before, it should be particularly clear now.

We have a piece of legislation designed for identifying and listing terrorist organizations, shutting down their operations in Canada and ensuring they are not able to recruit, fundraise or in any way operate here. I know that the Iranian community, families of the victims of the downing of flight PS752 and many other victims and family members of victims have been leading the charge here, and we have seen increasing activity from Canadians of all backgrounds who are hearing these stories and are inspired to take up the call.

I have asked multiple questions and repeatedly raised this issue in the context of late shows, but we still do not have an answer from the government. Why does it refuse to list the IRGC as a terrorist organization? Why is it unwilling to shut down IRGC operations in Canada? It wants to point to all kinds of other measures, which are not without some modest effect, but if it is continuing to allow this organization to exist here in Canada, to intimidate people who are speaking out in support of the freedom movement and to operate, then it has really missed the bus regarding the main sanction and main action required. The push to list the IRGC as a terrorist organization needs to continue. We need to keep up the pressure.

I know that the foreign affairs committee is going to be studying listing the IRGC as a terrorist organization as part of a broader study on Iran, and we see some movement with respect to the NDP's position, which I think is welcome. At one time, the NDP voted against my motion to list the IRGC. Now it has put forward a motion to study this issue at the foreign affairs committee, and we support that motion. We want to see that study take place. Of course, we think the case is obvious and clear, and we will be making the case throughout the study that the committee should reiterate its past recommendations for the listing of the IRGC as a terrorist organization. However, hopefully we will see a continuance of that shift and will be able to bring other opposition parties aside with our long-standing position that the IRGC needs to be listed as a terrorist organization.

Routine Proceedings

I should say that the 11th report we are debating today is the immigration committee using its resources to highlight the issue of listing the IRGC, and it says in particular that the government should “stop issuing visas to all Iranian nationals directly affiliated with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), Iranian Armed Forces, Iranian Guidance Patrol or Iranian intelligence organizations”. This is the immigration committee calling on the House to take action in line with its powers. I think this is a very important step, and we have seen actions at other committees as well.

Part of the listing process is to say we do not want people to have an affiliation with oppressive organizations that are able to come to Canada. Canada should be a safe haven for human rights defenders. Canada should be a safe haven for those who have been victims of injustice around the world. Canada must not be a safe haven for their persecutors, because if it becomes a safe haven for persecutors, it can no longer be a safe haven for victims. Victims of the Iranian regime should not have to worry about their oppressors showing up here in Canada. Victims of the Iranian regime should know that Canada is a safe place for them and will not allow their oppressors to come here.

That is why this report is important. That is why the strong measures that the Conservatives have called for and the listing of the IRGC as a terrorist organization are required. It has been four and a half years since this House originally passed my motion. The case was obvious then and it is obvious now. The government should do it.

• (1015)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there is no doubt that the issue of the IRGC and how it is labelled is of the utmost importance. I do not question that. I will be afforded the opportunity to comment on the issue shortly, but part of the concern I have relates to the games being played by the Conservative Party. We are supposed to be debating Bill C-27 today. I am wondering why the Conservatives continue to go out of their way to prevent debate on government bills. Does the member not feel any obligation to Canadians or the constituents he represents to at least ensure there is debate time? They ask for debate time and should use that time to at least debate the government's agenda.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I certainly think it is important to constructively use the debate time that we have in this House. One way to constructively use that debate time is to discuss the recommendations that committees bring forward.

Our committees do a lot of important work in this House. Committees study issues. They bring forward recommendations, and any recommendation that comes from a committee already has the support of a majority of members of that committee, naturally. They bring it to the House, and then the House has an opportunity to look at these committee reports, study them and debate them. The debate is limited; it is only a three-hour debate.

I think the implication from the member's comments is that there is something illegitimate about the House of Commons responding to the important work that committees do. I do not agree with that. I think part of what drives the agenda of the House is opposition motions, private members' motions, government bills, government mo-

tions and also committee work. Unlike a government bill or an opposition motion, committee motions already have the support of a majority of members of the committee before coming here.

I would happily spar with anyone who claims that the Iran freedom movement is not an important issue to discuss. I think it is a very important issue to discuss.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I do not deny it is an important debate. I am just a little concerned about the consistency of the Conservative Party. We certainly support the concurrence motion today, condemning the violence and the repression we are seeing in Iran.

Last week, as members recall, we had the motion that the NDP brought forward on a public inquiry on foreign interference. At the committee level, at the procedure and House affairs committee, members of the Conservative Party sought to take out references that would have included Russia, Iran and India, foreign interference writ large as part of the public inquiry. At the time, Conservatives did not feel it was important to actually have foreign interference include Iran. Today, they are bringing forward a concurrence motion on an important issue. However, they seem to be on two sides of the same fence in the course of one week.

I just want to ask the member to clarify the position of the Conservative Party.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, the reality of what happened at the committee, and the member would know this, is that in fact Conservatives moved an amendment to strengthen the motion by ensuring that there would be input from other parties into the appointment process.

The NDP was essentially enabling its coalition partner by initially proposing a motion that would have given the Liberals the ability to fully, in an unfettered way, select who was going to do this inquiry. We have seen in the past how the Liberals do not exactly have a great track record when it comes to making independent appointments.

The record will show that I and all members of the caucus voted in favour of having an inquiry into foreign interference and having that inquiry cover the broad range of possible actors. We voted in favour of that at committee and in the House. We voted in favour of an amendment that we had in the motion to strengthen it by having opposition input into the appointment process.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to acknowledge my colleague for the commitment he has to ensuring that democracy is promoted and fought for. He has worked on many files over the years, and I have always respected him immensely.

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On a personal level, I very much support the IRGC being labelled a terrorist organization. I supported that when it came forward, and I would certainly like to see more activity happen, given the incidents that we have seen of the schoolgirls being poisoned and other things happening.

What other action would you like the government to be taking today?

• (1020)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind the member that she is to address all questions and comments through the Chair.

There is not very much time left, so I want to ask the hon. member for a brief answer, please.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I want to recognize that the member is joining us in calling for the listing of the IRGC as a terrorist organization.

I would just like to see other members of the government, if they want to meaningfully show solidarity with the Iranian community and stand with the freedom movement, join us in asking their government to list the IRGC as a terrorist organization. It is a responsibility of members of Parliament to speak out for truth and justice, and to hold their own government accountable when there is a lack of action.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, let us start with the obvious: The IRGC or *Sepah*, as it is known in Farsi, is a terrorist group. It has been a terrorist organization for decades, since 1979. It has been organizing terror campaigns in the Middle East, both against opponents of the Iranian Islamic regime in Tehran and also against its own people. It has been successful at intimidating and bullying, but also at murdering its political opponents wherever they are, whether they are in Europe, in Africa, or in the Middle East, including right in Iran.

We have seen this ever since September 2022, after the murder of Jina Amini, a Kurdish woman from the city of Saqqez. She was visiting Tehran when she was picked up by the morality police for not wearing her hijab properly. When they noticed that she was Kurdish, that led to her eventual beating and murder by the regime, which then kicked off the mass protests in her home town of Saqqez, and then the worse protest in Sanandaj, which had the worst repression by IRGC militiamen.

I was looking on ChatGPT, which is a fancy little AI program, and I asked it what is a great Yiddish proverb on doing the right thing. ChatGPT gave me this one: “To conquer the world, the best tactic is to be a mensch”, meaning a person of integrity. The government needs to be that personhood of integrity in this case.

In 2018, the Parliament of Canada passed a motion calling on the Government of Canada to list the IRGC as a terror group. A person of integrity would have listened to Parliament then. They would look at 2022 and 2023, today, at the ongoing protests, because they have not ended. Many protesters have been executed. Many protesters have life sentences that have been given to them for the simple act of standing up for the democratic and human rights that they are entitled to by their very creator. Just by being, they are entitled to these rights: to disagree with their government and to

protest peacefully on the streets of whatever city they want in Iran, something that many of them have not been able to do since 1979, since the mullahs of Khan took over the country and led it down a dark, dark path.

There are names I want to mention, because I have been told repeatedly by Iranians, including Persians, Kurds, Baloch and Azerbaijanis who live in Iran, that it actually matters when we mention names in this House. The Iranian regime is worried that we will mention protesters, human rights activists and democracy activists because it will save their lives, so I am going to start with a few.

Nazila Maroufian is a 23-year-old journalist. She was actually a journalist with Ruydad 24 and she was one of the first to cover the story. She interviewed one of the parents of Jina Amini and, for her troubles to get the truth out, she was jailed. She was put on a show trial at first, then released and put on a new show trial. Her sentence is two years in jail and a five-year ban from leaving Iran. She is one of those victims of the IRGC and I am calling on the Iranian regime to release her.

There are many names that we can see on the Hengaw Organization for Human Rights list. This is a human rights group working in Iran itself that, for decades, has been describing the different crimes being committed by the Islamic regime against all the people of Iran, often targeting Kurds from the western provinces, a region that many Kurds call “*Rojhelat*”, especially *kolbar* Kurds. These are people, typically men, who go across the border into Iraq and bring much-needed supplies such as medicine and food. Supplies are very hard to come by in certain parts of Iran, or the costs are extremely high. These are individuals who are shot at by IRGC border guards and indiscriminately killed for the simple act of trying to bring bread, food and medication to people on the Iranian side.

I want to mention two more people, whom I politically sponsored, a practice that is often done in the European Union by politicians in international governments. They are Mohammad Amin Akhlaghi and Amir Mohammad Jafari. Both of these individuals were peaceful protesters. They were simply standing up for their right just to be heard, as citizens of their country. In their cases, the first one now has a retrial; the second one was sentenced to death, which was commuted to a prolonged imprisonment and it is unclear how long he will be in jail. They are another two victims of the IRGC, so why do we not list it as a terrorist group? None of these people have done anything violent. They simply stood up for their rights.

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The list goes on. There was an Iranian soccer player who was sentenced to death, Amir Nasr-Azadani, for the simple act of disagreeing with his government and saying that his government was wrong in the suppression and oppression of women in Iran, and how it is doing it. That is another victim of the IRGC, a terror group. He is being victimized by the IRGC and faces a death sentence.

• (1025)

We have often heard in these videos, and I have many Persian friends and Kurdish friends who send me these videos from different cities in Iran, women and men chanting “*Jin, Jiyan, Azadi*” or “Women, Life, Freedom.” It is a very basic ask that they are calling for here.

We have an Islamic regime based in Tehran that is completely disconnected from its own citizens, and, what is more, it exports its violence and terrorism to other parts of the world and intimidates Canadians right here in our country. I have met with Canadians in Vancouver, Burnaby, New Westminster and PoCo who are all worried. They self-censor sometimes, because they are worried.

The diaspora community in Canada has never been more united than it is right now. There was a major rally in Toronto this weekend with many speakers speaking on freedom for Iran. A free Iran is what they aspire to, including the very well-known Masih Alinejad, an Iranian American journalist. She has harrowing tales of being persecuted by the IRGC, including a kidnapping plot that was broken up by the FBI in the United States. She travels with security now, because the IRGC is actively looking to kidnap her or murder her for the simple act of standing up for the rights of women and men in Iran.

This is not a regime we should do business with. This is not a regime we should countenance. This is not a regime we should have half measures with. A person of integrity would list the IRGC as a terror group. It is the last, final act we need to do.

I want to mention a few more things on this particular issue and another four names, another four victims of the IRGC terror group. These come from a friend of mine, Reza Niarian, from Vancouver. The four names are Pejman Fatehi, Mohsen Mazloum, Mohammad Faramarzi and Wafa Azarbar. All four face the death penalty. Their great crime is organizing for a political party. We all know people on both sides who organize for political parties here in Canada. It is a basic freedom, the freedom of association to organize for a political purpose. They were not calling for violence or anything like that; they were simply organizing for a political party, which I think is a very basic human right.

These four men are facing the death penalty in Iran. Only with a terror group in a court run by the IRGC would this be the case. There is actually very limited information being provided publicly about the charges, the evidence and the details of their case. These are another four victims of the IRGC. This is a terror group. There is ample evidence of the fact that this is a terror group and we should be listing it as a terror group.

We just had the new year, Nowruz. Whatever people call it and whatever particular traditions they have around it, people in central Asia have been celebrating it for thousands and thousands of years,

and I hope they spend it with family. I hope they have a happy and prosperous new year, but for the people of Iran it has not been a good start to the new year.

The protests continue. The oppression continues. The random extrajudicial killings by the IRGC militia continue. These things continue, and they keep exporting that violence to other countries. Their agents continue to travel, because it is not as if they show up at the border at Toronto Pearson airport and disclose to the CBSA officer that they are working on behalf of the IRGC. They do it in secret. They continue to travel. They have sympathizers, both in our country and in the United States, who continue to intimidate Canadians of Iranian heritage, Persian heritage or Kurdish heritage.

I am glad we could debate this today as a follow-up to what has been happening since September, because we continue to call on the government to list the IRGC or *Sepah* as a terror group. The government needs to do, as in the Yiddish proverb, what a mensch would do. I strongly believe that a person of integrity would list it immediately as a terror group. If there are changes that need to be made to the laws, the government has had since September to make them. There has been ample time to change our laws so that IRGC conscripts, those unfortunate souls who are conscripted by his terror group, would not be affected by listing them as a terror group.

• (1030)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will get the opportunity to expand upon the point I am going to make to my colleague across the way.

Right away, I am concerned that the Conservatives have chosen this, as opposed to using an opposition day so that we could have a good and thorough discussion on the issue and hopefully get some more positive results coming from a full day of debate using an opposition day. They have chosen to use a concurrence debate, which prevents us from being able to have a number of additional hours of debate on the issue of Bill C-27, which is the digital charter that deals with the privacy of Canadians.

I am wondering if the member could explain to Canadians why the Conservatives continue to have misplaced priorities by not dealing with issues such as the personal security of Canadians on the Internet and by bringing forward a report like this today, as opposed to on an opposition day.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, let us talk about misplaced priorities. The Liberals could have tabled legislation by now, which we could have been debating, on making it possible for IRGC conscripts not to be affected by the listing of the IRGC as a terror group. They have known for months and months that this is a problem, but they have not done anything about it. They have chosen not to do it.

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On misplaced priorities again, I thought the human rights of the people of Iran, and family members of Canadians who are persecuted, bullied and intimidated would be a priority of the House of Commons and the Government of Canada. However, the member just said it is not a priority; it is not that important. A government of integrity would have listed the IRGC as a terror group, and I continue to call on the government to do that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very interesting speech.

I support the idea of banning a terrorist group, but how does my colleague intend to apply such measures? How does he intend to make the banning in question practicable?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his good question. Some terrorist groups are listed in the Criminal Code. What we are asking and what Parliament asked in 2018 is to designate the IRGC as a terrorist organization. That simply involves adding this organization to the Criminal Code so that it cannot cross our borders or fundraise in our country.

It is possible to amend the act. We already have examples, in the House, of bills that were proposed by the government, such as Bill C-41, that changed the way the system and the government agencies work in terms of terrorist organizations. If the government had any integrity or interest in taking such action, it would have done so already.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. The situation in Iran is horrific. We are witnessing gross and systematic human rights violations. We are seeing the systematic oppression of the Iranian people. This is a very legitimate debate right now, given everything that is happening to the people of Iran.

The report we are discussing was concurred in a few months ago. The government responded that it agreed “in principle” with the recommendations. However, the Liberals did not take all the mandatory steps required to act on the committee’s report and implement all the measures to counter the Iranian regime.

What does my colleague think about the government’s response so far to the committee report, given that the report was tabled in Parliament a few months ago?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question. When I see the government indicate in its response to a report that it agrees “in principle”, to me that means “no”.

The government rarely says no to the recommendations of a parliamentary committee because if it did it would have to explain itself. It would have to tell us why it does not want to follow these recommendations. It is therefore easy to say it is in favour in principle when in reality nothing will come of it.

In this case, in 2018, the Parliament of Canada asked the government to add a terrorist group from Iran to the list established under the Criminal Code. I believe that the government has no interest in doing that. As we keep seeing, this government does not have any integrity and it will not do this unless it is forced to.

• (1035)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, here we go again. We have the Conservative Party of Canada playing that destructive role here on the floor of the House of Commons, and it is intentionally done. Those who might tune in and try to follow the debate would think that today is about talking about what, I would argue, is a very serious issue. There is absolutely no doubt. There is not one Liberal member of Parliament who would question the importance of the issue the Conservatives have brought forward today.

Ever since the downing of the Ukrainian airline when Canadians on board were killed, in January 2020, I believe, there has been a ratcheting up of public awareness here in Canada of some of the horrible things that were taking place in Iran. Canadians were very sympathetic even before then, but that particular incident, I think, created a great deal of publicity about it that Canadians could really identify with.

There is no question that it is an important issue. I want to make that very clear. It is an important issue. Is it a priority? Of course it is a priority.

There are many issues around the world that Canada contributes to. Just yesterday, we were talking about Bill C-41, substantial legislation that has the support of all members of the House, as far as I can tell. After a few hours of debate in the chamber, it was unanimously agreed that we should advance it to committee. The core and purpose of that legislation is in recognizing the values of Canadians by saying we have an important humanitarian role to play abroad.

If people listened to the debate that took place yesterday, they heard us talk a great deal about Afghanistan and many of the terrible things happening there today. The legislation is actually broader than just Afghanistan. The principles being talked about, even though Afghanistan was the focus, were in regard to how Canada is going to be able to advance humanitarian aid to countries like Afghanistan where there are terrorists and terrorists causing actions.

The government does not need to be told these are important issues. Canada as a nation plays a very strong role in terms of its presence on the world scene. We often punch well above our weight. The legislation we unanimously supported yesterday to go to committee amplifies that.

There is a limited amount of time to debate in the House of Commons. The Conservatives know that and they know full well that that is the case. They are using this particular concurrence report, as they have done previously, to say this is an important issue. No one is talking about it not being an important issue.

If it were up to the Conservatives, they would have a concurrence report every day to prevent the government from being able to speak.

An hon. member: Hear, hear!

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Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member says, “Hear, hear!” That is the point. They would bring one in every day to prevent the government from being able to present its legislation, and then they will criticize. They will go outside the chamber to say the government cannot get its act together and cannot get its legislation through the House. However, who is preventing the government from seeing that additional debate time? Then, when we propose to sit late into the evening, they cry and whine. They do not want to sit late into the evening.

• (1040)

Canadians are used to working a little extra, often working until midnight. As a result—

An hon. member: Bring it on.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Yes, Madam Speaker, we are bringing it on because this legislation is important to Canadians.

What was supposed to be happening today? A number of members came to the House anticipating we would be debating Bill C-27. That is the digital rights legislation about the thing called the Internet. We are all somewhat familiar with it, I suspect, everyone except maybe those from within the Conservative Party.

The Internet raises a whole litany of concerns regarding personal identity theft and how data is being collected on the Internet. When I asked the member across the way a question about the report, he said it is about priorities. Yes, it is about priorities. Canadians want their identities protected. It is substantial legislation, which we are supposed to be debating as opposed to participating in—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We have a point of order by the hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, I found it especially interesting to hear my colleague talk about Bill C-27. I am in the House today because I am interested in this topic. Unfortunately, the interpretation was not working and I would like that to be corrected.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There was a problem with interpretation.

[*English*]

It is working now.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, we have a fixed amount of time to debate a wide spectrum of both domestic and international issues. Today members came in prepared to listen, debate and have an exchange on the issue of the digital charter because Canadians are concerned about this issue. We were going to have literally hours of debate on it. That will not happen because the Conservative Party, under motions, brought forward a report it wants to have a debate on.

Yesterday, Conservatives could have provided ample ideas, thoughts and reflections on the report because we were debating Bill C-41. I do not know if any member made reference to Iran, let

alone the report, at all yesterday, but it would have been absolutely relevant to have done so.

What other options do opposition members have? They just had an opposition day. They wanted us to talk about a budgetary measure as opposed to talking about this issue they say is so critically important that it had to be debated today. It could have been debated a couple of days ago when they had an opposition day. They could have designated an entire day to that and had a resolution at the very end of that day, which would have forced a vote on the issue.

This is part of the games Conservative Party members play day in and day out. As the Government of Canada continues to be focused on Canadians and the issues that are important to Canadians, we will continue to tolerate the games being played by the Conservatives. At the same time, we will deal with those international issues that are so critically important to our nation in reflecting true Canadian values.

Last year, Mahsa Amini, a young lady in her early 20s, was in the community in Iran and was picked up by the morality police. It was later said that she had a heart attack and that caused her death. The morality police are not fooling anyone. We know she was abused and beaten, and that is what caused her death.

We understand and we appreciate those true freedom fighters in Iran. They are the brave women of Iran who are standing tall. They are ensuring that individuals like Mahsa are not forgotten and that what she stood for will continue to prevail and will be fought for in Iran. Mahsa inspired the world to mobilize and to recognize that what was taking place was just so wrong.

I would argue that Mahsa is one of the reasons that even members of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration feel the way they do in regard to Iran and what is taking place there today. It motivates individuals like myself and other MPs to stand and be vocal on this issue not only inside the chamber but also throughout our communities.

• (1045)

The motion that came from the standing committee reads:

That the [standing] committee [on citizenship and immigration] report the following to the House: In light of the downing of the Ukrainian International Airlines flight PS 752 by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps—

That is what we often refer to as the IRGC.

—and in light of the killing of Mahsa Amini by the Iranian Guidance Patrol, that the committee demands the government stop issuing visas to all Iranian nationals directly affiliated with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard...Iranian Armed Forces, Iranian Guidance Patrol or Iranian Intelligence Organizations and that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request a response to the report by the government.

That response is well under way.

Mahsa encapsulated what is so wrong when we contrast Canadian values to what took place between her and those in the Iranian society who support the regime that is currently in place. We see how wrong it is.

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The downing of the Ukrainian airline touched Canada, as I made reference to, in a very profound way and to me, personally. Kourosh is a dear friend whom I have been meeting at the local McDonald's on occasion. He has actually met many parliamentarians because of his former role in the real estate industry. He would make presentations to members of Parliament. Kourosh's wife was on the plane that went down and, like many other victims' families, he faced the horrors of the downing of that plane.

I think it is important that the Prime Minister appointed the former minister of finance Ralph Goodale to investigate the situation. We wanted to ensure a sense of accountability for that tragedy. We also worked with other governments, such as Ukraine, where the flight was headed. It was a Ukrainian international flight.

The effect of the lives of those who passed away on the lives of those here in Canada is so profound. When we look at the achievements of those individuals in a relatively short time span here in Canada, they made incredible contributions. I like to think that members, no matter what side of the House one sits on, along with the broader community that follows what is taking place in Iran virtually on a daily basis, can imagine and provide sympathy for those victims.

Our Iranian community is large and it is very much interested and tuned in to the issue. That is why I take offence when someone in the chamber accuses the government or myself of not having a high priority in regard to this issue because nothing could be further from the truth. The government and its ministers have been following what is taking place in Iran very closely, and it is taking appropriate actions where it can in dealing with the Iranian regime.

• (1050)

Where I challenge opposition members is on the manner in which they feel that they can declare that an issue of urgent importance be used as a tool as opposed to a legitimate debate. The Conservatives will stand up today and reflect on this issue, as opposed to talking about the important domestic issue of the digital charter and the protection of personal information.

I raised that because the Conservatives will criticize the Liberals for not allowing enough time for debate on Bill C-27 if the government needs to bring in any form of time allocation in order to get the bill through. Unfortunately, this issue today is no more a priority for the Conservative Party than it was last week when it completely ignored the issue when it had an opposition day motion.

Today it is only important because it wants to disrupt the government agenda. It is an agenda that deals with personal information on the Internet. It is something I know of first-hand. We are often asked to bring concerns from our constituencies here to Ottawa, and we do believe that within our caucus.

I can assure members that there is a genuine concern about information that is being collected on the Internet. I feel that the Conservatives taking away from that debate today does a disservice to those who are concerned about how the Internet collects data. Bill C-27 should be going to committee at the very least.

All one needs to do is look at the government's agenda. We have a budget this afternoon and there will be budget debates. We have

other legislation, and the Conservatives know it is a very aggressive legislative agenda. It will cause us to continue, as we did last night, whether the Conservatives want to or not. As long as there are other parties that understand the importance of having that debate, we will have to sit later.

I want to conclude by talking about the debate on Bill C-41 yesterday. It is substantial legislation that would ensure there is ongoing humanitarian aid to countries like Iran and other countries. It is for those in the Iranian communities to know and understand that the Government of Canada, through its ministries, is following what is taking place in Iran and it is taking actions that will make a difference. We want to keep our Iranian communities not only safe but also feeling safe.

• (1055)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I do not really have much of a question because I am not convinced I will get an answer, but I do have a commentary to make.

The government is confusing, and the member is confusing, the best interests of the Liberal Party of Canada and the best interests of the House of Commons and the way we conduct business here. Members get to decide what we debate on the floor of the House of Commons. When issues come up and when there is accountability that needs to be done, like through a report, where a committee reports to the House its findings, we get to debate that here in the House and then pass judgment on it.

He made a ridiculous claim that the government cannot get its agenda passed, but the whole point of this place is to debate ideas and issues on the timetable of members and not what the government wants. The government is not in charge 24-7. It does not get to tell everyone here what we are going to do and how we are going to do it.

I think the Iranian community, the diaspora community in Canada, deserves to have their issues heard on the floor of the House of Commons, and I am glad we can have this debate here so they can be heard.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, in the last federal election, the electorate determined that there would be a minority government. In a minority government situation, it takes opposition parties and government for things to work and move forward on a wide variety of issues.

I have been a parliamentarian for over 30 years. I am not naive enough to believe virtually anything that the member just said, that it is a concurrence report and as members, we should be bringing forward concurrence reports. I understand how the timing and agenda actually work.

The member might be able to fool some of the people watching. However, at the end of the day, this report is being used as a Conservative political tool in order to prevent us from having the debate on personal protections through the Internet. Conservatives can say what they want, but that is the bottom line.

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Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I would like to first send my thoughts to the family of Mahsa Amini and to the Iranian people. I am not too adept when it comes to international issues such as this, so I do appreciate this debate brought forward by the member for Calgary Shepard.

Given that we are paying attention to what is going on, could the member describe what Canada has done? We have said that we will not tolerate violations of human rights and terrorist activities. What has Canada done to make sure that tens of thousands have been rendered inadmissible? What mechanisms has Canada put in place to make sure that we are protecting Canadians and not tolerating such activities?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it is a good question. If we look at the motion itself, it is trying to say that we do not provide temporary visas to people from Iran in certain areas.

We have a system that prevents individuals who are in question, who are there, virtually, from being able to currently come to Canada. The Minister of Immigration has reinforced this. However, there are some concerns. For example, with mandatory conscription, if young males do not have any choice but to participate in the Iranian forces, should that automatically exclude them from the opportunity of ever coming to Canada? Under mandatory conscription, they do not have a choice. They have to become members. However, maybe they want to flee that opportunity.

We already have the rules—

• (1100)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have to go to another question.

Questions and comments, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, is the member aware of the sanctions that were announced yesterday by the Minister of Foreign Affairs? This is the 10th package of sanctions. Canada is leading the way in the world.

In addition, does the member know that Canada is actually considered the second leader, if not the leader, in the strongest sanctions and measures against Iran? This includes understanding the state as a sponsor of terrorism, as well as strong sanctions that have been placed against the leadership of the IRGC.

In every sense, this is a way of ensuring that Canada's leadership is strong, dedicated and committed to the women and men of Iran. Is the member aware of that?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comment and the question. At the beginning of my comments, I referred to how Canada often punches well over its weight in its very strong leadership throughout the world. That is recognized.

In terms of its strength, I did not know where Canada is positioned, but I am not surprised by what the parliamentary secretary for foreign affairs has just listed. It amplifies, as an excellent example, the degree to which the government takes this issue seriously. One only needs to reflect for a few moments on what the parlia-

mentary secretary said the government has already done. We should all feel good, at least in good part, with respect to that.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to take exception to the member for Winnipeg North's comments minimizing the deaths of 176 people who were killed on PS752, 55 Canadians who were on that flight, plus 30 permanent residents who called Canada home, never mind all the students coming from Iran who were returning to their universities here in Canada.

He does not want to debate this; instead, he is trying to say we need to get on with Bill C-27. Let us remind the member that they have had the bill before the House since June of 2022. In nine months, they have only brought that bill forward three times.

I would say that it is not a priority for the government. The member should get up and apologize to the Persian community across Canada and to all the families who lost loved ones on flight PS752.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member needs to reflect on what he is actually saying. Just last week, the opposition had an opposition day. It has had numerous opposition days that are just a repeat of former opposition days. They are wasted opposition days. Not one of them has dealt with this issue.

When he says this to the Persian community or to those who are passionate and following what is taking place in Iran today, I would suggest that the Conservative Party of Canada, on the floor of the House of Commons, does a huge disservice. If the Conservatives genuinely cared about the issue, as they say they do today, they would spend an opposition day instead of trying to bring it up in a concurrence report. Obviously they do not really believe what they are saying.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am concerned about the rhetoric on both the Conservative and Liberal sides. This is an important debate. We know that the Iranian population is suffering untold horrors. At this point, we know that systemic torture and barbaric killings are going on.

We see a regime that is imposing oppression on its citizens. It is not just doing this in Iran but also in Canada. We have seen threats against Canadians of Iranian origin here in the country. We have also seen an Iranian regime that wants to interfere in our democracy.

A public inquiry motion was adopted last week. The Liberals have refused to put that into place, but this would allow an inquiry that would also look into the Iranian regime's attempt to influence Canadian elections.

Why has the Liberal government not put that public inquiry into effect?

• (1105)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, in short, we have the special rapporteur looking at all options, including the possibility of a public inquiry. I think that we would be doing a disservice to the former governor general by not holding off and waiting until he ultimately comes down with a recommendation.

Routine Proceedings

I appreciate the member's comments in regard to some of the heated parts of the discussion. I would suggest that for the Persian community or those following what is taking place in Iran, yes, at some point, it would have been wonderful to have a take-note debate or an opposition day debate on this.

There are other alternatives that would have allowed for a more wholesome debate on the broader issue, in terms of what the Government of Canada could be doing. I would recommend to the Conservatives and others that we have that discussion among the House leadership and see if something can be accommodated to facilitate a healthier debate on the issue.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, as always, it is an honour to enter into the important debates taking place in Canada's House of Commons. Before I get into my remarks, I would note that I am splitting my time with my hon. colleague and friend from the riding of Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

As we know as members of Parliament, things can change and develop quickly in this job. This has led me to be making a speech from a bit of a unique location. Having seemingly come down with the flu over the weekend, I was delayed in my return to our nation's capital. As a result, I was not able to get on my Sunday afternoon flight, which is my normal commute. Therefore, if you would indulge me, Madam Speaker, I am in a unique location that I would like to highlight.

I am giving my speech from another chamber, actually: the town council chambers of the community of Drumheller. This is the second-largest community in Battle River—Crowfoot in this beautiful area of east central Alberta, and I am proud to represent it. I am on my way to the airport this morning, and I appreciate the community's generosity and the hospitality that the mayor, council and staff have provided so that I could give my speech on an incredibly important subject.

I would note that when people ask me about the riding I represent, I talk about east central Alberta, describe the region I have the honour of representing and affectionately refer to it as "God's country". When people look at the area I represent, I can often refer them to dinosaurs. About half a million people a year, from across our country and around the world, come to Drumheller to see the dinosaurs. It may be Tyra, the world's largest *Tyrannosaurus rex*, which is towering over my shoulder just down the street; the Royal Tyrrell Museum; or many of the other tourist attractions that are focused on dinosaurs in the community of Drumheller. It may also be the rich history that exists in this area, from the badlands to things like the hoodoos and the region's mining and agricultural history.

I am certainly proud of the Drumheller Valley and the work that is done to ensure that this is a world-class tourism destination. I am proud to be the representative of this incredible place. It is kind of a neat opportunity to be speaking from the council chambers here today. I again thank Mayor Colberg, the town council and everybody in the community of Drumheller for their hospitality as I speak about this concurrence motion and highlight this incredible community and the hard work they do to make sure this is a great place to live, work, raise a family, and of course, come to visit.

I would note before I get into the substance of my remarks that this community is undergoing a massive infrastructure project that includes significant climate mitigation funding, including from the federal government. I know the federal government—

• (1110)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is a point of order by the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's speech, but up to this point, he has not once mentioned the Iranian people or the situation that is happening there. If the Conservatives have moved this concurrence motion, it would behoove them to actually speak on the item.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the hon. parliamentary secretary that there is a bit of leeway. There is no doubt the hon. member will get to the concurrence motion on the committee report before the House.

Some of what the hon. parliamentary secretary spoke about was more a point of debate, so I will allow the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot to continue with his speech.

I would remind all members that when they are speaking to a specific issue before the House, their speeches should be related to that issue, and members speaking should mention it.

The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I always find it troubling that, when we speak about the communities we represent, it seems to be offensive to those in the Liberal Party.

When it comes to the issue we are addressing here today, part of the reason I brought up the rich history that exists in the community of Drumheller is because it has a rich Ukrainian diaspora. It is a melting pot, and that speaks to, whether with respect to the mining or agricultural resources we have here, how this region has a very rich history we can all be incredibly proud of. Therefore, as we speak about the 11th report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, it is in that context that I bring forward these remarks today.

I heard the parliamentary secretary earlier today dismiss how important this issue is. However, I would remind the House and all Canadians watching that, as we talk about the tragedy of the downing of Ukrainian International Airlines flight PS752 by the IRGC, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, it is a tragedy that has touched so many Canadians. I know that, although this happened a number of years ago, the impacts have reached far and wide, over the breadth of our country, with a number of personal connections made with my constituents. It was astounding to see how the history of the people of Ukraine is so deeply connected with that of our country.

Then of course there was the killing of Mahsa Amini by what is basically the morality police in Iran and the absolute tragedy that represents to the Iranian people, as well as the fact that we have an instance of terrorists more or less operating as a legitimate state arm of the Iranian government.

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It is incredibly troubling, as we have seen over the last number of years, since I was elected in 2019, that Parliament has taken—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would say to the couple of hon. parliamentary secretaries speaking that, if they want to have conversations, they should take them outside because their voices are carrying within the chamber. Even when an individual is presenting virtually, those conversations still interrupt the House.

The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot may continue.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I have no doubt that they are listening intently to the words I am sharing.

Parliament, in the midst of the minority circumstances we find ourselves in, has spoken quite clearly over the last three Parliaments about how it is important to take a strong and consistent message to demonstrate Canada's commitment to support the Iranian people and ensure against the types of terrorist activities that the IRGC have shown itself to be so willing to employ to further its political agenda. We can see that in the two instances related to this motion here today.

Parliament has made it very clear. I believe there have been a number of votes. It was not until just recently that the Liberals finally started taking some more concrete actions, although it seems to, in what is honestly a confusing word salad, continue to bring sanctions forward to those involved with the IRGC, and those who defend their actions, but it refuses to outright list it as a terrorist entity. Certainly, Parliament has made it very clear, and because we are the supreme legislative authority in this country, I suggest it would behoove the Liberals to listen to the will of Parliament and take strong and firm action to stand up for the people who are suffering from the consequences of the IRGC's terrorist-like actions.

While the government has brought about sanctions, taking some steps in the right direction, it is troubling that it does not seem willing to go quite far enough, especially when it comes to the downing of the Ukrainian airline, where 176 people tragically lost their lives, including 55 Canadians and, I believe, around 30 permanent residents, as well as a number of students and other individuals. They all had their entire lives ahead of them. The families had loved ones ripped from them without justification or cause, as a clear act of terrorism, something that was most definitely an attack on the peace and security of all of those involved.

We talk about the importance of this motion and the need to ensure that we do not allow the victims of these terrible actions to be diminished in the midst of debate and dialogue. This place needs to stand up for what is sound and right in the world so we can continue to call out terrorist actions, such as those of the IRGC, the Iranian armed forces, which is in control, and other Iranian intelligence organizations.

• (1115)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts on why it is that the Conservative Party has decided to take this very important issue and present it as a concurrence motion.

They could have designated it for one of their opposition days, where there would have been an opportunity to have a more thorough debate on the issue, a day-long debate, ending in a vote. That would have been more of a unanimous consent being formalized. There is also the possibility of having the House leadership teams look at a take-note debate, as opposed to just moving concurrence on a report.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I hope the parliamentary secretary is aware that the government controls the legislative agenda. Especially in a minority Parliament, this requires that the government does work, of course, with opposition parties.

The bill that was scheduled for debate today, and will be debated here in a couple of hours, is like much of the legislation the government has attempted to pass and, in a few cases, has been successful with. Especially over the last minority Parliaments there have been some significant challenges, but we have seen a level of mismanagement when it comes to the House's legislative agenda. It is absolutely outstanding and, I would say quite frankly, embarrassing.

When important issues comes up the House needs to address them. To diminish the importance of this issue is incredibly shortsighted and unfortunate. It is something that I would hope would encourage members of the Liberal Party to take pause and consider carefully about how they seem to be willing to put their political interests before that of such important issues, such as that which we have moved concurrence on here today.

• (1120)

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise today as an opportunity to share the names of a family in my community that was impacted by the downing of the flight we are talking about today: Ardalan; his wife, Noulifar; and their son, Kamyar. This debate hits home for the Iranian community in Port Moody—Coquitlam, Anmore, Belcarra and Port Coquitlam. This impacted our community. This impacted people in our community. They were a part of our community that the community loves.

I wanted to talk about family reunification because that is what I hear about in my riding. I hear about the need for families to reunify, and I wanted to ask the member about the super visa and whether the Conservatives and the member agree that the super visa program, which allows for family reunification, especially in times like these, could be enhanced.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, like the member from the NDP, so many of us have those connections within our constituencies. Families were devastated by the downing of that flight.

When it comes to the immigration system, super visas and the work that needs to be done, I find that there has to be a concerted effort to bring about reforms to our system so we can have that secure, compassionate and efficient immigration system that all Canadians expect. There is nothing compassionate about having a two million people in a backlog waiting for answers as to whether they can come visit this country, come see loved ones or come here to start a new life. These things have to be addressed.

*Routine Proceedings**[Translation]*

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Battle River—Crowfoot for his speech, and I hope he feels better soon. He seems to have caught a bug that is affecting his usual tenor.

I have an acquaintance of Iranian origin from a past life. He did his military service a few years ago, and he has been refused a visa. How can we prevent Iranian nationals who have done nothing wrong from getting caught up in measures now being implemented to ensure national security and to condemn the Iranian regime?

[English]

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I certainly feel much better than I sound, so I thank the member for the best wishes, and I apologize to the interpreters for a bit of a hoarse voice, as that seems to be the last thing to recover.

The member makes a good point. There are those in countries who become victims as much as, in some cases, the victims of terrorism. There are those who, in some cases, are drafted or pressed into service in armed forces and whatnot, and it is unfortunate when there are instances where those people who, even though they are trying to escape their country for a better life, are falling through the cracks. Absolutely, there has to be a path forward to ensure Canadians are secure, as that has to be maintained, and to ensure those who are victims as well are able to come find refuge in this country.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise and have this debate in our House, the House of Canadians, where we are allowed to bring forward issues that are important to Canadians, including those people in the diaspora community from Iran. I want to remind everyone that this motion from the immigration and citizenship committee was based upon two facts.

First, the IRGC attacked Ukraine International Airlines flight PS752. It was determined to be an act of terrorism, and the Iranian regime needs to be held to account for it. Of the 176 people who died on that plane, 55 of them were Canadian citizens and 30 of them were permanent residents. On top of that, numerous young Iranians were coming to Canada to study.

The Liberals have suggested that we are taking up valuable, precious time from the government's agenda by having this debate to highlight the shortfalls of the Liberal government in addressing the needs of those who were impacted: the families in Canada, the victims of those terrorist acts and those who lost loved ones. I want to say, on the House of Commons floor, that it is our right as parliamentarians to bring forward these types of concurrence motions, to have these discussions and to do it in a respectful way.

I am disappointed when the member for Winnipeg North continues to cry about the fact that this is taking away from the debate on Bill C-27. I remind the parliamentary secretary that this bill was tabled in the House of Commons in June 2022. I remind him that the Liberals have only brought this forward on three occasions for debate. Therefore, the digital charter that he is decrying as being so important to Canadians has not been a priority for the government as it has not brought it forward very often over the last nine months.

Taking three hours today to debate this important issue and to talk about how the Government of Canada has not listed the IRGC as a terrorist organization is something all Canadians need to understand. This is about Canada. This is about the threat environment that we are facing.

We know there is an increasing threat from the IRGC. Its terrorist activity is not just against the people of Iran. It is not just against the people who were unfortunate enough to be on flight PS752 and were shot down and killed. We have to remember that the IRGC is exporting its terrorism around the world. It is on the ground, as we have just witnessed in Syria, killing American soldiers. We know that the IRGC has been supporting the genocidal Assad regime in Syria. We know that the IRGC has been helping Hezbollah in Lebanon and in Syria. It has been helping Hamas carry out terrorist attacks against the State of Israel. We know that today, in Ukraine, the IRGC is on the ground, operating drones, killing Ukrainian civilians and bombing Ukrainian infrastructure. All of these are atrocities, war crimes and violations of the Geneva Convention. If there is any organization that ever deserved to be listed as a terrorist organization, it is the IRGC from Iran.

When the Liberals talk about the response to the committee report, it is that they have taken some measures. They are targeting individuals, including 1,000-plus people who are part of the IRGC leadership. However, let us remember that this is an elite fighting force that the Iranian terrorist regime has brought forward, recruited and moulded. These are the people who continue to serve even though there is only a one-year mandatory service. These are the people who stay and they are more than happy to go out and kill those whom they consider as being unclean.

We see it active in Canada. Today, the Persian community faces coercion, intimidation and death threats from operatives of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. We have seen it interfere with our politics.

● (1125)

We are having this discussion right now about the foreign interference by the People's Republic of China, by the Communist regime in Beijing, influencing the elections here in 2019 and 2021. We also know that Iran has been active in trying to intimidate and coerce the Persian community to support its efforts, its cause and its potential for election outcomes.

In this motion, we think about Mahsa Amini, women, life and freedom. She was a brave, young Kurdish girl who stood on the streets of Tehran and refused to put on her head scarf. The morality police, under the direction of the IRGC, beat her to death. That has sparked civil disobedience, protests throughout Iran, and rallies of support across Canada and around the world.

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I have had the pleasure of joining our Persian community and standing with it in solidarity, fighting for women, life and freedom, the things that we take for granted here. Our diaspora community from Iran expects the government to do better in supporting their cause, those who seek democracy and liberty, and enjoy the life we have in Canada. They expect us to be there for them.

As we have witnessed, the IRGC continues to crack down on those who take to the streets. Not only is it going after those brave women and those who stand beside them fighting for equal rights for an egalitarian society, for a pluralistic culture, but it is also cracking down on religious and ethnic minorities, like the Kurds, the Baha'is, the Baluch and the Azerbaijanis. The IRGC continues to target them, make them political prisoners and torture them in those prisons.

It is time for us, as Canadians, and for the government under the Liberal Party to stand up for those people who are fighting so hard for that opportunity to have freedom, democracy and a rule of law that respects individuals, not their ideology.

I call on the government to do more than just list the IRGC as a terrorist organization. We should be paving the way at the International Criminal Court to ensure that those responsible for the attack on flight PS752 and those who are responsible for the attacks against those innocent civilians, be dragged in front of the Hague and tried for the atrocities they are committing.

The crimes against humanity are so easily documented. If we believe in the Geneva Convention and if we believe in an International Criminal Court, then this is the time to start bringing forward the cases, as we have done with Vladimir Putin and Russia to ensure that he is held responsible for his crimes against humanity with the kidnapping of thousands of children from Ukraine and brainwashing them in Russia.

This is also ensuring that those in the regime in Tehran, those fanatics, are also dragged in front of the Hague for the crimes they are committing against their own people, for the crimes they are committing throughout the Middle East, for the crimes they are committing against Ukraine, both in shooting down PS752 as well as going to war with Russia in Ukraine, flying those kamikaze drones against civilians and civilian infrastructure.

I call on the government to use Magnitsky sanctions once and for all, which it quit using in 2018, especially against the IRGC that is standing shoulder to shoulder with Putin. Let us call them out under the Magnitsky sanctions, recognizing that they are both gross human rights violators as well as corrupt foreign officials.

As this motion calls on the government, let us finally do the right thing and list the IRGC for what it truly is: a terrorist organization and it should never be allowed to have any assets or the ability to raise funds in Canada, directly or indirectly, that benefit its ideology as well as its terrorist activities.

• (1130)

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as parliamentarians, we are pretty much all feeling the same frustration of wanting to see more done. The fact is that the government has taken the stance of refusing visas to any of the Iranian officials and has quite a long list of people who would be

denied visas to come to Canada, who are inadmissible. Part of the concern is that all of those younger people who would have been enlisted by force, who had no choice, would be caught up in a blanket covering of everyone.

I would like to hear my colleague's comments on that.

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the work the member has done on this file over her career. It is one we often walked in lockstep on.

I recently met with one of my constituents who is an Iranian, who had mandatory service in the military in Iran and who now would find himself under the current listing, as he has been in the United States. He no longer can travel to the U.S. because of the listing of the IRGC as a terrorist organization.

However, picking and choosing and allowing lists to go stale does not provide us with the ability to stop those who come over here and coerce and intimidate our Persian community and diaspora. Rather, I would want to see us take a more aggressive stance of ensuring that everyone who has ever belonged to the IRGC is banned, sanctioned and listed as terrorists. However, those who are already in Canada should have the opportunity to apply for exemptions and go through the proper security clearances. That is the way we can address the needs of Canadian citizens and those who continue to stand alongside Iranians fighting against the regime in Tehran.

• (1135)

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqagtittiji*, I understand Canada is already using existing mechanisms to ensure that people who violate human rights or undertake terrorist activities are being prevented from being admitted into Canada, such as people from the IRGC, the Iranian armed forces and the Iranian guidance patrol, which is otherwise known as the morality police.

I wonder if the member could provide us more information on the specifics that the Conservatives are seeing as gaps that need to be addressed to ensure we do better to protect people and their human rights.

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, first, we did list the Quds Force, which is a special operations military unit of the IRGC, as a terrorist organization.

Second, the morality police responsible for cracking down on women's rights and for the murder of Mahsa Amini needs to also be held responsible and potentially listed as a terrorist organization. It definitely is committing human rights abuses and should, at the very least, be charged through the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice for violations of the Geneva convention and of basic human rights. Iran is still a member of the United Nations and it approved the charter and articles under the United Nations, which includes respecting human rights.

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The final thing that is missing is that the organization called the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has not been listed on the terrorist list, and it needs to be right now.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, listing the IRGC as a terrorist entity also requires the government to ensure there are not unintended consequences. The government has not done that. It has not listed it and it has not shown the steps that are required to put into place the IRGC as a terrorist entity.

I would like to ask my colleague, who I know has pretty strong knowledge of all of this, about why the government has not acted.

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, I hope the member, as part of the Liberal-NDP coalition, would be able to put pressure on the Liberals to finally do the risk analysis and provide the exemptions required to ensure Canadians who are of Iranian descent are not caught up in these sanctions being brought forward. More important, they need to have a better explanation why one of the most murderous regimes in the world, one of the greatest terrorist organizations we have ever witnessed, has not been listed by the Government of Canada.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, we are having this debate in a democracy where we can agree or disagree and have that contentiousness of ideas. All members of society can participate in voting for our members of the House of Commons.

At the same time as we are having this debate in a free and democratic society, we know there is a darkness over Iran, that there is a vicious and violent suppression of the people of Iran. It is taking place at this very time. Those wanting to speak out against the brutal regime are subject to a whole range of atrocities, including summary execution. At this time, what we are seeing in Iran is a people who are being violently oppressed at all times.

Today we remember, of course, Mahsa Amini, whose crime was simply to not follow the orders of the morality police. She paid for that with her life. Today, as well, we think of the victims of Ukrainian International Airlines flight PS752, brutally killed by the IRGC. Today we think of all of those people of Iran who are being oppressed.

We know what the situation is. Across the western world, there are those who are speaking out. When we speak out, it does not take the same courage, because when we speak out, when we protest, when we raise our voices in Parliament, we know we are not going to pay for that with our lives. That is not the case for those campaigning for women, life and freedom in Iran. That is not the case for those speaking out against a brutal regime of thugs who are oppressing the people of Iran.

It is important to start by talking about what is actually happening in Iran right now. That needs to formulate the policy of the federal government that responds to Parliament, so that we are doing everything possible to show solidarity with the people of Iran, that we are doing everything possible to end the impunity of the violence and brutal killings of this regime, to ensure that the victims will eventually see justice. Whether that is through the International Criminal Court or banning these individuals for life, we need to en-

sure Canada's response is proportionate to the brutality the regime is showing to its people.

The Amnesty International report for last year tells the tale of what has actually happened, the scale and scope of the brutality being used against the Iranian people. In its report, Amnesty International says the following:

Iran was rocked by an unprecedented popular uprising against the Islamic Republic system. Security forces unlawfully fired live ammunition and metal pellets to crush protests, killing hundreds of men, women and children and injuring thousands. Thousands of people were arbitrarily detained and/or unfairly prosecuted solely for peacefully exercising their human rights. Women, LGBTI people, and ethnic and religious minorities suffered intensified discrimination and violence. Enforced disappearances, torture and other ill-treatment, including through the deliberate denial of medical care, were widespread and systematic. Cruel and inhuman punishments, including flogging, amputation and blinding, were imposed and/or carried out. The use of the death penalty increased and public executions resumed. Trials remained systematically unfair. Systemic impunity prevailed for past and ongoing crimes against humanity relating to prison massacres in 1988 and other crimes under international law.

● (1140)

Amnesty International tells a profound story of the brutality that the thugs of the regime in Iran are exercising against its own people.

The executive summary of this report, and its details in the following pages, are about the ending of freedom of expression, association and assembly; arbitrary detention; unfair trials; discrimination; torture; ill treatment; and all of those things, along with the death penalty and impunity of the IRGC and other thugs associated with the regime. When we look at what is written in this report in black and white, what it actually details, the horrors are unbelievable.

People are having their limbs cut off by the regime. People are having their eyes punctured in the torture chambers by this regime. We are seeing widespread sexual violence by this regime in its torture chambers. We are seeing public executions and summary executions and, beyond that, security forces simply mowing down hundreds of Iranian civilians exercising their peaceful right to protest, to speak out against the regime. They are greeted with mass killings, massacres by the thugs of the regime against its people.

This report by Amnesty International and the many other reports we have seen detailing the widespread human rights violations are not something that, in Canada or in any other country, we can simply turn away from. We have to take every action we can to ensure we are fighting back, fighting in solidarity with the people of Iran, in the face of these atrocities.

● (1145)

[*Translation*]

The regime is guilty of massive human rights violations against its citizens—legs and arms broken or severed, eyes gouged out. A whole host of horrors is being perpetrated against the people of Iran.

There are also thousands of people—students, young girls and boys in high school—who are being arrested and tortured. Journalists, lawyers, activists, environmentalists, writers, artists and musicians, everyone is subject to this violence. They are killed or tortured and consistently arrested. It is impossible for the citizens of Iran to simply state their opposition, loudly and peacefully, to this violent regime that is trying to impose a violent law on its own people.

All of these points demonstrate how the Iranian people are being oppressed by this regime that, frankly, believes in using violence to stay in power. Today we think of Mahsa Amini, a brave woman who simply wanted to demonstrate against this government's strict rules against women.

She paid for her opposition to the regime with her life.

Of course, there are also all the victims, including Canadians, of the tragedy of Ukraine International Airlines flight PS752. All of those victims were slaughtered by an illegitimate regime that is trying to oppress its people.

• (1150)

[English]

Given the size and scope of the thuggish, brutal reaction of this regime to oppress its people, what can we do as Canadians? The committee report, which passed unanimously, details the importance of a government response that is strong and proportionate to the brutal human rights abuses we are seeing happening in Iran right now.

I want to take a moment to talk about this corner of the four-cornered House, a minority Parliament where there are four recognized parties, and what New Democrats have been doing. New Democrats have been speaking out, and I want to talk about how they have been speaking out to ensure the voices of the Iranian people and Canadians of Iranian origin are heard in the House and, hopefully, right around the world, including providing some hope and support for the people in Iran.

The member for Burnaby South, the national leader of the NDP, has spoken out incessantly about the human rights violations taking place in Iran. I want to underscore the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, who spoke a few minutes ago and who has risen in the House numerous times to decry the brutality of the Iranian regime in oppressing its people. She has raised this issue repeatedly in the House, calling on the government to take action. We have the members for Winnipeg Centre, Victoria, and London—Fanshawe all raising their voices repeatedly in the House, calling on the government to take action.

At the same time, this is an action of solidarity that I know every member of the House shares. We see the brutality, we read the reports and we are saddened and horrified by what is happening in Iran; of that, there is no doubt. However, that solidarity needs to translate into action. Regrettably, the government has not taken all of the actions absolutely necessary to show that proportionate response to the brutality of the regime towards its citizens.

Our foreign affairs critic, the member for Edmonton Strathcona, raised this issue following the terrible killings of the victims on

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Ukrainian International Airlines flight PS752. On October 29, 2020, she raised, on behalf of the NDP, the following motion:

That the House:

(a) condemn the threats, harassment and intimidation tactics which are targeting family members of flight PS752 victims;

(b) call for the government to investigate the complaints; and

(c) call for greater action to protect the safety of all family members of flight PS752 victims.

The motion passed unanimously, to the credit of every member of the House. That is in keeping with our concerns about how this brutal Iranian regime is not only oppressing its citizens but also trying to threaten Canadians of Iranian origin here in Canada.

Last week, our call for a public inquiry was endorsed by all political parties and independents in the House, with the exception of Liberal members, sadly. I wish the motion for a public inquiry had passed unanimously, but it is fair to say that having four of the five parties in the House and all independent members endorse it sends a powerful message not only to the special rapporteur but also to the government that a public inquiry on foreign interference is warranted and needed immediately.

The New Democrats had to steer this motion through, including the issue of Iranian interference. We felt very strongly that Iranian interference, like Russian and Chinese interference, had to be fully investigated through a public inquiry. Our supports for the victims of flight PS752, our concern around Canadians of Iranian origin facing brutal threats from the regime even here in Canada and the regime's interest in disrupting our democratic system because we speak out against the Iranian regime are all vitally important elements. That is why we brought the motion forward. We are happy to see that all parties, except for one, and all independent members supported it.

Last month, the NDP foreign affairs critic, the member for Edmonton Strathcona, put forward a motion at the foreign affairs committee to study the current situation in Iran. It stated:

...examining (i) the federal government's refusal for listing of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist entity, (ii) the connections between people or assets in Canada and the IRGC, and (iii) paths forward to support Iranian human rights activists, artists, journalists, and other political refugees; that the committee invite the Minister of Foreign Affairs to testify as well as additional witnesses....

I am pleased to say that the motion proposed by the member for Edmonton Strathcona, the NDP foreign affairs critic, passed unanimously and has led to the debate we are having today.

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Sadly, we have not seen the reaction from the government that we had hoped. It has taken a number of measures with sanctions. There is no doubt about that. We commend it for the sanctions it has put in place so far, but the issue of listing the IRGC, given its horrific connection to the oppression in Iran and the killing of innocent civilians, including those on flight PS752, cannot go without a strong and firm response. That is why we believe the IRGC needs to be listed as a terrorist entity.

The issue that comes up and why we are debating this today is that the government, after this motion passed at the foreign affairs committee, should have immediately moved to do a risk analysis on the IRGC as a terrorist organization and put together a package that would include listing the IRGC as a terrorist entity and possible exemptions. I think all members of this House understand that we want to avoid any sort of collateral damage in making this decision, but it is a decision that needs to be made. That is why we believe the federal government needs to move now and provide information to members of the House so we can proceed to listing the IRGC.

We also believe there are a number of stronger steps, including referral to the International Criminal Court, that Canada can take to ensure that the brutal Iranian regime is held to account. We have to end impunity. We have to listen to the voices: the victims of PS752, Mahsa Amini, the hundreds of civilians who have been brutally killed and the thousands of Iranians who have been tortured, have had their limbs amputated and have been blinded by this brutal regime.

There is no doubt that Canada can be a stronger voice. We need to step up. That is why we are having this debate today. The New Democrats believe strongly that there should be no impunity for the violent thugs who are oppressing the people of Iran, and we hope the government acts accordingly.

• (1155)

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is a parliamentarian in this House or anywhere else who does not support the people of Iran and their quest for freedom and for a free and democratic Iran, ultimately. I believe we all want the very same thing.

One recommendation was put forward by the committee, and I will read it quickly:

That the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration report the following to the House: In light of the downing of Ukrainian International Airlines flight PS 752 by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and in light of the killing of Mahsa Amini by the Iranian Guidance Patrol, that the committee demands the government stop issuing visas to all Iranian nationals directly affiliated with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), Iranian Armed Forces, Iranian Guidance Patrol or Iranian intelligence organizations....

The government does agree with that recommendation in principle. What else would the member like to see the government of the day do to try to move forward and remove this Iranian group?

• (1200)

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I think every member of this House stands in solidarity with the people of Iran. There is no question about that. I think this is part of fundamental Canadian values. We see the brutality with which people of Iran are being treated,

and we see the threats that are being enacted and perpetrated on Canadians of Iranian origin here, so we all stand in solidarity. The question, then, is how the government should act.

The government has, it is fair to say, dragged its feet on the issue of having the IRGC designated as a terrorist organization. It is true that it is more complicated than it might be for other organizations, but the government needs to come clean on what the implications are, do a risk analysis and look at possible exemptions to ensure that there are no inadvertent impacts that would hurt innocent people. The debate today should provide additional direction to the government to take action. It simply cannot drag its feet anymore. The people of Iran demand action from Canadians, and the government should be acting in consequence.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the impact on the international community is a sensitive subject. Assuming that people around the world are paying attention to our work here, what message is Canada sending by adopting this report, particularly with respect to the issue of women's rights and the fight against terrorism? I would be curious to hear the member's thoughts on that.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, indeed, we are all united on this issue. We need to use every available tool to pressure this brutal regime, the Iranian regime. As far as women's rights are concerned, it is clear that women continue to be oppressed. Mahsa Amini is just one of the victims of this brutal and misogynistic regime.

With that being said, this government must take action. It has not taken all the necessary steps or used all available tools. That is what today's debate is trying to address. The government must once again be willing to take direction from the House of Commons to use all available tools to end the Iranian regime's impunity in relation to its citizens and to put pressure on this brutal regime.

[*English*]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for New Westminster—Burnaby for bringing this important voice to the House today and for pointing out that the government needs to be doing more.

The member and I share a border and share many of the same families, so I wonder if the member would not mind sharing with this House what it would mean to the people of Port Moody—Coquitlam, Anmore, Belcarra, New Westminster, Burnaby and Port Coquitlam if the government finally did the work to classify the IRGC as a terrorist organization.

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• (1205)

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I want to underscore the incredibly valuable work the member representing Port Moody—Coquitlam, Anmore and Belcarra has done on this issue. She has been constant in her support for the Iranian people and Canadians of Iranian origin not only in her riding but right across the country and has spoken out repeatedly. She has been a dogged and determined voice to ensure that the government uses all of the tools it should be using. It is fair to say that her voice has been very present not only in her riding but right across the country. Even in New Westminster—Burnaby people speak about the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam and her strong advocacy for the people of Iran.

Her question is a valid one. What would it mean if the government did its work and came back within a few days to say it has done the work on designating the IRGC as a terrorist entity, has noted the issues we need to deal with and the possible exemptions, and wants to move forward with this? There is no doubt the government would receive the unanimous support of this House of Commons.

The government has to act. It can no longer drag its feet. It needs to respond to the brutality with which the regime is treating its citizens in a way that uses every possible tool to put pressure on that brutal regime.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the recommendation talks about limitations on temporary visas. If we look at the work that has already been done, particularly by our civil servants, there are certain criteria that need to be met. A good character, for example, would be one such criteria.

My question for the member is this. Given the current system, the manner in which temporary visas are processed and the desire we have seen from the minister and this chamber, does the member not believe that the civil service is doing its job by applying criteria to prevent what is being suggested within the resolution today?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, it is fair to say that the government has used a number of tools. Of that I have no doubt, but fundamentally we still come back to the issue that has now been pending for a number of months, which is listing the IRGC as a terrorist organization. It is fair to say that the issue has to be dealt with, and the government needs to go into more detail on it because of the complexity around it.

We do not want a fallout that impacts innocent people, but the IRGC is behind much of the violence of this brutal regime. The tools need to be put in place. If the motion we are discussing today is voted on, and I believe it will be, and passed, it would be a strong message to the government to act now to do the work. It would assure that it comes back to the House of Commons in short order to say what it can do to designate the IRGC as a terrorist organization, noting exemptions to ensure that innocent people are not impacted by that decision. The government needs to act, and the vote we will have on this will increase the pressure for the government to act now.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is wonderful to rise this morning to speak on a very im-

portant issue that is impacting many residents of Iranian or Persian heritage in York Region.

To commence my remarks, I want to say that this Sunday we hosted a Nowruz celebration in my riding, with about 200 people in attendance. It was a wonderful celebration and really illustrated what this country of Canada is about. We had individuals from Iranian or Persian heritage, as well as Bahá'ís or Afghans from Turkey, Turkish citizens and Turkish people of Kurdish heritage. We also had folks from the Azerbaijani community. I think there were about five or six different communities that I am proud to represent. We had a haft-seen table, which represents the arrival of spring for Nowruz. It was just a wonderful celebration. It represented not only the diversity we have here in Canada but also how inclusive a country we are.

I want to take a moment to say that I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from the riding of Humber River—Black Creek. When I was first elected in 2015, my hon. colleague was a friend and mentor and still is someone who is dear to me and my entire family. Therefore, I will be splitting my time with that hon. member.

I also wish not only to comment on the beautiful Nowruz celebration that I hosted with my team and a number of communities but also to say that our government is clearly focused on being there for the Iranian diaspora here in Canada and assisting that community in the fight for liberty and a free, democratic and secular Iran. It is very important to us. It is very important for the community members who were in attendance with me on Sunday evening. The great thing was that when we posted this event on our communication channels, I received probably 15 or 20 direct messages from community members wishing to attend. It just goes to show the vibrancy, dynamism and growth of the Persian community in the city of Vaughan and my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge.

I wish to thank the committee members for their report and recommendations. To date, the government has taken decisive action to hold the Iranian government accountable for the shooting down of PS752. The passenger flight was shot down by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, killing all 176 passengers and crew, including 55 Canadians and 30 permanent residents of Canada, a number of them from the region of York.

For family members of the victims already in Canada as temporary residents, we have provided a pathway to permanent residency if they fear that returning to Iran could put them at risk. For people who lost family members, we have provided expedited temporary residency visas to allow them to come to Canada to address personal matters and deal with estates. We have offered permanent residency for families of the victims of PS752 in Iran who are at risk of threats of violence and retribution by the Iranian government, especially their security intelligence and police services.

We continue to stand with the victims and their families. We are working with allies to force Iran to provide support and compensation for those who lost their loved ones.

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Iran has a history of violent actions and the use of threats and intimidation to force citizens to comply with their demands. Canada and all Canadians stand for human rights and the equality of all. Iran continues to oppress many of its people, carrying out acts of violence against women and children and imprisoning protesters and those who speak out against the regime and its leaders. We have all seen the gruesome pictures on TV of the executions, arrests and beatings by a heinous regime.

Last September, Mahsa Amini, a young Kurdish woman, was detained and killed while in the custody of Iran's so-called morality police. Reports have suggested that she was detained because she was not wearing her hijab in the appropriate manner as designated by Iranian law. Canada strongly condemned this reprehensible and heinous attack, which was the direct result of the systemic harassment and repression of women in Iran. In response to this violence, tens of thousands of people across Iran have held protests, demanding change on behalf of the many victims like Ms. Amini. Women, students and youth have taken to the streets to demand the end of the repressive regime and the violence inflicted on their own people.

• (1210)

The Iranian regime's response has followed the same path as it has in the past. It has only met the demands for equality, human rights and justice with violence and further oppression. To date, thousands of protesters have been injured. Nearly 500 are reported to have been killed, murdered by police, security forces, and again, the so-called morality police. Once again, Canada strongly condemns the violent crackdowns against civilian protesters and the use of force by Iranian authorities against Iran's own civilians. Canada stands with these victims of violence and with those fighting for human rights and equality. We stand with Mahsa Amini and her family. We stand with Iranian women who have been leading the fight for human rights and equality in Iran.

Iranian rock climber Elnaz Rekabi participated in an international competition for her country, but without her hijab. Ms. Rekabi was immediately taken back to Iran and is reported by state authorities to be under house arrest. With their acts of violence against their own people and their denials of co-operation and information to Canada and others over flight PS752, these authorities have shown that they cannot be trusted. We hope that Ms. Rekabi is well and safe.

On the sanctions front, on March 23, Canada further amended the Special Economic Measures Act to list eight additional individuals and two entities in relation to Iran's gross and systemic violations of human rights and ongoing grave breaches of international peace and security. Yesterday, we added our 10th package of sanctions against the regime and the organizations and individuals behind it. To stand with the victims against this senseless violence, the shooting down of PS752 and the oppression of human rights, Canada imposed strict economic sanctions against Iran.

I believe that since October 2022, Canada has now imposed 10 rounds of sanctions under the Special Economic Measures Act in condemnation of Iran's violations of human rights and ongoing breaches of international peace and security. Canada has continued to update and add individuals, organizations and businesses to the

list of bans. This has now listed 127 Iranian individuals and 189 entities, as including senior officials in the IRGC and across the regime's security, intelligence and economic apparatus.

On November 14, 2022, Canada announced the designation of the Islamic Republic of Iran as a regime that engages in gross and systemic human rights violations and terrorism. This means that tens of thousands of senior members of the Iranian regime, including many members of the IRGC, are now inadmissible to Canada. This also includes senior political figures; senior public servants; members of the judiciary; and senior leaders in the police, security and intelligence organizations. This move ensures that Canada will not be a safe haven for any Iranian regime officials who may flee Iran in the face of massive protests and demands by its people. It also means that any current or former senior officials in Canada may be investigated and removed if determined to be inadmissible.

In conclusion, the government welcomed the committee's report and has taken comprehensive steps against the Iranian regime. I trust all members of the House will welcome the government's response and support keeping the pressure on this heinous regime, while also supporting the families of those on PS752 and protesters in Iran fighting for human rights and equality.

On a personal note, I have always had a very close relationship with the Persian community, including in British Columbia, going to school with many of my university colleagues at Simon Fraser, visiting them in their homes, being invited to West Vancouver and North Vancouver and travelling down to Los Angeles with some of them many years ago. Of course, in York Region and my city of Vaughan, I have gotten to know this wonderful, dynamic, entrepreneurial and beautiful people; I am proud to be their member of Parliament and friend. I am blessed for it. Our government and all parliamentarians in this House know that we will continue to fight for women, life, liberty and for all Iranian citizens in that country. We know the best days for Iran and its beautiful people are ahead of them, and we will make sure we get to that spot with them.

I look forward to questions and comments.

• (1215)

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just a few days after the parliamentary secretary for foreign affairs stormed out of an event in Toronto in a stadium of 15,000 people there to support the revolution in Iran, the government decided on more sanctions. It cannot add sanctions to a list of 10,000 when it does not have 10,000 names.

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The member opposite, whom I live probably half a dozen kilometres from and share a community with, voted in this House to list the IRGC as a terrorist organization in 2018. Therefore, why did he change his mind? Has he advocated to his own government to do the thing that they all voted to do years ago? Why the inaction?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, with regard to putting pressure on the Iranian regime, we are continuing to work and collaborate with our allies, working through the international court system to hold those accountable in Iran for the shooting down of PS752 and imposing sanctions on those individuals and only those individuals who need to be held accountable in the IRGC.

We will continue to do that and to impose sanctions. This is not only the Canadian direction; many countries have taken this direction on increasing the numbers of entities and individuals we have imposed sanctions on. We want nothing less for the Iranian people and nothing more than that they have a country that is democratic, secular and free and all of the individual rights that we enjoy as Canadians in this blessed country we call home.

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, these are obviously sensitive issues that we are addressing in the House, but we are talking about what we should do. That is always what I do. What can we do to change things?

Economic sanctions are all very well, but I feel that they perpetuate the status quo and that does not lead to the change in the regime that we want to see. Is there a way we could go further? That is my question to my colleague from Vaughan—Woodbridge.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question, which is very important to us.

[*English*]

How do we go further in terms of assisting the Iranian people in achieving their goals of living in a free, democratic and secular country?

I think that the one thing that we can continue to do is that we cannot forget about what is going on in Iran. For the media, for those who broadcast messages and for us as politicians, we need to continue to amplify the message of what the wishes of the Iranian people are.

We need to continue to work with the very dynamic, blessed diaspora that we have here in Canada, whether it is in British Columbia, Ontario or across this country, to make sure that we continue to put pressure on that regime and on international organizations. From here in Canada, we should also continue to work with our allies to push back against this heinous regime and what is going on in that beautiful country.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I always appreciate the member speaking. I enjoyed his speech, but there is a missing link or gap: For months now, we have been calling on the government to list the IRGC as a terrorist organization. We understand, and I think all members of the House understand, that we want to make sure this is done in such a way that it does not have an impact on innocent people.

However, we have not seen movement from the government around the IRGC to do the work, do the analysis and provide for the exemptions or the careful measurement that needs to go with designating the IRGC as a terrorist organization. We have not seen that work being done.

My question to my colleague is simply this: Given the importance of pushing back against the brutal regime and using all the tools necessary, why has the government not acted, provided us with a risk analysis and provided us with information so that we can move to designate the IRGC as a terrorist organization?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. member from the Lower Mainland, who is a good friend and colleague, I wish to say that our government will continue to work at a very quick pace in terms of continuing to impose sanctions and pressure. This may be done directly by Canada to the oppressive regime in Iran or done by working with all of our allies to hold Iran and the Iranian regime accountable for its actions, from the downing of PS752 to the oppressive actions against its citizens that continue to occur to this day.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as much as it was unexpected this morning to be dealing with this rather than the Order Paper items and the work of the government, I think it is a very important debate. I would like to see us have a take-note debate in an evening when we could talk a lot more about the issues that we are all talking about.

I believe all of us stand against this terrible regime, and stand with the Iranian community who are fighting for their freedom, especially the protesting women and students in Iran. The Government of Canada has designated the Iranian regime as a regime that has engaged in terrorism, as well as systemic and gross human rights violations. We hear about it every day on the news, the number of people who are murdered senselessly for nothing more than wanting to stand up for their freedom and the freedom of the Iranian people.

As a result, senior officials, including those from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and its top leaders, are now inadmissible to Canada under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. There is an important distinction here, from the blanket covering of everyone. The government is targeting all senior officials with decision-making power, not innocent Iranians, as one of my colleagues was referring to earlier today, many of whom are actually the victims of this horrific regime.

It is an important and effective measure. We do not want former Iranian IRGC and military leaders to be able to claim asylum in our country. The designation the government has put on the Islamic Republic of Iran as a regime means that all senior officials in the country are inadmissible. This includes heads of state, military leaders, intelligence officials, senior public servants, diplomats and members of the judiciary.

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To further strengthen our ability to hold Iran accountable, last May the government tabled Bill S-8 in the Senate to make changes to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. This legislation addresses an important gap in our framework to hold foreign governments accountable, whether we are talking about Iran or interference from China or Russia. I believe there are many countries that are looking to find ways to intimidate Canadians and Canadian parliamentarians, and to interfere in a variety of ways, which is why we are having many discussions here in the Government of Canada.

The amendments placed expand the scope for inadmissibility to Canada based on sanctions imposed on a country, entity or person. Right now, individuals, organizations, state entities and businesses named or listed in Canada's economic sanctions are not automatically inadmissible to Canada. Bill S-8 is going to fix that and tighten up the loophole that is there. It means that corrupt officials may still be eligible for a travel visa, even if they are sanctioned under the current laws.

Bill S-8 would fix this legislative oversight and empower Canadian officials to refuse visas to any Iranian regime leader, as well as any other individuals and groups sanctioned in the future. Again, this is another step forward to try to put down the kind of conditions that we want to see against Iran, and to try to help bring down the regime, ultimately, which I believe should be everybody's goal.

Bill S-8 was reported to the House in October of last year, but it is not yet before the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. I do hope, especially given today's debate, that Bill S-8 gets there sooner rather than later, so that we could strengthen all the tools we have to try to help defeat the mullahs who are currently causing such terror throughout Iran and elsewhere. We know that the Iranian mullahs are helping to provide drones to Russia to continue to help with the destruction in Ukraine. They continue to murder their own people in a very clear way.

I want to share with the House that last year I had an opportunity, together with several of my colleagues from other parties, to attend a meeting with representatives of the NCRI to talk about democracy and their quest for freedom for the Iranian people.

● (1225)

For over 40 years, the NCRI has been standing and protesting against this brutal regime. Their dream, and the dream of most Iranians, is to have a free and democratic secular Iran. That is what people want. That is what NCRI wants. That is what the United States wants. Two weeks ago, I believe, Congress passed the motion for House Resolution 100, which was endorsed by hundreds of congressmen and senators, supporting the 10-point plan put forward by NCRI. Again, the goal is to have a free and democratic Iran. That is what we all want to see, and an end to the brutality.

We are so fortunate to live in this wonderful country of ours and to have the freedom to come and go as we please, to say the things that need to be said, to have our freedom of speech and freedom of dress, all those things we take for granted. That is what the Iranian people are fighting for now. I think it is critically important that we, together, as parliamentarians of all stripes, continue to be their voice to continue to keep that pressure on Iran so that, ultimately, there will be many parties to choose from, whether it is NCRI or others that get together. It will be up to the Iranian people, who do

not want to have a dictatorship and who want the freedom that we have. I hear that so many times: The Iranian people want what we have, that freedom of choice and the freedom to vote for whomever they want.

Currently, I am working on a letter to send out to parliamentarians to try to keep up the pressure, as many Canadians are protesting at rallies every weekend. I think it is important, if there is going to be a collapse of this regime, for all of us to do whatever we can, so I have been putting together a communication. I will summarize a bit of it, because it will go to all 338 members. It is calling for support for the Iranian people in their quest for a secular and democratic republic. It talks about the past six months and the terrible things that have happened. It acknowledges that we stand in solidarity with the people of Iran in their desire for a secular and democratic republic in which no individual, regardless of religious beliefs or birthright, has any privileges over others. Through their slogans, which we have heard many nights on the nightly news, the Iranian people have made it clear that they reject all forms of dictatorship, be it in the form of the deposed shah or the current theocratic regime, and reject any association with any of the others.

The goal here, I think for all of us, is to see a free and democratic Iran. We are looking today, in this discussion, for other ways to strengthen sanctions. Putting the IRGC on the terrorist list, yes, I support that. I am known to support that it should be listed as a terrorist organization, but I think we need to do more than that. We need to have more voices out there supporting and fighting for a free and democratic Iran. That has to be the goal, and whatever all of us can do as parliamentarians to advance that, whether it is in our own communications to each other or out to the community, I think is very important.

I am thankful for the opportunity to participate in this important debate today, and I am happy to take some questions.

● (1230)

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member opposite's advocacy. I have always appreciated it. I know that she was on this cause long before I was here and long before many other members were here, so I commend her on that. I also appreciate that she is one of the few members on the other side talking about a true regime change. As well, I appreciate that she is one of the few members on the other side who have admitted that the IRGC should be banned and listed as a terrorist organization. I appreciate her support for that.

Routine Proceedings

Why will she not advocate to the rest of the government to do what it voted to do in 2018, which is to help those who are here, the families in our neighbourhoods? I know they sometimes go to the gym or to a Starbucks with their children, and they are fearful of members of the regime. They call our offices with a blurred-out background in their car away from their homes, because they are terrified of who is in the country and why they are still let in here. I know the government has sanctioned a number of regime operatives, but it does not know whom it has sanctioned. The government does not have the names of all those it has purportedly put on a list in terms of a number. We cannot put 10,000 people on a list and not know who they are. That is not real action.

I wonder if the member will advocate to her government to finally list and ban the IRGC as a terrorist organization here in this country.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Mr. Speaker, I very much enjoy the times when my colleague and I occasionally get together at events.

We do not always know what the government is doing. It does not send out a message to us every day on what it is doing and what it is not doing. When the government chose to take the route of not doing a blanket cover over everybody in Iran who was part of the regime, it was an attempt to make sure that innocent people were not caught up in that. That is the route it chose to take.

There are senior officials who know exactly how many people are on that 10,000-plus list and who they are. They are doing the best they can to protect people's individuality and their opportunity to be treated fairly. We do not want to be like the regime in Iran and put a blanket over everybody and say everybody is inadmissible for whatever terrible reason.

I do want to add that we need to do more together than just label it as a terrorist organization. More needs to be done. That is just one step. It works for us to talk about it here in the House, but more needs to be done.

• (1235)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am still shocked about the death of Mahsa Amini. It raises many questions.

We know about these events because they were reported by the morality police—which wanted to boast about this to send a message to the rest of the population—and because international reporters communicate this information at great personal risk. There have been probably many more such cases than just the ones reported.

What can we do to foster the disclosure of more information so we know what is happening around the world? What is happening is serious. If we want to take action, we must be able to properly assess the situation.

How do we go about getting that information from within these countries?

[*English*]

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Mr. Speaker, my colleague continues to ask questions about what else can be done, rather than just talking about labelling it as a terrorist organization. I think many of us want to see that happen.

The issue is what else can be done. How do we continue to be the voices for the protection of journalism? So many journalists have been in jail. With the recent incident of the poisoning of many schoolgirls, which happened in over 50 schools in Iran, the journalists who were able to report it are apparently all in jail. It makes it very difficult. It calls on us, as parliamentarians and free voices, to be their voices, to stand up here in the House and outside making sure people understand and care about what is going on in Iran.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to ask the member for some facilitation. In my community of Port Moody—Coquitlam, Anmore and Belcarra, community members have been asking me to assist them with getting a meeting with the government to talk about some of those exemptions that need to happen. They want to see the IRGC named as a terrorist organization, and they have some ideas on how to protect innocent people on that front.

Could the member assist me with making that connection so they can speak to the minister?

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Mr. Speaker, I want to applaud the member for the work that she continues to do on these issues. I am very happy to try to facilitate that as soon as we can get together and do that.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by saying that I will be sharing my time with my esteemed and dynamic colleague from Shefford.

Women in Quebec and Canada are lucky in many respects. We can go to school, hold a job, get involved in our community and go into politics. We still have a number of battles to wage to achieve full gender equality, but we have it pretty good compared to some.

We have it pretty good because in some other parts of the world women do not have nearly as many rights and freedoms as we do here. Let us not forget that women and girls in Afghanistan have been unable to attend school or university for many months now. Let us not forget that women and girls are being disfigured with acid for refusing to enter into a forced marriage. Let us not forget that women and girls are being kidnapped, held captive, forced to convert and forced to marry one of their abductors. Let us not forget Mahsa Amini, who was abused and beaten to death, and all of the other deaths that followed. These people were imprisoned, tortured, blinded and killed, all because they stood up and demanded what we have here: freedom and equal rights. This goes well beyond being required to wear a hijab by the regime. It is a matter of freedom and equality.

Routine Proceedings

For months, we have been outraged to see such things happening over and over again in Iran, but nothing has been done. Is the regime fed up with seeing our outrage? It is not. Is the regime fed up with our protests and awareness nights? It is not. To keep my language parliamentary, I will say that the regime does not care at all.

These protests all have one thing in common. They seek to raise awareness of the situation among Quebecers and Canadians and their governments, so that these governments can take practical action and not just pay lip service. One of the things the protesters want is for the government to seize or at least freeze the material and financial assets located on Canadian soil of Iranian nationals associated with the IRGC, the Iranian armed forces, the Iranian morality police and Iranian intelligence agencies.

There is nothing about that in the motion and there is nothing about what my constituents told me in it. However, it does provide a worthwhile approach in terms of sanctions, that of asking the government to stop issuing visas to Iranian nationals with ties to the groups that I just mentioned.

Today, I am using my voice and my words here to share a message from my constituents. I spent time with them, I demonstrated with them, and we spent evenings together informing people about what was really happening in Iran.

Next, I am going to talk about the means at our disposal to exert real pressure. My constituents told me that, right now in Canada, there are people with ties to the regime who are making financial and material investments here only to then redirect those funds to support the Iranian regime. My constituents are asking me when those individuals will be subject to the same measures we reserved for the Russian oligarchs, meaning when their assets will be frozen to prevent support going to this untenable and unacceptable regime.

My constituents also shared a number of concerns with me, including the fact that this regime is powerful and has a long reach. They reminded me that money not only provides support for the Iranian regime but also allows some Iranian permanent residents or Canadian citizens in Canada to be monitored. They fear for their safety, and yet, that was the reason they came to Canada: to be safe, free, equal and secular. Some of them have received threats to their family back in Iran.

● (1240)

Every day they are worried that their name will get out there and that their family will be punished because they chose freedom. In fact, they fear going through the same experience that we have seen Chinese citizens and Uighurs go through in our own country. They even worry about travelling abroad, for fear that their plane will inadvertently be taken for a foreign missile.

My constituents tell me that individuals involved with some of the organizations I mentioned, or who are funded by them, are very active at every level. They do everything they can to downplay the actions taken, to have others shoulder the blame for appalling acts that are committed, to clear the regime. My constituents really want to avoid seeing here the experiences and events happening there. People tell me that they chose to live in Quebec because of our freedom and equality that they cherish above all else.

Now, for our part, we are we doing? We are protesting, side by side, with the Iranian citizens and protesters. Again, these are just words. There is no action. Where are the sanctions?

The government is aware of the suspicious situations I just mentioned, of the presence of Iranian nationals linked to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the Iranian Armed Forces, the Iranian Guidance Patrol or Iranian intelligence organizations. Nothing is being done.

There is a sanction in place, although it is apparently difficult to enforce and cannot be applied to everyone. Once again, there are ways to do that, and action is needed.

As many people know, I was once a teacher and a vice-principal. When classroom and school rules needed to be implemented, certain questions came to mind. What is the goal? What means do we have to enforce the rules? What sanctions can we apply? Are the means and sanctions consistent with the goal?

I mention this because it is important to be able to apply sanctions, when needed. If that cannot be done, the government will end up in a situation where it is constantly talking and never doing anything. That is basically what is happening right now.

The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act does have teeth and provides for a case-by-case analysis of the people suspected of being tied to the organizations that I mentioned. Why is this not done? We have the tools to apply the sanctions. Canada has a list of those responsible and of those at the most senior levels of the regime. The committee's recommendation does go further and prohibits entry of any cell of the regime in Canada. Let us evaluate every case before issuing a visa. Naturally, that is a lot of work, but it ensures the safety of our citizens of Iranian origin and the entire population.

In conclusion, as I was saying, we must protect our fellow citizens of Iranian origin so they can truly enjoy the life of freedom, equality and safety that they came here for. We must implement concrete and real measures to starve the regime so that it does not have the financial and ideological means to continue its wrongdoing and atrocities in Iran.

We must take action for Mahsa and for so many others. If we do not, we are accomplices.

I am going to borrow a phrase from a song by Loco Locass: Go for it, do it.

● (1245)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, within the current legislation and regulations, when we think of visitor visas or temporary visas generally speaking, the civil servants have a system that includes things such as good character. The civil service is very much aware of the issues that are taking place in Iran.

Routine Proceedings

Could the member provide her thoughts on how our current system seems to already accommodate and take into consideration what the first and only recommendation would do in limiting temporary visas to individuals who should not be coming to Canada?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Mr. Speaker, as I stated, the decisions we have made have primarily targeted the senior ranks of the regime. It is sad to see that Iranians who are complicit with the regime manage to come to Canada despite the security measures in place to carry out a case-by-case analysis. What we need to do is ensure that those who are complicit with the regime and commit inhumane acts against their own fellow citizens are sanctioned and barred from Canada by conducting a case-by-case review.

• (1250)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, most of the immigration rules that the government has changed, such as visas, are designed to keep people out of this country. Anyone identified by the government as a member of the regime should not be allowed to enter Canada.

The next step is to add the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to the list of terrorist organizations in the Criminal Code. Consequently, anyone who is in Canada and is a member of that group, has been a member of that group, or has assisted a terrorist group, would be allowed to go before the courts and have a judge decide whether they actually helped the group to persecute or intimidate citizens or violate Canadian law.

I would ask the member to look into this issue. Parliament already looked into it in 2018 and determined that the IRGC should be listed as a terrorist group in our Criminal Code.

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Mr. Speaker, throughout my speech, I said that there was a lot of talk but no real sanctions. What my colleague just mentioned is real action. It is about making sure that these people are on the list of terrorist groups and that, ultimately, real powers are granted to find out where they are and to urge them very strongly to leave the country.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, one of the problems that we hear about a lot from the Iranian diaspora is that it is extremely fragmented. Ultimately, the state was able to do what it set out to achieve, which was to divide and conquer.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Mr. Speaker, the diaspora is definitely scattered, but it is informed. Some of them support the regime, but all those I met were against what is happening right now and do not recognize their country, the beautiful Iran of the past. They would like their country to recover the historic, secular beauty that it once had.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Beauport—Limouilou is always a tough act to follow. It is truly not easy, but I will try to speak today with sensitivity to this situation in Iran, a very complex subject.

As the critic for the status of women, I have been asked about this topic many times, and I am particularly concerned about the situation of Iranian women and girls. Our debate today concerns more specifically the 11th report of the Standing Committee on Cit-

izenship and Immigration. To help people follow my speech, I will read the motion:

That the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration report the following to the House: In light of the downing of Ukrainian International Airlines flight PS 752 by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and in light of the killing of Mahsa Amini by the Iranian Guidance Patrol, that the committee demands the government stop issuing visas to all Iranian nationals directly affiliated with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), Iranian Armed Forces, Iranian Guidance Patrol or Iranian intelligence organizations and that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request a response to the report by the government.

I will quickly provide some context, discuss the situation of women in Iran, and reiterate the role we have to play in this.

First, Ukraine International Airlines flight PS752 was shot down over Iran on January 8, 2020. The United States and Iran had started attacking each other after the United States killed a high-ranking Iranian officer, General Qasem Soleimani, near the Baghdad airport on January 3, 2020. Iran also attacked an American airport in Iraq on the night of January 7 to 8, 2020, in retaliation for Soleimani's death. Iran may have been expecting a U.S. counterattack, so its air defence system was on high alert. A total of 176 people died on the downed flight, including 63 Canadians.

I will now turn to the Mahsa Amini affair. The election of Ebrahim Raisi as President of Iran in 2021 marked the rise to power of the most conservative wing of the Combatant Clergy Association. Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei is said to be in ill health and could die soon. For these reasons, authorities are becoming more rigorous in the application of *Velayat-e faqih*.

Mahsa Amini was a Kurdish Iranian woman who was arrested by the morality police in Tehran on September 13 for allegedly violating Iran's strict female dress code. She was killed by Iran's morality police just for wearing her hijab "improperly". She died in hospital three days later, on September 16, 2022. Mahsa Amini, a Kurdish Iranian woman, was only 22 years old.

Her death was followed almost immediately by protests on an unprecedented scale for Iran. Iran forces women to wear the hijab. Mahsa Amini was wearing her hijab, but her hair was slightly visible. This was the reason she was arrested and fatally beaten by police. Her death led to major demonstrations against the regime throughout Iran, and more than 500 people have died so far, while many others are determined to overthrow the regime. Mahsa's death sparked nationwide protests, with Iranian women leading the charge, as well as solidarity rallies around the world.

Routine Proceedings

Activists say that Mahsa suffered a head wound while in custody. Iranian authorities deny any physical contact between the police and the young woman and say that they are awaiting the results of the investigation. Iran's largest protests since the 2019 unrest over increased fuel prices were met with a violent crackdown. According to the latest report from the Oslo-based NGO Iran Human Rights, at least 92 people have been killed since September 16. An official report lists some 60 dead, including 12 members of Iran's security forces.

The international community denounced the crackdown, and some countries imposed sanctions. As a reminder, here is the motion I moved in October:

That the House:

- (a) reiterate its unconditional support for Iranian women who are peacefully demonstrating for their rights in Iran;
- (b) condemn the killings, intimidation, and acts of violence initiated by the Iranian state against protesters who support the women's liberation movement in Iran; and
- (c) call on the United Nations to withdraw Iran from its Commission on the Status of Women.

• (1255)

Last month, I also supported a petition presented by the member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill that urged non-partisan action. It reads:

We, the undersigned, residents of Aurora, Oak Ridges, and Richmond Hill, Ontario, draw the attention of Leah Taylor Roy, MP for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill to the following and ask for her help in bringing this matter to The House of Commons.

THEREFORE, your petitioners call upon Leah Taylor Roy, MP, to: Demand the Canadian Government urgently follow through with the actions against the Iranian regime which includes making the regime, the IRGC and top leaders inadmissible to Canada, expanding sanctions against those responsible for human rights violations and denying them entry to Canada, and investing more money to allow sanctioned Iranian person's assets to be quickly frozen and seized. The Regime and its most senior officials - including the IRGC - be immediately banned from entering Canada, and current and former senior officials present here be investigated and removed from the country as soon as possible.

We also ask that you insist that the Minister of Global Affairs, the Hon. Mélanie Joly, and the Government of Canada, with its partners and allies, have Iran removed from the UN Commission on the Status of Women, which is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

That is the petition we presented here in the House.

The United States announced economic sanctions against seven high-ranking Iranian officials for their roles in the crackdown. According to a press release from the Treasury Department, Minister of the Interior Ahmad Vahidi, the key figure behind the crackdown, and Minister of Communications Issa Zarepour, the person responsible for the shameful attempt to block Internet access, were two of the individuals sanctioned. Washington had already announced a slew of sanctions against the Iranian morality police and several security officials on September 22.

Iran's strict dress code forces women to wear the Islamic head scarf, but according to videos posted online, women are leading the protests in Iran. Schoolgirls even organized rallies in several regions, where they removed their hijabs and shouted anti-regime slogans.

In a video verified by AFP, bare-headed young girls chanted “Death to the dictator”, referring to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, one Monday at a school in Karaj, west of Tehran. Some of these girls lost their lives. Right now, there are allegations that female students were poisoned simply because they decided to protest.

Getting back to the motion, it seeks to sanction members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and the Iranian armed forces by refusing them visas. However, prohibiting entry to the country is a complex issue, since many people serving in the Iranian armed forces are conscripts.

For example, one Iranian-born man was refused entry to Canada because he served in the armed forces 20 years ago. The United States is also imposing similar restrictions, which many are calling discriminatory.

It would be more reasonable to make decisions on a case-by-case basis. Generally speaking, refusing to issue visas to individuals who are currently on active service seems appropriate, but it is not that simple.

On November 14, 2022, Canada announced that it had designated Iran as a regime that has engaged in terrorism. As a result, tens of thousands of high-ranking officials, including senior members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, the army and the morality police, were denied entry to Canada. Low-ranking members of these organizations are dealt with on a case-by-case basis, which is a reasonable approach. For example, those who committed war crimes or other crimes would be inadmissible to Canada regardless of their rank.

Because of the conscription in Iran, all men aged 18 and over must serve in the military. It is therefore reasonable that the Canadian government maintain a certain amount of leeway in its sanctions. We do not want to see a case like the one of a family of Iranian refugees in Saskatoon, who are trying to get a brother who remained in Turkey into Canada. The brother was refused entry because of his military service in Iran 20 years ago. There are many of these types of cases in the news.

Keyvan Zarafshanpour, a 38-year-old man, and his family managed to settle in Canada about three years ago, after fleeing religious persecution in Iran. Keyvan's older brother Kaveh Zarafshanpour is still in Turkey. Canada refused him entry for supporting a terrorist organization because he served his compulsory military service in the IRGC.

Members can see where this is going. That is why a case-by-case approach is important. There are also branches of the Iranian Armed Forces that are designated as terrorist organizations in the United States, but not in Canada.

Clearly, there is a lot we still have to look into. We need to show considerable diplomacy depending on the situation. I think it is better that way. There are still a lot of grey areas.

For example, in an email, the Canada Border Services Agency stated that it processes applications as quickly as possible, adding that the average wait time is eight years. We also need to take into account the time it takes to process applications. In short, the situation is nothing short of deplorable.

In closing, I will say: woman, life, freedom. Women and girls also have the right to freedom of expression. Women and girls also have the right to a secular state where they are no longer murdered for who they are, where they do not see their rights slipping away, and where they can continue to live a dignified life.

• (1300)

[*English*]

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I enjoy working with my colleague on the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. She always has a great sense of purpose and always defends the rights of women.

January 8 was the third anniversary of the downing of flight 752. On that day, and every year on that day, Shahin, husband to Shaki-ba and father to Rosstin, remembered that they last spoke as his wife and son were departing for Canada. Unfortunately, the last conversation he had with his family was that he welcomed them home so they could share some quality time together. That never happened. Each and every year he struggles. To this day, he, a constituent in my riding, continues to suffer.

Would the member agree the government needs to do more to ensure we identify the IRGC as terrorists and nothing else?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague and tell her how much I deeply appreciate our collaboration on the Standing Committee on the Status of Women and our work on the senior file, which we share. We are working together in both these areas.

That being said, as my colleague from Beauport—Limouilou mentioned and I reiterated, the government is not doing anything about the situation in Iran. I heard the same thing when I attended the protests in Montreal in support of the “Woman, Life, Freedom” movement.

I was there with my colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert. Protesters told us that the Canadian government was not doing enough, that it was not taking enough concrete action, and that it appeared to be afraid to go any further with its sanctions against the regime. What is it afraid of?

People asked us. We had no answer for them, but we decided to bring back their demands. My colleague mentioned this as well: we have been having this discussion since 2018. Let us move forward and try to work faster to take action in support of Iranian women.

• (1305)

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion.

[*English*]

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

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I request that it be carried on division.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition from 72 Canadians with regard to the holding of a Canadian in prison in China.

Petitioners say that, although Canadians Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig have recently been released after a thousand days of unjust detention in China, there are at least 115 Canadians still being detained in China, including Huseyin Celil, who has been detained for over 5,000 days.

Huseyin is a Canadian Uighur human rights advocate who was detained in China for supporting political and religious rights of Uighurs. He is a Canadian citizen who escaped China to Uzbekistan after being unjustly jailed for 48 days in 2001. On recognition from the United Nations as a refugee, he immigrated to Canada, obtained Canadian citizenship and gave up his Chinese citizenship.

The Chinese government has refused to accept his Canadian citizenship and has denied him access to lawyers, family and Canadian officials.

Petitioners demand the Chinese government recognize Huseyin's Canadian citizenship and provide him with consular and legal services according to international law, that the Canadian government formally state that the release of Huseyin from Chinese detainment and his return to Canada is a priority for the government of equal concern to the unjust detentions of the two Michaels, that it appoint a special envoy to work on securing his release, and that it seek assistance from the Biden administration and other allies around the world in obtaining his release.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to table a petition today about ocean protection.

It is quite ironic that I am sitting with my colleague from Nunavut, whose birthday it is today. I wish her a happy birthday.

We know Canadians care deeply about the health of the ocean and they depend on thriving ocean ecosystems. In 2019, over one million cruise ship passengers travelled from British Columbia on their way to Alaska. These ships generate significant amounts of pollutants that are harmful to human health, aquatic organisms and coastal ecosystems.

Government Orders

Canada's regulations under the Canada Shipping Act that address the discharge of sewage and grey water are much less stringent than those in U.S. Pacific coastal states. Canada has zero no-discharge zones off British Columbia, it does not require third party independent observers on board ships as is required by Alaska, and it has less stringent regulations that encourage cruise ships to discharge their waste off British Columbia.

Constituents from my riding are calling on the government to set standards for cruise ship sewage and grey water discharges equivalent to or stronger than those in Alaska; to designate no-discharge zones to stop pollution in marine-protected areas, the entirety of the Salish Sea and Great Bear Sea and; to require regular, independent third party monitoring while ships are under way to ensure discharge requirements are met.

• (1310)

HAZARAS

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling this petition on behalf of constituents in my riding. It is regarding the ongoing genocide and persecution of the Hazaras in Afghanistan by the Taliban.

The petitioners are calling upon the Government of Canada to prioritize Hazaras coming to Canada as part of the target of 40,000 Afghani refugees. They are drawing the attention of the House to the persecution of the Hazara ethnic group in Afghanistan that has been going on for hundreds of years. Most recently, in the last few decades, it has been made worse by the Taliban, who are originally from Pakistan, and they are still involved in the extrajudicial killings of Hazaras, the forced expulsion from their homelands and the destruction of their villages. Some of the worst persecution that went on between 1998 and 2001 was massacres, arrests, forced mass displacement and the confiscation of Hazaras' lands.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to make sure it includes Hazaras as part of the 40,000 target of Afghan refugees.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

DIGITAL CHARTER IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2022

The House resumed from March 7 consideration of the motion that Bill C-27, An Act to enact the Consumer Privacy Protection Act, the Personal Information and Data Protection Tribunal Act and the Artificial Intelligence and Data Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is, again, an honour to rise and speak in this place on behalf of my constituents of Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner in relation to Bill C-27. It is dubbed the digital charter implementation act.

It is really frustrating to continually see legislation from the Liberal government that is sloppy, lazy and really incomplete, to be honest, and this bill is no exception.

Canadians have seen most of this legislation before in a failed attempt back in 2020. That legislation died on the Order Paper when the Prime Minister took his costly, ill-timed and overly optimistic opportunity to call an election. Since then, we have had three years of inaction on this file, and now the government has tabled this piece of legislation, Bill C-27, which should have been more focused on giving the people of Canada the privacy rights they deserve.

Instead, this legislation is literally the least that they could have possibly done in this regard. The bill is a flawed attempt to start the long overdue process of overhauling Canada's digital data privacy framework. Conservatives will be looking at putting forward some common-sense amendments at the committee stage to protect both individuals and small businesses alike and to ensure that it is the best possible legislation moving forward.

The Conservative Party believes that digital data privacy is a fundamental right that urgently requires strengthened legislation, protections and enforcement. Canadians must have the right to access and control collection, use, monitoring, retention and disclosure of their personal data.

It is unfortunate that we could not rely on the Liberals to get it right the first time, but maybe they will have the modesty, humility and common sense to accept the amendments that will be coming, instead of once again using their NDP coalition to control and steamroll at committee stage.

It is also a shame because Canada's digital data privacy framework has been in dire need of modernization for years. This government has been dragging its feet as well for years on this critically important legislation.

It appears that there is no good reason as to why there has not been advancement on this legislation. Clearly, they did not spend their extra time making the legislation any better than when it was first proposed in 2020.

Conservatives will be looking to see how this bill can be improved. However, when looking at how to improve something, we need to look at why it is even in front of us to begin with.

The Liberals brought it forward today because they were finally exposed for being flat-footed on Canadians' data protection and how they were exposed. Let us think about TikTok.

Michael Geist, Canadian research chair in Internet and e-commerce law at the University of Ottawa, said that he found it “pretty stunning” that the Liberals had to block TikTok on government devices as a precaution because, again, “part of what [the Liberals] were attributing the TikTok ban to was essentially Canada's weak privacy laws.”

The expert continued to say that, when it comes to Bill C-27, the government “sat on it. It barely moves in the House.”

He is not alone in his criticism either. Former privacy commissioner of Canada Daniel Therrien shared similar concerns to those of Michael Geist and those we as Conservatives have.

The former commissioner, Mr. Therrien, argued that the solutions in proposed Bill C-27 are not strong enough to rein in technology companies from pursuing “profit over respect for democratic values”.

He also said that Bill C-27 “will not provide effective protection to individuals, in part due to weak enforcement provisions.”

Former commissioner Therrien's most notable criticism, however, is in his retort to the Liberals' claim that the bill “will create the most important penalties among G7 countries”, which is called “simply marketing”.

This is just a gentlemanly way of a former public official saying that it is not really the case. There are those of us who would call it by some other name.

At best, Bill C-27 is a first step. It is better than the nothing that the Liberals have done for the last three years. That is where the catch-22 is with this bill as proposed.

Doing something will be better than staying in our current technological stone age, with respect to data privacy.

• (1315)

Specific items like the bill's requirements for all businesses to have a privacy watchdog and maintain the public data storage code of conduct are positive measures. However, it does cause worry about the burden this new layer of red tape will have on small business and especially for sole proprietors. Again, on a catch-22 of this lazy Liberal legislation, the law does not go far enough to protect children's privacy for example.

While the information of minors is finally included in the legislation, the definition of what is sensitive, what a minor is or who a minor is are not set out, and the sensitive information of adults for example is not given the same special provisions. This means that businesses are left to decide what is sensitive and appropriate for minors. It also means that the courts, when interpreting the legislation, will understand that if not amended, the sensitive information of adults was specifically left out of the legislation.

Further, businesses will have to navigate varying rules in each province where different definitions of a minor actually apply and that depends on provincial law. This is not good for protecting minors, this is not good for protecting Canadians' sensitive information and this is not good for businesses.

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Finally, the fundamental problems in this bill can be summed up in that this bill does not recognize privacy as a fundamental right. Thirty-four years ago, the Supreme Court said that “privacy is at the heart of liberty in a modern state”.

Conservatives believe that individuals are worthy of privacy as a fundamental right, and the concept of privacy as a fundamental right is worthy of legislative protections. Based on that alone, the Liberals have missed the mark on this legislation. Once again, it is up to the Conservatives to fix the Liberals' poorly written legislation.

As I close, I want to offer my thanks for the hard work of the Conservative members of the access to information, privacy and ethics committee. They have done a great job to date. They spent a lot of time on the previous iteration of this legislation, and I have heard a great deal about how Canadians' information and data is used without their consent. With the many identified flaws of the bill, Bill C-27, I think it would be best if this bill were voted down and redrafted, honestly, in order to take these issues into account. However, the NDP-Liberal coalition will surely ignore doing these things right in favour of expediency and send it off to committee.

With that, Canadians and I are leaving the flaws that I have pointed out, and there are many more, along with the additional flaws that I am sure my colleagues will find in their review and will need to be fixed at committee. The Liberals have left the committee a lot of work, but I know that my colleagues there are up for the challenge.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague about the overall theme of his speech, which was about the positioning of personal privacy versus business interests. In clause 5 of this bill, it basically says that the purpose of the bill is to balance interests. There has been a lot of discussion about the protection of personal privacy interests. However, clause 18 of the bill says that business interests can trump individual interests by saying that express consent is not needed for a company to do something with the information of an individual if the company thinks it is in the legitimate interests of the company.

I wonder what the member thinks about a government that says this protects personal privacy while giving all the power to the businesses to determine legitimate interest.

• (1320)

Mr. Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, I go back to something my father taught me a long time ago that in all things that one is deliberating, one should have a reasonable and a balanced approach.

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With respect to my colleague's question, there needs to be an appropriate balance, legislatively, so that there is no ambiguity and misinterpretation. However, the businesses and individuals, whose information a business has, have the comfort of knowing that it is used appropriately, that there are safeguards in place for its use and that it is not going to be misused. I think that would be an appropriate balance to strike.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think everybody would agree that for Canadians to prosper and benefit from the improvements of technology, they need to have confidence in the systems. If we look at some of the new apps out there now, it is extremely easy to access information about individuals, whether that is considered to be private information or public.

Could the member expand on why he might see this as critical in making sure Canadians have that confidence to trust the technology? At the end of the day, that is what these businesses will have to rely on if they are going to be successful.

Mr. Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that question from my hon. colleague. When he stands up, I never know what angle he is going to go with. It is nice to have a reasonable question from my friend across the way.

I look at some of the recent examples of privacy and mobility data being used without consent. The member is right. Canadians have to be confident about the information they are using in apps, and they have to have businesses they can trust.

The Tim Hortons app was tracking movements after orders, which caused concern for Canadians. Telus' data for good program was giving location data to PHAC. That was a significant faux pas. One that really stood out was the public doxing of those who donated to the "freedom convoy" through GiveSendGo. Anytime one is revealing their personal information online, there has to be some confidence behind it. Businesses rely on it. Those who use those businesses as consumers need to have confidence that the information is not going to be abused and shared inappropriately.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, given that this is a debate on artificial intelligence, I thought it might be fun to have ChatGPT make up a question for my Conservative colleague from Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner about passing Bill C-27 and the Liberal government's lack of urgency, since that is one of the things my colleague mentioned.

This is ChatGPT's question: "How does his party view the Liberal government's lack of urgency to pass Bill C-27, which is designed to protect workers and retirees in defined benefit pension plans in the event of employer bankruptcy? Also, how does he think this inaction could affect affected workers and retirees, as well as the economy as a whole?"

There is room for improvement, but the crux of the question is there. In terms of delays, I understand that the Liberal Party could have introduced a similar bill a long time ago, but my colleague said that he would vote it down all the same.

Are we not at the point where we should approve the principle of the bill quickly and improve the content in committee?

• (1325)

[*English*]

Mr. Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, I do not see the connection to the first portion of my hon. colleague's question. I do understand that this bill absolutely needs significant improvement.

I am certainly supportive of it, in principle, to go to committee to have the amendments ironed out and improved upon so the legislation could address some of the concerns raised by my friend, as well as the concerns identified by people across the country. This includes some of the experts who say we need to strike the right balance, and it is about time privacy legislation takes into account all those issues.

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for this opportunity to speak to Bill C-27, the digital charter implementation act, 2022. While there are many important components of Bill C-27 to debate, my speech today will focus on just two aspects. The first is privacy, and the second is identity.

The protection of both the privacy and the identities of Canadians is essential. We need to ensure that strong legal mechanisms are in place to guarantee that protection. Connected with that is the need to protect from the commercial interests of private companies, as well as protection from the government and its potential overreach into the private lives of Canadian citizens. Consequently, I believe a national digital charter is urgently needed. To protect Canadians, it is important that we have a piece of legislation that acts as an umbrella to protect Canadians from government, and to uphold the privacy of Canadians' data and their digital identities.

The second part of my speech will highlight some of the breaches that have occurred over the past three years. These breaches drive home the urgent need for more stringent protection for Canadians when it comes to privacy and protecting their private information.

Privacy rights are at the heart of any democracy. They are necessary for reinforcing the limits and boundaries between private citizens, their government and the private sector. In Canada, individual liberties are guaranteed by section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Our Chief Justice of the Supreme Court has made comments on this. She stated, "liberty...depends on and mandates respect for the individual and his or her right to be free from government restraint, except as authorized by law."

Justice McLachlin further explains why it is important for government to keep the people informed and to answer questions, stating, "People who possess power, even small administrative powers, may use information they should not have improperly. And even if they don't, the individual's fear that they may use it, often leads to unwilling compliance."

Just as we have fundamental freedoms entrenched in the highest law of our land to protect us from government encroachment of our freedoms, I also believe that it is necessary to have digital data privacy legislation. That is a fundamental right that urgently requires the strengthening of our legislative protections and enforcement.

That is why we need a federal digital charter, which would act as an overarching piece of legislation. However, Bill C-27, the digital charter implementation act, falls short of this very important objective. The Office of the Privacy Commissioner, for years, has made several calls for reform. Privacy watchdogs have repeatedly lamented that our federal privacy laws are outdated, that they fail to provide the needed legal protections in an increasingly digital world.

Canadians also have serious concerns about privacy. First, they have concerns about how their private information is being used, and what large corporations and governments are doing with it. Second, these concerns have turned into a fear because of the misuse and abuse of private information in the recent years.

This leads me to the second point of my speech. I will speak about the bigger problem in the privacy landscape in this country, which is that the Liberal government is failing to update its own legal boundaries and parameters in this area. The reality is that this bill does not touch on the Privacy Act, the act that governs the government, and this digital charter does not cover how the government handles the information it collects from Canadians.

Essentially, this bill is saying, “Do as I say, not as I do.” With this bill, the government is telling businesses, even sole proprietorships, that they should add additional layers of red tape under the threat of financial penalties. Business owners are still struggling to recover from COVID setbacks, lockdowns and government red tape.

• (1330)

My fear is that many of these small businesses, subject to these new requirements, would not be able to survive or have the capacity to implement some of these new requirements. These demands come even though government itself has failed to lay down the rules and regulations as to what is needed in the form of a regulatory infrastructural framework to secure our digital future.

A digital charter is needed to protect Canadians, but the federal government should be leading by example by outlining a digital charter that would protect the personal data and privacy of its own citizens first, before it asks businesses to do so. Let us be honest that the number one privacy concern Canadians have right now is how their government is using their information. These fears were exacerbated during the trucker convoy when Canadians’ bank accounts were frozen and property was confiscated through the abuse of the Emergencies Act.

Canadians still remember how the government quietly spied on their movements during the pandemic without their consent. A year ago, it was discovered that the Public Health Agency of Canada was tracking Canadians’ movement during the pandemic. This was done without their knowledge, and PHAC wanted to keep doing it quietly for years into the future, but it was the Conservative opposition that discovered this breach and stood up for Canadians. We de-

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manded answers from the Public Health Agency on the way the data was collected, how it was defined, what third parties were privy to the data and whether any data was reidentified. It is important that the government answer these questions and sets standards because it is falling short of its own requirements.

Canadians have not forgotten even the ArriveCAN debacle, the privacy questions around its mandatory use, and the terms and conditions associated with it. In other words, exactly what personal data and identifying information has been shared outside the app? Under what circumstances, and with which domestic or international organizations, was it shared? The app’s privacy notice even stipulated that the government had the right to share our information contained in the app with international organizations and institutions.

Canadians have a right to know with whom their data is being shared. This matter, it is no surprise, was referred to the Privacy Commissioner for an investigation. We are still waiting for an answer on the ArriveCAN privacy breaches.

Let us not forget that Canadians were fined thousands of dollars and threatened at their own borders for not submitting their own private medical information. This was, in my view, a massive overreach of government powers, but the reality is that this overreach happened because Canada has insufficient legal safeguards in place to prevent such abuses, and this creates a profound distrust in government.

It concerns me that the government is moving toward integrating a digital proof of identity framework that would massively expand the centralization of government access to the private information and data of Canadians. There are numerous ethical abuses that relate to this data collection.

The biggest concern is having all of one’s private information in one place. Imagine our health information, driving information and banking information all in one portal. This would give information handlers a great deal of power over our data. This power urgently needs to be kept in check, and we need public experts in consultation on the ethics behind this centralized data collection power to uncover what we need to do to protect Canadians.

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In conclusion, Canada's digital privacy framework has long been in dire need of modernization. I want to thank the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, which worked hard on this issue for years. Canadians must have the right to access and control the collection, use, monitoring and retention of their personal data. However, in Canada, the Liberal government is failing Canadians by not prioritizing its own accountability when it comes to protecting privacy rights. The bill sadly fails to put forward a rigorous and comprehensive legislative framework that would defend Canadians' data, privacy and digital identities, now and in the future.

• (1335)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we heard some fairly outlandish claims about the government illegally monitoring Canadians, which is extremely bold, to say the least. I am curious as to whether the member has any actual facts to back up that claim or if that is just another conspiracy theory being led by Conservatives and the alt-right wing of the party.

Ms. Leslyn Lewis: Mr. Speaker, this is a part of the problem with why Canadians do not trust government. When Canadians raise concerns, the Liberals label them, degrade them, make fun of them and call them conspiracy theorists instead of dealing with the real issues and fears that Canadians have. The news report indicated that the privacy of Canadians was breached during COVID, and that is factual.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am known for my perspicacity, so I decided to ask ChatGPT another question.

I asked it to come up with a question for my Conservative colleague from Haldimand—Norfolk about the importance of enhancing data and privacy protection in Bill C-27. That was what her speech was about.

ChatGPT replied: "Sure, here is a question for the Conservative member. The question is as follows: As a Conservative member, how does she think that Bill C-27, which aims to modernize the Privacy Act"—already this is a step up from the other question—"will offer better protection for Canadians' data and privacy? Also, what are the key points she would like to see in the bill to ensure the adequate protection of personal information?"

I am very impressed by artificial intelligence because it touches on the role of the official opposition, which is not just to complain, but also to make suggestions.

I would be very curious to hear my colleague's thoughts on the subject, because I did not hear many constructive remarks in her speech.

[*English*]

Ms. Leslyn Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I beg to disagree. There were largely areas of constructive discussion in my speech, and I will highlight some of them for my friend.

The government needs to have an infrastructure framework that will protect the privacy of Canadians before it can demand that of businesses. Businesses, which are already saddled with red tape, do not even have the mechanism to put this in place. Nor does the federal government have the structure to put this in place, but it demands that the business sector do that, with sweeping loopholes that could violate the privacy of Canadians.

The first thing we need to do is ensure that the Liberals put in place a legislative framework that will set the foundation for digital privacy in Canada.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, privacy rights are fundamental. Small businesses are important. I wonder if the member agrees that it is important to empower the Privacy Commissioner to enforce the protection of both those groups of people.

Ms. Leslyn Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I am impressed that Bill C-27 would give the Privacy Commissioner some teeth to enforce penalties. That I acknowledge. I also see it as a positive that there is some attempt to create some sort of regulatory framework, but it does not go far enough. This framework has to start from the federal government and work its way down so we have an umbrella legislation to protect the digital privacy of Canadians.

• (1340)

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to ask the hon. member a question.

I am curious as to whether the member thinks there should be consequences or reprimands for members of the House who meet with known Nazis who spread misinformation and disinformation, who glorify the Holocaust and who speak against anti-Muslim rhetoric. If the member is talking about online hate, privacy of Canadians and regulation, does she condemn her actions by meeting with a known Nazi who spouts anti-Muslim rhetoric?

Ms. Leslyn Lewis: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has met with far worse individuals than I have ever met with. I can tell the member this. As a member of Parliament, it is my duty to have meetings—

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. All members are honourable members. The member just said that the Prime Minister had met with worse people than she had. I would like her to name them.

The Deputy Speaker: That is getting into debate.

The hon. member for—Norfolk, from the top.

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Ms. Leslyn Lewis: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has put on blackface so many times that he has degraded Black people. He literally put a banana in his pants, and the member has the audacity to stand and look at me, as a Black woman, and ask about my meeting with another member of the European Parliament. That is within my job description. I do not have to approve of everything in which another member believes in order to have the decency to have meetings with other individuals.

The Prime Minister denigrated Black men by putting a banana in his pants. Shame on every member over there who does not chastise him. If this were any other country, he would not be leading. He would not have the moral authority to lead.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to bring it back to the topic of this debate, Bill C-27, the intention of the bill is to modernize the protection of digital privacy rights in Canada. The previous iteration of the bill was roundly panned by stakeholders when it was introduced in the previous Parliament. However, in this new version, Bill C-27, the government has added a few new elements, for example, regulating artificial intelligence.

Unfortunately, there are so many different elements within the bill that nobody can actually address all the issues within a 10-minute speech, so I will focus on the privacy issues that are sorely lacking within the legislation.

The bottom line is that the new bill, Bill C-27, remains fundamentally flawed and is, simply put, a redux of the former bill. Essentially, what it would do is put lipstick on a pig.

The dramatic and rapid evolution in how we gather, use and disseminate digital information in the 21st century has presented the global community with not only a lot of opportunities but significant challenges as we try to protect society and individuals against the unauthorized use of their data and information. This directly implicates the issue of privacy and the various Canadian pieces of legislation that address the issue of privacy.

This is not the first time the Liberal government has tried to “fix” a problem, and I use that term advisedly. It tries to fix things, but just makes things worse. In the 21st century, we are faced with immense challenges in how we protect individuals, our Canadian citizens, against those who might misuse their data and information. Any suggestion that this digital charter is actually an articulation of new rights is simply wrong. This is a digital charter, but it is not a digital charter of rights.

I will turn to the most significant and substantive part of the bill, the privacy elements. Very little of this legislation has been changed from the original Bill C-11, and the government has not measurably responded to the criticism it received from the stakeholders when the previous version of the bill was reviewed at committee.

There are five key additions and alterations to Canada's existing privacy protection laws.

First, the bill expressly defines the consent that Canadians must give in order for their data and information to be collected and used, and there are guidelines attached to that. We commend the government for doing that clear definition of consent.

Second, Bill C-27 addresses the de-identification, the anonymization of data that is collected by private companies. Again, that is important. We want to ensure when private businesses collect information from consumers that this information is not attached to a specific individual or citizen.

Just to be clear, the bill contains numerous broad exemptions, which we could probably drive a truck through, and will likely create the loopholes that will allow corporations to avoid asking Canadians for permission.

Third, the bill provides that all organizations and companies that undertake activities that impact the privacy of Canadians must develop codes of practice for the protection of the information they collect.

Finally, the act would create harsher financial penalties, up to \$25 million, for a violation of Canadian privacy rights. We, again, commend the government for doing that.

However, let me say for the record that what we do not support is the unnecessary creation of a new personal information and data protection tribunal, which is another level of bureaucracy that would add more layers of complexity, delays and confusion to the commissioner's efforts to enforce privacy laws.

• (1345)

Canada is not alone in expressing concern over the risks that digital information and data flows represent to the well-being of Canadians and our privacy rights. Many other countries are grappling with the same issue and are responding to these threats, and none more so than the European Union. The EU has adopted its general data protection regulation, the GDPR, which has now become the world's gold standard when it comes to privacy protection in the digital environment.

The challenge for Canada is that the EU, which is a market of over half a billion well-heeled consumers, measures its willingness to mutually allow sharing of information with other countries against the GDPR, the standard it has set. Those who fall short of the rigour of that privacy regime will find it difficult to conduct business with the EU.

Do our current regime and this legislation measure up to the GDPR from the EU? No, probably not. In fact, for years Canada's digital data privacy framework has been lagging behind those of our international counterparts. The problem is that if we do not meet the standard, we will not be able to do the kind of business with the EU we expect to. As someone who played a part in negotiating our free trade agreement with the European Union, I know it would be an absolute travesty to see that work go to waste because our country was not willing to adopt robust privacy and data protections.

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I note that, as is the custom with our Liberal friends, the bill creates more costs for taxpayers to bear. There is a creation of new responsibilities and powers for the commissioner, which we support, but this legislation calls for the creation of a separate tribunal, a new layer of bureaucracy and red tape that small and medium-sized enterprises will have to grapple with.

There are other unanswered questions. Why does this legislation not formally recognize privacy as a fundamental right? Regrettably, as presented, Bill C-27 misses the opportunity to produce a path-breaking statute that addresses the enormous risks and asymmetries posed by today's surveillance business model. Our key trading partners, especially the EU, have set the bar very high, and the adequacy of our own privacy legislation could very well be rescinded by the EU under its privacy regime.

Thirty-five years ago, our Supreme Court affirmed that privacy is “at the heart of liberty in a modern state”, yet nowhere in this bill is that right formally recognized. Any 21st-century privacy regime should recognize privacy as a fundamental human right that is inextricably linked to other fundamental rights and freedoms. By the way, I share the belief that as a fundamental right, it is not appropriate to balance off the right to privacy against the rights of corporations and commercial interests. Personal privacy must remain sacrosanct. When measured against that standard, Bill C-27 fails miserably.

I have much more to say, but I will wind down by saying that this bill is another missed opportunity to get Canada's privacy legislation right by consulting widely and learning from best practices from around the world. There is a lot riding on this bill, including the willingness of some of our largest trading partners to allow reciprocal data flows. This bill is not consistent with contemporary global standards.

The Centre for Digital Rights notes that this legislation “fails to address the reality that dominant data-driven enterprises have shifted away from a service-oriented business model towards one that relies on monetizing [personal information] through the mass surveillance of individuals and groups.” That should be a wake-up call to all of us. Sadly, this bill fails to listen to that call. Let me repeat that there is a move toward monetizing personal information through mass surveillance of individuals and groups, and the government has not yet recognized that.

• (1350)

For those reasons, I expect the Conservatives will be opposing this bill and voting against it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I switched from ChatGPT to Bing, since I also wanted to test that platform. I asked Bing, in connection to what my colleague from Abbotsford was saying, what the consequences of not legislating on the content of Bill C-27 would be.

It gave me an interesting answer, namely that, essentially, it could have an impact on the protection of data provided by companies.

Not legislating and not acting right now will therefore lead to more data losses unless we establish a framework, which is one of the aims of Bill C-27.

By playing all these games in the House to waste time and stop us from passing Bill C-27, are the Conservatives not putting Quebecers' and Canadians' personal information at risk?

[*English*]

Hon. Ed Fast: No, not at all, Mr. Speaker. We are certainly not trivializing Bill C-27. In fact, right now it is only the Conservative members of Parliament who are speaking to it. This is the most important issue of privacy and protecting the privacy of Canadians within an emerging digital environment. I am disappointed that my colleague from the Bloc does not take this issue seriously enough to get up in this House and debate it. It is important that we get this right.

What we have is a redux of the old bill the Liberals brought forward. It was so roundly castigated and panned at committee that the minister had to go back to the drawing board. However, he has come back with essentially the same milquetoast legislation, which does not address the most critical parts of protecting the privacy of Canadians.

• (1355)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have great respect for my colleague and great interest in the issue of making privacy a fundamental human right.

One of the shocking things we found with the last bill was from the Privacy Commissioner. He ruled that the company Clearview AI had broken Canadian law by allowing all manner of photographs of Canadian families, individuals and children to be sold on a market with facial recognition technology. He called that out as illegal but told us that under the new law, it would be almost impossible for him to go after Clearview AI because his rulings could be overturned by a board the Liberals will appoint above him.

We trust our Privacy Commissioner and we need to protect privacy. I want to ask my hon. colleague why he thinks the Liberals are undermining privacy at this time.

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, I have mutual respect for the member. We are both from the class of 2006, I believe.

Mr. Charlie Angus: It was 2004.

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, yes, 2004. He has a couple of years on me.

I agree with him 100%. What has happened is the government, in order to protect its right to interfere in protecting the privacy rights of Canadians, has established a tribunal that could override the commissioner's investigations of violations of privacy rights within Canada.

The member mentioned the Clearview AI situation. He is absolutely right that it was a fundamental breach of our privacy rights. However, there are Canadian companies like Tim Hortons that have also violated Canadians' privacy rights. That is why it is important that we get this right and not put through a milquetoast bill that will not achieve what we want and that allows the Liberal government to continue to interfere and protect its big business buddies.

I just mentioned the importance of making sure our privacy rights are protected in an era when data is being monetized. Canadians' own personal information is being monetized by corporate interests. We need to make sure that our rights are protected, and this bill does not go far enough.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member a question about clause 5 of the bill. Clause 5 is the purpose section and is probably the most important section of any bill, as it sets out the reason for the legislation. That is the section where the government says an individual's rights are equal to a business's right to use people's personal information. That is the section, in my view, that needs to be amended to make a personal privacy right a fundamental right.

I wonder if the member could comment on why it so important to put a fundamental right in that section of the bill.

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, it is an excellent question because that is the fundamental failing of Bill C-27. We have an opportunity, once and for all, to express and codify Canadians' right to have their personal information and data protected. Typically, that kind of statement of purpose goes into the purpose section. It is completely missing from that section because we know the Liberals are not really serious when it comes to protecting Canadians' privacy rights. We can do better than this.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this legislation is all about protecting the rights and privacy of Canadians. I am surprised that this member, more so than any other Conservative member, has been very clear in saying the Conservative Party of Canada opposes this legislation. Am I to believe that the Conservative Party will be voting against allowing the legislation to go to committee?

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, the member should know what the parliamentary process calls for. Bills that come forward to this chamber have the opportunity to be considered at committee. We then call in witnesses and stakeholders from across the country to express their views on legislation. It is within that context that I have expressed serious reservations about the legislation as it is currently drafted.

I expect we will allow this bill to go to committee, and hopefully the Liberal government will do what it so rarely does: listens to the stakeholders, listens to the witnesses and then makes the fundamental changes to the legislation that I have referenced. That could make this a salvageable bill and allow us to vote in favour of it.

Statements by Members

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[*English*]

GREY CUP CHAMPIONS

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Scarborough is home to a Grey Cup champion. On Sunday, at Scarborough Town Centre, Toronto Argonauts running back Daniel Adeboboye brought the Grey Cup home to Scarborough, signing autographs and posing for pictures with fans.

As part of the 2022 Grey Cup champion Argos, Daniel was a nominee for the league's most outstanding special teams player, and is an inspiration to our local youth. He took the time to speak with all of the kids and encourage them to reach for their dreams.

Daniel grew up in Scarborough, and also on hand were his proud parents, Pastor Tai and Marian Adeboboye of Wilmar Heights Baptist Church.

Daniel Adeboboye reminds Scarborough youth that, with hard work and determination, all is possible.

I thank Daniel for bringing the Grey Cup home, and say, "Let's go Argos."

* * *

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as members of Parliament, we stand in the House of Commons for the good of the common people, for their paycheques, their savings, their homes and their country. However, in order to work for the common people, one must have common sense.

With 40-year high inflation, families are having to make common-sense decisions each and every day about their budgets, and they expect the government to do the same by getting by with what it already has, reining in spending, imposing no new taxes and improving the services Canadians are already paying for. Families have to make those decisions each and every day, with respect to grocery items, whether or not the children play sports, and cancelling family vacation plans.

However, the Prime Minister is displaying none of the common sense Canadians are, with his \$6,000 hotel rooms and the \$162,000 Jamaican vacation plans, while Canadians are cutting back and expecting common sense from the government.

We need a new Prime Minister who displays real leadership and real common sense, and looks after the common people.

*Statements by Members***DEFENCE INNOVATION ACCELERATOR FOR THE NORTH ATLANTIC**

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Putin's invasion of Ukraine, an attack on the international rules-based order that Canadians fought and died to build, has underscored the importance of multilateral alliances such as NATO. It has also highlighted the urgent need for NATO allies to advance innovative defence and peacekeeping systems to protect the alliance against hostile actors. It is in this evolving security environment that NATO is establishing a network of innovation sites in North America and Europe.

After a team Atlantic effort, the Minister of National Defence announced earlier this year that the government will submit Halifax as the host city for the NATO Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic, or DIANA.

There is no better choice. Halifax, with its thriving ecosystem of entrepreneurial science and technology start-ups, universities and research centres, and Canada's Atlantic naval fleet, is the right place for DIANA. This is a major deal for the Halifax region. Once ratified by NATO, it will mean investments and jobs, and growing our innovation and tech sectors, all while supporting the NATO alliance.

I thank everyone who was part of the campaign to make this happen.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CENTRE D'ENTRAIDE RACINE-LAVOIE

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the anniversary of an organization that has been serving Rivière-des-Mille-Îles for 50 years. I am talking about the Centre d'entraide Racine-Lavoie.

The centre supports the autonomy and development of low-income individuals and families by offering a variety of services and activities. Year after year, the Centre Racine-Lavoie offers a variety of services, including a tax clinic for people who cannot afford professional services, a community kitchen to promote healthy eating, a lunch prep workshop, an eye-care program called "Bonhomme à lunettes" that offers affordable vision care, talks on many themes, and the list goes on.

The Centre d'entraide Racine-Lavoie is much like a close-knit family that prizes the values of sharing, support and solidarity.

Congratulations to the team at the Centre d'entraide Racine-Lavoie on this milestone.

* * *

● (1405)

LIAM SCHMIDT

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight the performance of our Laval athletes at the 56th Quebec Games finals, which were held from March 3 to March 11 in Rivière-du-Loup. They won eight gold, six silver and 11 bronze medals. They make us proud.

The performance of young Liam Schmidt from Alfred-Pellan deserves special recognition. At the age of only 14, Liam gave us an extraordinary performance, beating the Quebec Games record in novice figure skating with a score of 92.2.

He said, "I am surprised to have beaten the record, I am really proud and I will continue to work hard." In addition to being an extraordinary athlete, he has shown us that Quebec youth have talent, determination and hope.

Congratulations to Liam for his incredible performance. I urge him to continue doing what makes him happy.

* * *

[*English*]

BASSMASTER CLASSIC WINNER

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to acknowledge a significant accomplishment by a Canadian angler who has made our nation proud. Jeff Gustafson of Kenora has made history by becoming the first Canadian to win the Bassmaster Classic, a prestigious tournament in the sport of professional bass fishing.

With a five-pound, 12-ounce lead going into the final round over American John Cox, Gustafson managed to boat just two fish that weighed a combined six pounds, 13 ounces, to edge his opponent and win. What a spectacle it was. Gustafson's win is a testament to the hard work and dedication of Canadian anglers, who continue to showcase their skills on the world stage.

Conservatives know that fishing is more than just a hobby for many Canadians; it is a way of life. We take pride in our Canadian heritage and we celebrate Gustafson's win with him. May his achievement inspire generations of Canadians to continue to celebrate our heritage and the great outdoors through the sport of fishing.

To Gussy, I say, "Way to go".

* * *

NATIONAL ENGINEERING MONTH

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, March is National Engineering Month. As a fellow engineer, I want to acknowledge the invaluable work engineers do in my riding of Surrey—Newton and of course in the riding of my colleague, a dear friend and fellow engineer and the Minister of Transport, the riding of Mississauga Centre, as well as in communities throughout Canada.

Presented by Engineers Canada, the annual campaign is designed to spark an interest in youth and the next generation of engineering professionals, while celebrating the role engineers play in our daily lives. The theme for this year's National Engineering Month is "There's A Place For You in Engineering", which highlights the inclusive nature of the profession and showcases its diversity in perspectives, opportunities and people.

Statements by Members

To all those considering joining the profession, I can proudly say that there is a place for them in engineering.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, a 16-year old was stabbed to death at Keele subway station in my riding of Parkdale—High Park. Gabriel Magalhaes was simply sitting on a bench minding his own business when a complete stranger, unprovoked, randomly attacked him, stabbing him three times.

On December 8, 2022, two women were stabbed at High Park subway station, also in my constituency. Vanessa Kurpiewska was killed that day. Again, the violence was unprovoked and the attacker and the victims were unknown to each other.

Over 12 months, there have been four homicides and countless assaults. Passengers have been attacked with weapons and pushed onto subway tracks, and a woman was set ablaze. This senseless random violence must stop. Torontonians cannot be frightened about taking transit.

Immediately, we need an increased presence of uniformed staff and TTC officials to reassure passengers of their safety. Going forward, every level of government must commit funding to support mental health and improved housing in our city. Confidence in the TTC must be restored.

* * *

PARKINSON'S AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, April is Parkinson's Awareness Month in Canada and I want to recognize the residents of Barrie—Innisfil and my friend Greg McGinnis for using their voices to bring awareness to Parkinson's disease for the 100,000 Canadians who are living with Parkinson's.

In 2023, 35 Canadians a day will be diagnosed with Parkinson's. It is the fastest-growing neurological disease in the world. It is widely considered a disease of older Canadians, but young-onset Parkinson's is afflicting 20% of diagnosed Canadians under the age of 50. There is presently no cure for Parkinson's, but researchers continue to search and hope that one will be discovered.

Greater awareness about Parkinson's is needed, in an effort to work together so every Canadian who has been diagnosed with Parkinson's can enjoy a good quality of life. This greater awareness is what my friend Greg has asked me to undertake by bringing this message to the House of Commons today.

I would also like to thank Parkinson's Canada for its commitment to transform the lives of people living with Parkinson's.

* * *

● (1410)

WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Jessica Rotolo is an actor, artist, dancer, model and role model, Beaches—East York constituent, Humber graduate and

a big Blue Jays fan. She is also a relentless advocate for her Down Syndrome community.

In addition to her award-winning PSAs and countless media appearances, Jessica is the winner of Down Syndrome International's LotsOfSocks competition. Her heart design was chosen among hundreds of submissions and can be found on over 17,000 pairs of socks sold for World Down Syndrome Day last week.

I was lucky to spend that day with Jessica, other Down Syndrome advocates and a loving community at her old school, Haydon Park. Everyone there understood the core idea of inclusion. No matter our differences, we all deserve equal treatment and opportunity to participate. It is not a matter of working for the Down Syndrome community but with it.

On behalf of everyone in the House, our thanks go to Jessica for what she has done and continues to do. We cannot wait to see all she accomplishes.

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[*Translation*]

MAUREEN BREAU

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was saddened to learn that Sergeant Maureen Breau was killed yesterday evening while performing an arrest in Louiseville. Sergeant Breau had more than 20 years of experience with the Sûreté du Québec. It is true that every time an officer loses their life in the line of duty, it is a painful reminder of the constant danger they face every day they wear the badge. We do not put our lives at risk when we go to work in the morning, but police officers do. It is a reality they face every day. It is a reality their partners, their children and their families also face every day.

I offer my condolences to Sergeant Breau's family. I want them to know that we all feel powerless when tragedy strikes, but that will not stop us from celebrating how important Sergeant Breau was to public safety or what she meant to her friends and to so many other people. Being a police officer is not a job, it is a calling. By answering that calling, Sergeant Breau demonstrated her selfless regard for the people she served.

Rest in peace, Maureen.

Statements by Members

[English]

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the current Prime Minister, everything feels broken and Canadians are struggling. In Canada, it is understood that, if one follows the rules, works hard and contributes to their community, they will be able to make a good living, buy a home and raise their family in a safe neighbourhood, and that the government will ensure the right conditions exist to make this possible.

After eight years of the Prime Minister, the contract is broken. While the Liberals continue their high spending, inflation has hit 40-year highs, destroying Canadians' savings. Canadians are losing their homes and hundreds of thousands more are using food banks. They are hurting and the Liberal government refuses to take responsibility.

The finance minister has promised to show fiscal restraint in today's budget, but we have heard these promises before. Canadians need a government that will be fiscally responsible and remember its contract with its citizens. If the current government will not, it needs to step aside so Conservatives can.

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CHARLES P. ALLEN HIGH SCHOOL

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week was a difficult one in Halifax West as our community dealt with the stabbing of two staff members at Charles P. Allen High School. Thankfully, both Ms. Light and Mr. Rodgers have now been released from hospital. We wish them well in their recoveries and I will be keeping them in my prayers.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the staff, students, first responders and community members who helped during and after this horrific event, especially grade 10 students Rory Chadwick and Easton Schlender who assisted Mr. Rodgers as they waited for paramedics to arrive. CPA's principal, Stephanie Bird, has done an incredible job supporting her staff and students as they begin the process, and I thank her for that.

We are wounded but are filled with hope as our community is there to support one another in this difficult time.

* * *

CANFOR SAWMILL

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there are few things more devastating for a small rural community than learning that its main employer is closing its doors. That is the news the people of Houston, B.C. received last month when Canfor announced it is closing its sawmill in that community. Three hundred mill employees are going to lose their jobs. That is 10% of the community's population and there are hundreds more who work for local contractors and other businesses.

Mayor Shane Brienen sees a path forward for his community, but he has called on the federal government to help. I spoke with Scott Rowsell from the forestry consulting company Pro-Tech, and he talked about the need for a program like the job opportunity pro-

gram from 2009 to help displaced forestry workers. The steelworkers have called for reinstatement of the EI flexibility that was put in place during the pandemic, yet the government has done nothing.

The B.C. government is there in Houston, on the ground, working with the community and coming up with a plan. I implore the federal government to be there for the community during this difficult time.

* * *

● (1415)

[Translation]

MAUREEN BREAU

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for our police officers, the price of public safety means putting one's life on the line every day, with no guarantee of going home safe and sound. Yesterday, in Louiseville, policewoman Maureen Breau was killed in the line of duty during an arrest. Sergeant Breau joined the Sûreté du Québec in 2002. She had over 20 years' experience on patrol and had been a relief supervisor since 2019.

This tragedy reminds us that there are no routine police interventions, each one is critical, even for experienced officers. Let us never forget the important work that our police officers do and the respect that they deserve.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I want to offer my deepest condolences to Ms. Breau's family and loved ones. We also stand in solidarity with the entire squad at the Maskinongé RCM. Finally, we wish a speedy recovery to Ms. Breau's colleague who was also injured during this intervention.

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[English]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians need the truth about Beijing's interference in our democracy and to know what the Prime Minister is hiding and why he refused to act in defence of Canada. The Globe and Mail reported that Beijing “employed a sophisticated strategy to disrupt Canada's democracy in the 2021 federal election campaign” and that “their proxies backed the re-election of [the member for Papineau's] Liberals”. For weeks the Liberals blocked the Prime Minister's chief of staff from testifying, and it was only under the pressure of Conservatives and an outcry from the public that the Liberal obstruction collapsed.

It is no wonder the Liberals are blocking the truth. The Prime Minister has benefited from dictator dollars through the Trudeau Foundation and a sweetheart book deal pushed by the Communist regime's propagandists.

The Liberals' plan to have a secret committee with secret evidence, secret hearings and a secret conclusion is just not acceptable. A fully independent public inquiry is the only way to credibly investigate Beijing's interference in our democracy and to uncover what and when the Liberals knew about this foreign interference in our democracy.

* * *

CANADIAN FIREFIGHTERS

Ms. Valerie Bradford (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my appreciation for the brave men and women who serve as firefighters all across Canada. Their dedication to keeping our communities safe from the dangers of fire and other emergencies is truly admirable.

This week, firefighters from Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and across Canada are descending on Ottawa to advocate for legislation to better protect those who so selflessly protect us. They are bringing to light the risks posed by PFAS used in firefighting protective gear, as well as regulatory shortfalls that have resulted in firefighters at several major airports not being well-positioned to respond quickly to aviation emergencies.

It is our responsibility as legislators to ensure the safety of our firefighters and the public they serve. We must work collaboratively to find alternative solutions to PFAS-laden gear and address the regulatory gaps to ensure the safety of those who travel through our airports.

I want to express my deepest appreciation to all firefighters for their service, dedication and sacrifices.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

FINANCE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the former Liberal finance minister, Bill Morneau, the future Liberal leader, Mark Carney, the current Governor of the Bank of Canada, Tiff Macklem, and now the Minister of Finance have all admitted that deficits and added debt fuel inflation.

When presenting the last budget, the Minister of Finance stated that they were absolutely determined to reduce the debt-to-GDP ratio, that it had to continue decreasing, and that it was a line they would not cross.

Is the Prime Minister going to cross that line today?

• (1420)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that the members opposite cannot wait to see the budget. I can assure them that our priority is to help Canadians.

Oral Questions

We will be there with targeted measures that will help Canadians with the cost of living. We will be there with health care services and more money for the provinces to provide dental care assistance, which the Conservatives voted against. We will also create jobs for the middle class in a growing green economy.

Those are the government's priorities. We will continue to be there for people.

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is what has happened over the last three days in Canada: On Saturday night, a 16-year-old boy was stabbed to death at a Toronto subway in an unprovoked attack by a repeat offender. On Sunday evening, a father was stabbed to death outside a Vancouver Starbucks with his wife and daughter present. On Sunday night, a man was stabbed on a Toronto city bus and taken to hospital. On Monday night, a sergeant, a police officer, was killed near Trois-Rivières. In addition, in the early morning of this day, a young girl was shot to death in Calgary.

This is part of the 32% increase in violent crime since the Prime Minister took office.

Will he reverse the policies that caused it?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like all Canadians, we are deeply concerned with some of the very heinous crimes that we have seen over the past number of days, with the increase in violent attacks on innocent Canadians and on those serving the public through law enforcement. It is extremely concerning.

That is why we will continue to be there to make investments in public safety.

Unlike Conservatives, who cut funding for police officers, we have invested in public safety. We have invested in municipal police officers, as we have invested in community safety programs, strengthened gun control and continued to strengthen consequences for violent offenders.

We will continue to be there to keep Canadians safe.

* * *

JUSTICE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, people are tired of hearing about his concern. They want to know what he is going to do to reverse the damage he has caused.

Oral Questions

He brought in a bail system that allows repeat violent offenders back on the street again and again, sometimes released the very same day. In Vancouver, the same 40 violent offenders were arrested 6,000 times in a year. That is 150 arrests per criminal each year, as a direct result of the Prime Minister's easy bail system.

Will he replace bail with jail for repeat violent offenders?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work on bail reform, including working with the provinces to ensure that we have a fair, responsible system that keeps Canadians safe right across the country.

If the member opposite were really serious about moving forward on keeping communities safe, he would back our upcoming Bill C-21 at third reading to make sure that we are keeping assault weapons out of the hands of people across the country, strengthening gun control to freeze handguns and continuing to move forward.

Instead of being in the pockets of the NRA, we are focused on Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is unbelievable. He thinks that a hunter in Nunavut is responsible for the stabbings in downtown Vancouver. That is ridiculous.

Under his policy of targeting law-abiding citizens, while we are allowing repeat violent offenders to go out on the street again and again, we have seen a 32% increase in violent offences. In fact, one of the detectives close to the case in Toronto said that the offender was out again on numerous releases, with probation and prohibited bail. If one can name it, he has been released on it.

This is a full-scale justice system failure. Will the Prime Minister reverse it?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, amidst all this tragedy, it is interesting to see the lengths to which the Conservative leader will go to avoid talking about his desire to weaken gun control in this country and bring assault weapons back into the communities where they were banned over the past couple of years by the government.

We have put a freeze on handguns in the market across the country. We are strengthening gun control, and every step of the way, the Conservative Party stands against it.

That is why I am asking Conservatives, with their concerns about public safety right now: Will they step up and accelerate the passage of Bill C-21 when it comes back to the House for third reading?

• (1425)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when we were in office, in the last year, there were 124,000 fewer violent crimes than there were last year. Violent crimes, including murders, have skyrocketed under this policy of the Liberal Prime Minister.

He is targeting law-abiding hunters and farmers rather than the repeat violent offenders who are committing the crime. Why would the Prime Minister not look at the evidence, which has demonstrat-

ed that our streets have now turned into war zones after eight years of his policy? Will he replace bail with jail for repeat violent offenders?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite himself brought up what they did under the Harper government in those years.

What they did was loosen gun control laws. What they did was make it easier for people to buy assault-style weapons. That led to direct increases in gun ownership, and unfortunately, in violent crime across the country.

That is why we are trying to bring back stronger gun control legislation, despite the Conservatives' ideological opposition to gun control. We will continue to put the safety of Canadians and their communities first. We will continue with stronger gun control laws right across the country.

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[Translation]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about interference. Media reports have alleged that a Liberal MP advised a Chinese diplomat to halt the release of Canadians in China. On Friday, *The Globe and Mail* reported that the Prime Minister had been informed of that conversation in 2021, but he did not consider it serious enough to intervene. However, it was serious enough for the Liberal MP to leave the caucus. It was serious enough for several sources to leak the information. It was serious enough for the media to publish it.

Is everyone else wrong to think this is serious, or is this another example of the Prime Minister's poor judgment?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague should pay careful attention to the facts he presents here in the House. He should check his facts, because it is important not to mislead the House.

The fact is that we have always taken the allegations we heard very seriously. We have always taken action and made sure that action was taken when necessary. Rather than playing partisan games, we will continue to rely on the experts and authorities to get the job done and keep Canadians safe. We are not looking to score political points, which is unfortunately what the Bloc Québécois and the Conservative Party are trying to do.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister should pay more attention to his credibility, because credibility is key.

Every piece of information that the Prime Minister has received from intelligence services about Chinese interference since 2019 goes in one ear and out the other. Whether it is out of complacency or naivety, we are not sure. The truth is that he does not have the credibility to lead the investigation. He does not have the credibility to choose the commissioner, let alone the rapporteur. He does not have the credibility to give any sort of mandate.

The only credible move is for him to launch an independent public inquiry. When will he wake up?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc is clearly spoiling for a fight, trying to make political attacks. The reality is that if the Bloc is concerned about anyone's credibility in the House, they can rely on an independent expert like the former governor general, who will be able to decide if we need a public inquiry. He will be able to determine what kind of inquiry is required and what resources it will take to reassure Canadians. It is precisely because of the partisan games that are too often played here that we are relying on credible, independent experts. That is what is needed to tackle a serious issue like this.

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[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Ukrainians fleeing from Russia's brutal illegal war are looking to start over and build a new life in Canada.

However, the Liberals' emergency travel measures have a three-year limit, meaning that Ukrainians cannot participate in most trade apprenticeships. Ukrainians are effectively being shut out of the trades because of this limit. It is wrong, and union leaders like Scott Crichton from IBEW 424 want this to change.

Will the Liberal government remove the limit so that Ukrainians could train and work in Canada?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past few weeks, I have had the opportunity to sit down with union leaders, including that of the IBEW, across the country.

I have had an opportunity to thank them directly for all the incredible leadership they are showing in training Ukrainians and other new arrivals in this country. This will help Ukrainians to contribute fully to this country that is offering so much and is going to benefit so much from their being here.

We will continue to work hand in hand with union leadership and union members right across the country on creating growth for the middle class, on creating a strong future for our communities, and yes, on helping people fleeing war and violence all around the world. On that point, this government is close friends with unions and will continue to be.

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SENIORS

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with the cost of food and housing soaring, Canadian seniors are being left behind. In my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith, seniors tell me they cannot make ends meet. To make matters worse, for seniors who are disproportionately women, widowed or single, costs are even harder to keep up with, yet they pay more in taxes than their coupled counterparts.

Will the Prime Minister end these discriminatory tax rules, implement equitable tax benefits and finally start supporting seniors?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the very first things we did was significantly increase the GIS for the most vulnerable single seniors because we knew that was something we needed. Unfortunately, the NDP actually voted against that measure.

We continued over the past years by doubling the GST tax credit and putting more money back in the pockets of seniors, and by providing nearly two million low-income renters with financial relief, including seniors. We permanently increased the OAS for seniors age 75 and up, and we restored the age of eligibility for OAS back to 65 from the 67 that Conservatives raised it to.

On this side of the House, we will continue to be there for seniors. Whether it is through COVID or through housing affordability, we will be there.

* * *

FIREARMS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a moment ago, I listed four stabbing deaths that have happened in the last three days, including that of a police officer, and the Prime Minister glibly got up and said he was going to ban hunting rifles. Stabbings happen with knives, not hunting rifles. Perhaps that is why we see a 32% increase in violent crime since the Prime Minister took office. He is not looking at logic or facts. It is the criminals wielding the knives who are doing the killing.

Does he really believe that banning the rifles of rural hunters will stop knife crime in big cities?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians deserve to feel safe and Canadians must be able to feel safe in their communities. That is why, on March 10, I met with my provincial and territorial counterparts to work on bail reform to include repeat, violent offenders and to include crimes with knives. We have a plan. I invite the hon. member to read the joint communiqué that came out of that federal, provincial and territorial meeting of justice and public safety ministers. We are moving ahead with that plan.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the question was for the Prime Minister, who did not have the guts to get up and answer.

Oral Questions

A moment ago, I listed four murders and near murders that happened with knives in the last three days. This is part of a massive crime wave that the Prime Minister's catch-and-release bail system has unleashed right across the country. We did not have crime like this before he took office. His solution is to ban hunting rifles in rural communities.

I ask him again, does he really believe that banning hunting rifles in rural communities will stop knife crime in downtown cities?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been working with the provinces and territories with respect to bail reform since last October. We appreciate that there is a concern out there among Canadians. There is a desire to be safe, and there is a desire to feel safe. That is why—

The Speaker: Order. I am going to interrupt the hon. minister.

The hon. minister can start from the top. I missed the beginning.

Hon. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, we have been working with justice ministers and public safety ministers from the provinces and territories since last October. We appreciate that Canadians need to feel safe and Canadians have a right to be safe, which is why we have been working together on bail reform to address repeat offenders, violent crime, crime with knives and crime with guns. We are moving ahead with that plan, as we have stated in the joint communiqué. This is a problem that will be solved by working together.

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● (1435)

FINANCE

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, taxes have never been higher and the Liberals are awash with higher revenues from their inflationary deficits. After eight years of the Prime Minister, the price of a home has doubled. The price of rent has doubled. The price of an average mortgage payment has doubled. Credit card debt has never been higher. Food bank use is at a record high. By all accounts, this is not a record that anyone should aspire to.

The government's solution seems to be more deficits, more debt and more inflation. The Prime Minister has an opportunity at 4 p.m. today. Will he commit to no deficits and no new taxes?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is great to see our colleagues so excited about the budget today. In a short two hours, they will learn everything that is in the budget to support Canadians.

However, I am going to make a prediction. No matter what measures are there to support Canadians through affordability challenges, no matter what is in there to grow an economy that helps everyone, no matter what is in there to position Canada for greatness in the future, the Conservatives, the opposition in this House, will vote against it. It is what they have always done, and it is what they will do again. They will vote against, and we will keep delivering for Canadians.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, never has a government spent so much to achieve so little. He is right; we

will vote against it. The member opposite should go to a food bank and tell someone—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order.

From the top, please.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite should go to a food bank and tell somebody that they have never had it so good. Perhaps he can tell a family struggling to pay their mortgage that they have never had it better, or he can tell a small business owner that the struggle is a product of their own imagination.

At a time when the government is awash with cash, Canadians are working harder and they are getting less. The Liberals believe they can spend Canadians' money better than they can.

Will the Prime Minister admit that his approach has failed and commit today to no deficits and no new taxes?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are 2.7 million fewer Canadians in poverty today than when the Conservatives were in government. That includes 450,000 children, thanks to the Canada child benefit, in which a child under six could receive up to \$7,000 a year.

Let us talk about our child care agreements that have cut fees by 50% for families across this country, which could be up to an additional \$6,000 for families with children in registered care.

We are delivering for Canadians in hard times, and we are going to continue to be there for them.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, the Minister of Finance will announce a \$1.4-billion cut in spending on outside consultants. However, given that the government has increased the size of the public service by 28% since 2017, even more of the work that is currently being contracted out to private companies could be done in-house.

The government is spending over \$21 billion a year on outside contracts, and the proposed cut clearly shows that its real intention is to continue giving money to its cronies.

Will the Prime Minister commit today to cut spending on outside contracts in order to reduce the burden on Canadians?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is wonderful to see how excited our colleagues are for today's budget. In two hours, they will know everything that is in our budget.

I will make a prediction. I predict that regardless of what measures are set out in the budget to support Canadians, build the economy or green the economy, the Conservatives, the opposition party, will vote against them.

We are here for Canadians. They are against them. It is our duty to meet our commitments.

* * *

FINANCE

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what does the Associate Minister of Finance think of the fact that in 2019, the Prime Minister billed Canadian taxpayers more than \$200,000 for his personal vacation to Costa Rica? He billed a further \$160,000 for another personal vacation to Jamaica in December. When he is not billing Canadians for his vacations, he has a solution: He violates Canada's Conflict of Interest Act by accepting vacations, gifts and flights to his friends' private island.

Today his Minister of Finance will be announcing budget cuts for government trips. Does that mean that Canadians will no longer have to pay for the Prime Minister's trips south?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in just two hours, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance will announce all the measures in budget 2023.

Afterward, we will hear from the members across the way. I think it will be a canned speech with their usual slogans.

Today, in this chamber, what we will not hear is the Conservatives talking about plans to grow our economy, to fight climate change and to improve infrastructure.

We have a plan. We are going to deliver for Canadians. The Conservatives will vote against.

* * *

● (1440)

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the cost of the Trans Mountain pipeline now exceeds \$30 billion.

Yesterday, I asked the Minister of Environment and Climate Change if he was going to officially recommend that his government get out of this sinkhole. He responded that he was not the finance minister.

Indeed, I was addressing the Minister of the Environment, the one who read the IPCC report, the minister responsible for Canada's role in the fight against climate change.

Today, is he officially recommending that his government put an end to the Trans Mountain fiasco?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

Oral Questions

We have put in place the necessary measures to stabilize the TMX project, ensure that Canada gets fair market value for these resources that we included in the budget, and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. The fact is that 12,700 jobs were created in Alberta and British Columbia. BMO Capital Markets and TD Securities have confirmed that the TMX project would be commercially viable. We will ensure that we get a fair share for Canadians by completing this project.

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is going to be hard to get our fair share when it already costs \$30 billion.

According to what the IPCC chair said in his synthesis report, we have the know-how, the technology, the tools, the financial resources and everything we need to overcome the climate problems we have identified. What we do not have right now is a strong political will to resolve them once and for all. That is the core issue: the political will to walk away from Trans Mountain, as well as projects like Bay du Nord, offshore oil exploration, and more.

Where is this political will that the IPCC is talking about? Where is it when it counts?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear. Our government has focused on the environment, and more than \$120 billion has been invested in the environment by our administration.

Once the TMX project is completed, we will undertake a process seeking to have a consortium acquire this asset. Canadians will get fair value for the asset.

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OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the only will the government has shown is to produce more oil and hope it will pollute less. That is not working.

Ottawa has already given \$8.6 billion to the oil companies for carbon capture, and they complain that it is not enough. The six biggest, greediest oil companies make \$35 billion in profits and yet they get \$8.6 billion in public funds, supposedly to pollute less. They invested only half a billion dollars of that subsidy. The worst part is that those gluttons are asking for seconds.

When will the government finally cut off the money?

[English]

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working on many fronts to reduce fossil fuel emissions. We will be capping emissions from the oil and gas sector. We will be investing, yes, in carbon capture and storage. We will be implementing a clean fuel standard and, very importantly, we will be eliminating fossil fuel subsidies. We have eliminated eight and the rest will be eliminated by the end of the year.

*Oral Questions***CARBON PRICING**

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, thanks to bad Liberal policy, last year was the most expensive harvest in Canadian history. The \$34 million in fertilizer tariffs and the carbon tax on feed, fuel and transportation all led to record-high production costs. The consequences of that fanned the flames of record-high, double-digit food inflation.

Does the Prime Minister not realize the consequences that the increase in the carbon tax has had on food prices for Canadians? Will he commit to cancel his carbon tax hike in today's budget?

• (1445)

[Translation]

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, we know how hard we have been working with and for farmers in Canada.

I am very pleased to say that we are currently finalizing the agreements for the sustainable Canadian agricultural partnership. This \$3.5-billion program will help our farmers improve production and quality, reduce their carbon footprint and be more productive. We are here to help farmers and to ease the transition towards increasingly sound practices as well as to improve productivity and competitiveness.

[English]

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): That is the problem, Mr. Speaker. Agriculture is not sustainable if farmers cannot afford to farm. The food price index was crystal clear. When the Liberals triple their carbon tax, it will cost the average farmer \$150,000 a year. The consequences of that are also crystal clear: higher food costs and higher food production.

A senior in my riding came to me in tears the other day, saying she can no longer afford groceries. She is having to make the choice between going to the food bank and keeping her home. Is that really what the Prime Minister wants, taxing Canadian farmers out of business and making Canadians choose between food and shelter?

Will the Prime Minister give Canadians a break? Will he commit to cancel his carbon tax hike in today's budget?

[Translation]

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, it is true that things are tough for Canadians right now. Things are tough for our farmers, who have had to deal with a lot of unpredictability because of weather and so forth, but also because of input costs. That said, we are here to support them in a variety of ways.

We are helping them through the sustainable Canadian agriculture partnership. We have also improved the terms of the advance payment program, which allows them to access interest-free loans of up to \$250,000. We are here to support them in any number of ways.

[English]

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, according to the “Canada's Food Price Report”, food insecurity is

about to get worse for Canadian families. It will now cost a family of four over \$16,000 a year to pay for their food, an increase of over \$1,000 from last year. Now is not the time to increase taxes on grocery bills.

In today's budget, will the Prime Minister cancel his carbon tax and stop making it harder for Canadians to feed their families?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a government, we understand these are challenging times for Canadians. It is why we have put important measures in place to help Canadians, like doubling the GST tax credit that has helped almost 11 million Canadians across the country to deal with the high cost of everything; like the Canada child benefit that is indexed to inflation and that increased last July, because we recognized how important it is for families to take care of their basic needs. Let us also talk about child care, which is helping thousands and millions of Canadians across the country to help with the high cost of living.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a family of four now needs to come up with \$16,000 a year to pay for basic food, and the Liberal carbon tax hike will make the cost to grow and transport that food even higher, which means record-high grocery bills will be going up by over a thousand dollars this year. While that might not be anything for a Prime Minister who would charge taxpayers \$6,000 a night for a luxury hotel with a butler, for many Canadian families it could be the difference between eating and going hungry.

Why does he not just do the right thing and cancel his carbon tax in today's budget?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been doing the right thing since we first formed government in 2015. When we formed government, the very first thing we did was raise taxes on the wealthiest 1% so we could cut them for the middle class. Then we decided to stop sending child care cheques to millionaires so we could put more money in the pockets of nine out of 10 Canadian families. Through the pandemic, we were there for households because we believed households were too big to fail.

Every step of the way, the Conservatives voted against us or held press conferences to say that these big fat government programs would not get their support. Now they are campaigning on a commitment to take money away from families so they can make it free to pollute. That will not work in my neighbourhood.

TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, public transit is how Canadians get to work, how students get to school and how caregivers travel between communities, yet since the pandemic, a financial crisis has meant cuts to public transit across the country. This hurts people and the climate. The Liberals have failed to be a reliable partner when it comes to funding this essential service. They must fix it now.

Will the Minister of Finance secure permanent operational funding for public transit in today's budget?

• (1450)

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank our hon. colleague for her continued interest in supporting something as important as public transit. We agree with her that this is important not only for protecting our environment, but providing a reliable and secure way for Canadians to get around communities big and small across the country.

Our government has made record investments in public transit, including a permanent \$3-billion public transit fund. We have always recognized the importance of this to Canadians. We will continue to support municipalities and provinces in securing public transit.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for almost a decade, I have asked respective governments to stop plans to bury and abandon nuclear waste near the Great Lakes.

Last week, the U.S. Congress and Senate, both Democrat and Republican, united opposing Canada's plan to create this radioactive dump. High level nuclear waste has long-standing and devastating consequences on lakes that provide 40 million people with drinking water. The Liberals should be funding the organizations that clean and protect these waters, like the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, not science fiction.

Will the government stop this plan from moving forward and instead focus on its commitments to keeping these lakes great?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure everyone in the House and all Canadians that all radioactive waste in Canada is currently being safely managed according to international standards at facilities that are licensed and monitored by a world-class regulator: the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. The CNSC is an independent regulator that makes science-based objective decisions and regularly undergoes peer reviews from world renowned organizations. We are keeping Canadians safe.

* * *

[Translation]

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, semiconductors are what make our telephones, computers and vehicles

Oral Questions

work. The industry that manufactures them is vital for innovation and economic growth.

Can the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry inform the House of our government's recent success in terms of investments in semiconductors and how these investments will help to create good jobs for the future?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Sudbury for that great question.

Semiconductors are at the heart of the 21st-century economy. Last Friday, everyone in the House was very pleased to hear the President of the United States talking about the Albany-Bromont corridor, a major semiconductor manufacturing corridor. He also mentioned IBM's investment.

Yesterday, we announced, here in Ottawa, that Ranovus, a Canadian company, is going to manufacture the fastest, most power-efficient semiconductors.

Canada is poised for success in the 21st-century economy.

* * *

[English]

TAXATION

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are struggling with generational high inflation. Meanwhile, the Liberals are raking in the cash through tax increases on the backs of Canadians.

After eight years of the Liberals, mortgages have doubled, rents have doubled, tax increases are creating uncertainty and people are worried about losing their jobs. Labour groups, small businesses and everyday Canadians have demanded that the government cancel the excise tax increase.

Will the Liberals listen to workers and businesses and cancel the April 1 excise tax increase in today's budget?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the work she does on behalf of the tourism sector in her area.

As Minister of Tourism, I understand the value that the spirits, beer and wine producers in our country offer, not just to their local communities but to the visitor economy. We have removed the excise tax from low-alcohol beer. We will continue to keep the escalator in place, which is less than one cent per can of beer, and we will continue to see growth in the sector.

Oral Questions

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this just shows how completely out of touch the government is with small businesses.

I represent thousands of people in my community who work at wineries, breweries, cideries and distilleries, and I have seen how hard business owners like Richard have worked. I have seen how hard Richard has worked planting his vineyard, going to school and building a small winery, and the struggles he has had, whether they have been bears eating his grapes or the government increasing his taxes. After 40-high inflation, Richard cannot afford the Liberal plan for a 6% excise tax increase that would crush his bottom line.

Will the Liberals listen to small business owners like Richard and cancel the April 1 excise tax increase in today's budget?

• (1455)

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps an apt question is whether the Conservatives will ever vote for a measure that we put on the table that reduces taxes, because their record speaks for itself. On tax cuts for working Canadians, how did the Conservatives three times? Against. On reducing home buyer taxes, how did the Conservatives vote? Against. On a federal minimum wage, what did the Conservatives do? They voted against. On eliminating interest on student loans, how did the opposition vote? Against.

Whatever plans we put in place to reduce taxes, the Conservatives vote against them. We are here to deliver for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of Liberal governance, Canadians have never been more taxed, and it is not over yet. Unfortunately, on Saturday, taxes on wine, spirits and beer will go up, as will the carbon tax.

This does not bother the Prime Minister because it does not affect him personally. When the Prime Minister goes home to his riding in Montreal, he chooses the most polluting mode of transportation possible by taking the *Challenger* jet for a 22-minute flight. That is quite the lesson to teach everyone on being careful about pollution: Take a private jet to Montreal.

Could the Prime Minister act for the good of all Canadians and not increase taxes on April 1?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the Conservatives were in power, an additional 2.7 million people were living in poverty. When the Conservatives were in power, Canadians received family benefit cheques, but had to pay tax on them.

Our government increased the Canada child benefit without taxing it. This represents up to \$7,000 a year for families with children under six.

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CARBON PRICING

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, sadly, we all remember when the Prime Minister stated that small and medium-sized businesses were a way for people to pay lower taxes. That is when the Prime Minister looked in the mirror.

Real small business owners, however, have their hearts in the right place. When they see taxes going up, they are no longer able to provide the services they believe in. That is why, according to a recent poll, 45% of small business owners will have to cut salaries, 56% say they will have no choice but to increase retail prices, and 61% are opposed to the Liberal carbon tax.

Will the Prime Minister listen to small businesses and forgo the Liberal carbon tax?

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Sport and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, not only are we listening to small and medium-sized businesses but we proved it during the pandemic, among other times.

I cannot say how many small business owners I have met in my riding and across Quebec who tell me the extent to which we were there for them. It is thanks to programs that we put in place during the pandemic that they were able to retain jobs and, thanks to those jobs, families are now able to pay their rent and buy groceries.

We have always been there for small businesses and for those most in need, and that will still be the case today with this budget.

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FINANCE

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulo, BQ): Mr. Speaker, expenses for our beloved Governor General of Canada's official trip to Germany totalled nearly \$700,000.

We are talking \$700,000 for a four-day trip when Quebecers are tightening their belts. Meanwhile, her salary was just increased by \$40,000 a year, which is almost as much as the average income in Quebec.

How many more times will \$700,000 be thrown out the window before people understand that this expensive and useless position must be abolished?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if my colleague were to look at the numbers and compare them, she would see that the cost of that tour was the same, on average, as other tours.

Obviously, we are going to do everything we can to keep costs down and to make sure that these tours cost as little as possible every time.

Oral Questions

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we do not have the same information. I want to be clear that all my questions about the Governor General concern the office and not the individual appointed to the position.

It is the position itself that is problematic and costly. When we ask someone to literally stand in for the Queen of Canada, it leads to behaviour that is disconnected from reality. Ms. Simon is wasting her own talents in this useless position that is insulting to all those that were wronged by the British Crown over the years.

When will it be abolished?

• (1500)

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc is attacking the office. It is attacking the federation. It is attacking Canada. It is attacking things we all hold most dear.

The Bloc members are obviously here to promote sovereignty, to pick fights whenever possible and ensure that nothing works. Unfortunately for them, Quebeckers are very happy to be part of Canada and we intend to stay that way.

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[English]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government spent \$21.4 billion on outside consultants in this fiscal year alone. That is a 95% increase under the Liberal government. This is at a time when Canadians are struggling to put food on the table. This is at a time when Canadians have record-high credit card debt.

Why does the government not show some compassion and stop helping high-priced consultants instead of struggling Canadians?

[Translation]

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important to understand that this government is implementing an ambitious agenda to help Canadians, support workers and ensure that workers can keep working. I believe that we have to continue to highlight the fact that we are implementing an ambitious agenda.

[English]

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the current government is a government that helps its friends. The trade minister gave \$23,000 to her friend. The housing minister gave \$93,000 to his friend. The current government spent \$21.4 billion on outside consultants. This is at a time when rents and mortgages are doubling. This is at a time when the excise tax and the carbon tax are set to increase on April 1. Why does the government not find some compassion and help struggling Canadians instead of just its rich friends and consultants?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important to be very careful how we characterize the use of consultant services. When a government is, for example, in a circumstance like a pandemic when it needs to scale up and expand its impact at a particular moment in

time, it is important to be able to use contracting services so that we do not create permanent costs by engaging permanent employees. The use of contracts allows flexibility in government to expand to deliver services without permanently increasing costs. It is irresponsible to misrepresent that and to hold it out as something other than what it is.

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at a time when Canadians are facing being caught in the vice of a cost-of-living crisis, the current Liberal government has done nothing but crank the handle. Rather than merely being content with raising the carbon tax, the tax on everything, the government is still spending millions upon millions of dollars on outside management consultants, and I have been schooled on being careful about that. There is something broken when the current Liberals cannot seem to understand that the spending is an inflationary dollar upon dollar. Why is the Prime Minister more focused on helping his high-priced Liberal consultants than on helping everyday Canadians?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, the use of consultants is an ability that allows the government to maintain flexibility in difficult times. As an example, during the pandemic we had to vastly increase our ability to be there for Canadians and to be there for small business owners to make sure that their businesses did not fail so that they could have the success we are seeing in the incredible jobs recovery, which is one of the strongest of our comparator nations. It is in fact due to the ability to use the flexibility of contracts to achieve that. To mis-characterize that or to try to create shadows with it is irresponsible.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a joint Canada-U.S. command, NORAD is integral to maintaining peace, stability and sovereignty in our country. Given Russia's arbitrary and brutal invasion of Ukraine and other recent threats to global security, there is intense interest, among my constituents of Yukon and across the north, in our government's commitment to modernizing NORAD while respecting and protecting Arctic sovereignty. Could the Minister of National Defence update the House on the progress made to protect Canada's Arctic security?

Oral Questions

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week we reaffirmed our commitment to continental defence and Arctic security by investing \$7.3 billion in bases across this country, including in bases that will house the F-35. These investments will ensure economic benefits for indigenous communities and Canadians across this country. As President Biden said, we can “rest soundly, knowing [that] NORAD [has] the watch.”

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● (1505)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this past Sunday, 37-year-old Paul Stanley Schmidt was fatally stabbed, not shot, outside a downtown Vancouver Starbucks. His wife, three-year-old daughter and dozens of others witnessed this horrific almost casual attack. After eight years of this Prime Minister's soft-on-crime policies, Canadians face a national crime wave. Governments should alleviate suffering not increase it. When will the Prime Minister give jail not bail to violent criminals?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our thoughts go out to the family of the individual who the member mentioned and to any individuals who are the victims of violent crime. Our government is taking needed action to deal with violent crime, including gun control. However, most importantly it is taking a multipronged approach to it by dealing with mental health, investing in mental health and investing in communities through the building safer communities fund. We know that we need to address the root causes of crime in order to keep Canadians safe.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about facts. The brutal and horrific stabbing last Sunday marked Vancouver's sixth homicide in 2023, where 40 offenders were arrested for 6,000 crimes in one year. Canadians are afraid to walk city streets and take transit. Violent crime is up 32%. Gang murders are up 92% under this Prime Minister's watch. Ask the family of 16-year-old Gabriel Magalhaes who was stabbed not shot while waiting for transit in Toronto. Will the Prime Minister get serious, put innocent victims first and replace bail with—

The Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, any kind of spike in violence, like the one on the TTC, is concerning to all of us. That is why we work with municipalities, like the City of Toronto and the City of Vancouver, to invest in the root causes of crime. That is why we are making investments in mental health.

We know that we need to be investing in the root causes, but we cannot ignore the impact that guns have on crime. That is why we will proudly take action, as we are with Bill C-21.

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during the eight years that the Prime Minister has been in power, violent crime has increased by 32%. Our streets have become increasingly unsafe, and this government's soft-on-

crime policies are making the problem worse. In truth, everyone fears for their safety.

When will the Prime Minister and his government take the problem very seriously?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians deserve to feel safe and to be safe in their communities. Since last October, we have been working with our provincial and territorial counterparts on bail reform in cases of serious crime, repeat offenders and knife crime, among others.

We issued a joint press release, and we will move forward.

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LABOUR

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government will always stand with Canadian workers and families. Measures like \$10-a-day child care, support for renters and dental care for children are just a few of the measures we have brought in that are making a real difference in the lives of families across Canada.

The federal minimum wage will increase to \$16.65 an hour on April 1. This increase will benefit thousands of federally regulated private sector workers.

Can the Minister of Labour tell us what this change means for Canadians and what other measures we are putting in place to support—

● (1510)

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour.

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question. The federal minimum wage will increase for federally regulated private sector workers on April 1, but that is not all. We introduced a tax credit for labour mobility. We brought in paid sick leave for employees in federally regulated industries. We invested in union-led training programs.

That means more money in the pockets of workers across the country.

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for decades senior officials refused to acknowledge the sexual misconduct crisis in the military. While survivors finally received an apology, that culture of secrecy remains.

Just this month, the media reported the existence of documents on sexual misconduct that the Department of National Defence previously denied. The government says it is working to address this crisis, but it is not making the necessary changes for transparency.

Will the minister finally take responsibility and establish that independent civilian oversight of our military to protect the women and men who serve?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from my hon. colleague. Let me reiterate that since I have been appointed, we have put on the table a number of additional reforms, including laying a road map for all 48 of the recommendations of Madame Arbour.

In addition to an official apology, in addition to millions of dollars in supports for victims and survivors as well as the transfer of cases from the military justice system to the civil justice system, we will always support victims of sexual misconduct and sexual harassment.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, many of my constituents who are refugees and former refugees are facing major delays in obtaining travel documents even when they provide proof of urgency.

Between 2020 and 2021, only 15% of applications were processed within 20 business days by IRCC. Many have been waiting for over a year.

The member for Vancouver East and I have written to the minister twice about this issue. When will the minister take action to ensure that refugees and former refugees can access their right to travel?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has a proud tradition of resettling some of the world's most vulnerable people. Of course we, through the pandemic, resettled more refugees than any other country in the world. We know that when people come here, having the desire to travel and to see loved ones in other parts of the world is a priority for them.

Over the course of the past year and a half, we have made significant investments to add staff to our department. We have adopted new technologies and relaxed administrative burdens to speed up processing times so people can be more quickly reunited with their loved ones.

I would be pleased to continue my work to expedite processing times, including for refugee travel documents, so more people can connect with those they care about most more quickly.

Oral Questions

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of Ms. Margareta Cederfelt, President of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. If you will indulge me, before I get to my specific motion, I would like to recognize the tireless work of Senator Leo Housakos, Senator Peter Boehm and former senator Jim Munson in support of autistic Canadians and their families. I also recognize the member for Don Valley East, members from all parties in this House who helped us get to this point and, most importantly, my son Jaden, who inspires me every single day.

As we approach World Autism Month in April, there have been many consultations, and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House, Bill S-203, an Act respecting a federal framework on autism, be deemed concurred in at the report stage on division and deemed read a third time and passed on division.

• (1515)

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

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

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[Translation]

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK ON AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER ACT

(Bill S-203. On the Order: Private Members' Business:)

March 22, 2023—Mr. Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin)—Consideration at report stage of Bill S-203, An Act respecting a federal framework on autism spectrum disorder, as reported by the Standing Committee on Health without amendment.

(Bill concurred in at report stage, read the third time and passed)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent on a point of order.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, on a completely different note, after that nice moment courtesy of my colleague from Alberta, I want to go back to the study I cited during question period.

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The study is from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, and it is called “Fueling Unfairness: Carbon Pricing and Small Businesses”.

I seek unanimous consent of the House to table it.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

[*English*]

POINTS OF ORDER

PERIOD FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FOLLOWING SPEECHES—
SPEAKER’S RULING

The Speaker: The Chair would like to make a statement regarding the period for questions and comments following speeches in the House. A series of points of order were raised on this topic on Wednesday, March 22, 2023. That day, some members immediately left the chamber after completing their speeches and were therefore unable to take part in the period for questions and comments thereafter.

[*Translation*]

The Chair thought it necessary to return to the House regarding this matter, given the numerous concerns expressed.

[*English*]

The provisions in the Standing Orders governing the period for questions and comments were adopted by the House on November 29, 1982, following the recommendations of the third report of the Special Committee on Standing Orders and Procedure. They were further modified on February 18, 2005, becoming the current Standing Order 43. In its report, the special committee expressed its intention that questions and comments exchanges be “short and sharp”. Our current practices have maintained this spirit.

[*Translation*]

The current iteration of Standing Order 43 includes references to both speeches and questions and comments periods. It shows those proceedings should be interpreted as complementary, as they enhance the qualities of each other. Setting aside time for questions and comments enriches debate and allows for a constructive exchange of views, instead of only a series of set speeches.

With respect to the events of last Wednesday, the issue raises concerns on what becomes of the period for questions and comments when the member who just completed their speech is unavailable.

This happens frequently when debate has been interrupted for another proceeding, resuming several hours or sometimes several days later. It is a well-established practice, in those cases, that the questions and comments period may only continue if the member having made the speech is present. This is the way my predecessors have consistently ruled.

[*English*]

These were not, however, the circumstances that occurred last Wednesday. Instead, members were leaving immediately after the

conclusion of their speech. Many members, as well as the Deputy Speaker, expressed some concern that this resulted in the questions and comments period not taking place. While this does not appear to have been a widespread practice in the past, it was something contemplated by one of my predecessors.

On October 28, 1985, Speaker Bosley stated at page 8076 of the Debates:

I said quite precisely to the House that when a normal period of interruptions such as a lunch period, overnight period or adjournment of the debate has caused a problem then it seemed to me to be unreasonable or to be against the spirit of what was intended by the Report to allow the question and comment period to continue in the unavoidable absence of the Member.

If the...Member is interpreting from that that he thinks that I believe that the question and comment period can be obviated by a Member making a speech and leaving the chamber then he has not interpreted me correctly.

● (1520)

[*Translation*]

Based on this, it is the expectation of the Chair that members having just completed a speech take part in the ensuing period for questions and comments.

[*English*]

Furthermore, should a member making a speech not be available immediately thereafter, and while the content of the member’s speech is still fresh to all, the Chair shall still recognize other members wishing to ask questions or comment on the speech, for the duration of the prescribed period.

The Chair invites the House leaders to discuss this matter further should they feel it necessary. Perhaps the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs may also want to study the matter and make recommendations back to the House.

I thank members for their attention.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

DIGITAL CHARTER IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2022

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-27, An Act to enact the Consumer Privacy Protection Act, the Personal Information and Data Protection Tribunal Act and the Artificial Intelligence and Data Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise in this House to speak to this piece of legislation. I would like to start today by saying a few words about how this bill is structured, and then I plan to use the majority of my remaining time to discuss the implications of this legislation regarding personal privacy rights.

Government Orders

When I look at this bill, my initial response is this: Should there really not be three separate pieces of legislation? One would deal with the consumer privacy protection act and issues related to modernizing PIPEDA, perhaps a second, separate piece would create the proposed personal information and data protection tribunal act, and a third, separate component, which should absolutely be its own legislation, would be for the section dealing with artificial intelligence.

AI may present similar, very legitimate concerns related to privacy, but the regulation of AI in any practical sense is almost impossible at this juncture because so many aspects of it are still very unknown. So much is still theoretical. So much of this new world into which we are venturing with AI has yet to be fully explored, fully realized or even fully defined. This makes regulation very difficult, but it is in this bill, so it forms part of this legislation.

We can see just how vague the language related to the AI framework really is. I understand why it is that way, and do not get me wrong; I think we need this type of legislation to regulate AI. However, in the same way, this is way too big a topic to delve into in a simple 10-minute speech. It is also too big a topic to drop into an existing piece of legislation, as the government has done here, basically wedging this section into what was known as Bill C-11 in the last Parliament.

I have deep concerns with AI. They are practical concerns, economic concerns and labour concerns related to the implementation of AI. I even have moral concerns. We have artificial intelligence so advanced that it can make decisions by itself. The people who have created that technology cannot explain how it came to those decisions and it cannot tell them. The capabilities of this technology alone seem almost limitless. It is actually a little scary.

Personally, I look at some of the work being done in AI and wonder if we should, as humanity, really be doing this. Just because we have the knowledge and capability to do something does not necessarily mean it is for the betterment of humanity. I wonder sometimes where this technology and these capabilities will take us. I fear that in hindsight, we will look back and see how our hubris led us to a technological and cultural reality we never wanted and from which we will never be able to return.

However, here we are, and we have this capability partially today. People are using it, and it requires some form of regulation. This bill attempts to start that important conversation. It is a good first step, and that is okay. I think this is one of those things where we need to start somewhere as we are not going to get it done all at once. However, again, given the enormity of the topic and the vast implications, it should be its own separate piece of legislation.

Those are my thoughts on the structure of the bill, and now I will shift gears to talk a bit about personal privacy.

Personal privacy is a fundamental right. Three decades ago, long before the advent of the Internet or smart phones, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled privacy is “the heart of liberty in a modern state”. It did not say that privacy was at the heart; it said privacy is the heart. Personal privacy is the fundamental right and freedom from which all other liberties flow, and with the advent of the Internet age, the age of the smart phone and the age of digitized every-

thing, laws related to protecting the fundamental right to privacy must be updated. Canadians must have the right to access and control the collection, use, monitoring, retention and disclosure of their personal data. The question is, how do we realistically do that?

One of the reasons I am a Conservative is that I believe in individual rights and that rights and freedoms must be coupled with accompanying accountability and responsibility. This has to be a two-way street. Canadians need to be informed, and they need to be responsible and aware of what they are agreeing to, subscribing to and giving permission for. How often do we simply and blindly click “accept” without reading the terms and conditions for using a website, using an app or allowing others the use of our information?

• (1525)

I would be curious to know among my colleagues in the House, when was the last time they fully read the terms and conditions of a user agreement or a disclosure statement? Most of us just hit “accept”. We do not want to be bothered.

Recognizing this, can we really say the privacy of Canadians is being violated when many individuals live every moment of their lives posting in real time online for all the world to see, and access and just click “accept” without reading what they are agreeing to?

In this context, what is the role of government and what is the responsibility of the individual user? Government and businesses need to provide clear information, but people also need to be informed. They need to take responsibility.

I recall a while back when my office received an email on this subject of privacy. The individual was deeply concerned about web giants having access to his personal data. I had to laugh, because at the bottom of the email it said, “Sent from my Huawei phone”.

As a government creating legislation, where should those legal lines between consent and informed consent be drawn? As Canadians, we are a bit too quick to consent.

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However, we have also seen far too many examples of Canadians' private and mobility data being used without their consent. We heard about the Tim Hortons app that was tracking the movement of Canadians; how the RCMP was using Clearview AI's illegally created facial recognition database; the public doxing of all those who donated to the freedom convoy; Telus giving location data to the Public Health Agency of Canada without a judicial warrant; and, in my view, the most egregious violation of privacy in generations, the requirement by the government and others for Canadians to provide their personal health data and information in order to work and/or travel.

If I am honest, it is this violation of privacy rights that makes me truly hesitant to support any effort by the government to strengthen privacy rights: first, because it has so flagrantly violated them, but also because I and a growing number of Canadians just do not trust the government. We do not trust it to keep its word. We do not trust it to create legislation that does not have loopholes and back doors that will give it the capability to violate individual personal freedoms.

Why? Because we have seen it from the Liberals. They want to control everything. There has never been a government that has had such an utter disregard for Canadians.

I have noted before that it was the Prime Minister's father who famously said that the government had no place in the bedrooms of Canadians. However, the current government not only wants to be in our bedrooms, but in every room, on every device, in every conversation and in every thought. It wants to control what Canadians think, what they see and what they post, and, by extension I can safely say, how their private data is curated and used.

One thing that is vital if we are to trust the government with our private data and with protecting privacy, there must be clear boundaries. This leads to one of the larger issues with this legislation, an issue we are faced with every time the government brings legislation forward. It fails to provide clear definitions.

There is a section of the bill that deals with the sensitive information of minors. The fact that there is no section for the protection of sensitive information of adults is a sign.

What does it mean by "sensitive"? It is never defined. What does it mean by "scrutiny" for data brokers? It is this habitual lack of specificity that characterizes so much of the government's legislation.

It is like a band that is way more interested in the concept of the album and how it looks on the cover than the actual quality of its music. If it cared about the quality of the music, it would have brought forward a bill that looks more like the European Union's 2016 GDPR, which is widely regarded as the gold standard for digital protection. By that standard, PIPEDA fails the test, but so might Bill C-27 if we do not bring it closer in line with what other nations have done. This lagging behind does not just affect personal privacy, but the ability of Canada and data-driven Canadian businesses to work with our EU friends.

• (1530)

This whole new regime outlined in the bill has huge implications for businesses, something I am sure my colleagues will be addressing. There is so much that can and should be said about this legislation, but it comes down to this: Canadians must have the right to access and control the collection, use, monitoring, retention and disclosure of their personal data.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I must first reflect on how much I appreciated the ruling of the Speaker, which recognized that members should stick around for questions and comments after giving a speech.

Having said that, I want to disagree with what the member said when he talked about just how evasive he believes the Government of Canada wants to be. I do not think the member realizes how much we appreciate the Charter of Rights. We were the ones who introduced it. When we look at the legislation, it is substantive in the sense of protecting the privacy of Canadians, whether with the huge data banks of our government, such as the health data banks, or private companies, such as Tim Hortons.

The previous speaker gave an indication that the Conservatives do not like the legislation and gave the impression that they would not support the legislation. Could the member provide his support for the legislation and indicate that he would like to see it go to committee?

Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, I should have pointed out at the beginning of my speech that I would be sticking around to answer any questions and address any comments. I appreciate the member for Winnipeg North, who I hear an awful lot, so I am getting used to him.

I do appreciate the member's question about whether or not Conservatives support this legislation because, in principle, we support the concept that there needs to be regulation in protecting, acquiring, monitoring and distributing individuals' personal data. He pointed out that the Liberal government was the one that brought in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

I have a question for the member, and I know he cannot answer it, but why did the government not respect the charter?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, after testing ChatGPT earlier, I continued my research with Bing and asked it whether the Liberal government deserved Parliament's confidence when it comes to its Bill C-27. The search engine told me that the bill enacts the Consumer Privacy Protection Act and that the Liberal government had introduced it in 2021. It also told me that it was unable to tell me whether the Liberal government deserved Parliament's confidence regarding this bill, but I could read the details of the bill.

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Fortunately, artificial intelligence still has its limits because we need to think for ourselves. I will ask my colleague from Provencher a question. Would the Liberal government deserve our confidence when it comes to Bill C-27? The member talked in his speech about confidence in the government. Accordingly, should we not be urgently sending the bill to committee? I think that everyone agrees on the need to regulate artificial intelligence. There is urgent work to be done in committee. Will the member be able to quickly provide his support to influence the content of this bill?

• (1535)

[English]

Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, I find it interesting that the member inquired with ChatGPT to determine whether or not Canadians should have confidence in the Liberal government on Bill C-27.

I would be much more curious had the member asked whether Canadians should have confidence in the Liberal government, period. I believe its AI ChatGPT would have been crystal clear in saying that no, we do not have confidence in the Liberal government.

Having said that, we do think this legislation is important. I think we are going to listen to debate to make a decision whether or not to send it to committee for further study.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, my question for the member is about the balance between personal information, privacy and business interests. It is something that this bill focuses a lot on.

The government talks about balancing them rather than the personal privacy of an individual being paramount. In particular, in subclause 18(3) of this bill, the government says that it is okay if it is in the “legitimate interest” of the company, even if it harms an individual. They do not need express consent to use the information.

I wonder what the member's views are on that, and whether or not the government is actually putting the emphasis on the individual or the big tech giants from the U.S.

Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, if we read the bill, especially in section 18, where the government has carved out a little space for business, it would appear as though business interests trump those of the private individual. I believe that mistake has been made too often, where we have given personal data to businesses too flipantly. Personal private data, first and foremost, belongs to, and should be protected by, the individual.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Madam Speaker, as I look around the chamber today, there are a few people who I think would remember my predecessor in my role as the member of Parliament, when I first was elected, for Wild Rose. His name was Myron Thompson. Myron was pretty well known. He was the guy with the cowboy hat and he was pretty outspoken.

One thing many people do not know about Myron Thompson is that back when he was a young guy he had a try-out with the New York Yankees. He was a pretty good baseball back catcher, but he did not make the team, and it was because there happened to be a future Hall of Famer at that position for the New York Yankees.

I wanted to reference that future Hall of Famer today because it is an amazing testimony to the impression he made on the culture. As a 1950s era baseball catcher, he is still famous not just for his play on the diamond but also for the gems he dropped in conversation off the diamond.

His observations have actually even found a place in English lexicon and are known as “Yogi-isms”. Of course I am talking about Yogi Berra. That is the fellow who beat out Myron Thompson for a spot on the New York Yankees way back then. He became a 1972 Hall of Fame inductee. He has 10 World Series victories to his credit, which is the most of any Major League Baseball player in history.

An hon. member: You've got to tie it in to the legislation somehow.

Mr. Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, he is certainly better known for the way his trademark mangling and misuse of words and phrases has resulted in strangely keen insights that are still widely quoted today by many. I have a few favourites. One of them is “I didn't really say everything that I said.” Another one is “We made too many wrong mistakes.” Another is “Swing at the strikes.”

When I thought about Bill C-27 and preparing to speak today, it brought to mind Yogi-isms, and not only because those examples I just cited reminded me of the Liberals' poor approach to governance but because the title of this bill is a real mouthful at 35 words long. This brought that to mind as well.

For now, I will call it the consumer privacy protection act, but it is really summed up best by what is probably the greatest Yogi-ism of all, which is “It's déjà vu all over again.” That really speaks to it. The member was looking for me to tie it back in, so there it is. There is the tie back in.

Here we are in 2023 and here I am speaking on yet another rehash of another Liberal bill from years previous. They have a real penchant for that, these Liberals. They kind of remind me of Hollywood Studios that no longer seems to be able to produce an original script so it just keeps churning out sequels. If Bill C-27 was a film, one could call it “Bill C-11, the redo”. Bill C-27 is essentially a warmed-over version of previous Bill C-11, the digital charter implementation act the Liberals introduced back in 2020.

It is not to be confused with the current Bill C-11, which is also making its way through Parliament and is the online streaming act and which also poses another threat to Canadians' privacy and online freedoms.

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It is really easy to see a bit of a pattern evolving here. In any case, in May 2021 the Privacy Commissioner said the digital charter act “represents a step back overall from our current law and needs significant changes if confidence in the digital economy is to be restored.” It of course died when the Prime Minister cynically called an expensive and unnecessary election nobody wanted and everybody paid for and that did not change the Prime Minister's political fortunes one iota.

Bill C-27 carries the stamp of that former digital charter proposal, which Conservatives had concerns about then, and which we still have concerns about in its new form now. Some of the text is in fact directly lifted from Bill C-11 and the text of that bill is available for all to review.

• (1540)

Let us talk more about the impact of the bill's content, rather than the wording itself.

The bill purports to modernize federal private sector privacy law, to create a new tribunal and new laws for AI, or artificial intelligence, systems. In doing so, it raises a number of red flags. Perhaps the most crimson of those flags, for me, is that the bill does not recognize privacy as a fundamental right. That is not actually all that surprising, because this is a Liberal bill. I hear daily from Canadians who are alarmed by how intrusive the Liberal government has become, and who are also fearful of how much more intrusive it still seems to hope to become.

It just seems just par for the course for the government that, in a bill dealing with privacy, it is failing to acknowledge that, 34 years ago, the Supreme Court said privacy is at the very heart of liberty in a modern state, individuals are worthy of it, and it is worthy of constitutional protection.

When we talk about privacy, we have to talk about consent. We have seen far too many examples of Canadians' private and mobility data being used without their consent. I think some of these examples have been cited previously, but I will cite them again.

We saw the Tim Hortons app tracking movements of people after their orders. We saw the RCMP's use of Clearview AI's illegally created facial recognition database. We saw Telus' “data for good” program giving location data to the Public Health Agency of Canada.

These were breaches of the privacy of Canadians. There needs to be a balance between use of data by businesses and that fundamental protection of Canadians' privacy. The balance in this bill is just wrong. It leans too heavily in one direction.

There are certainly issues with user content and use of collected information. For instance, there are too many exemptions from consent. Some exemptions are so broad that they can actually be interpreted as not requiring consent at all. The concept of legitimate interests has been added as an exception to consent, where a legitimate interest outweighs any potential adverse effect on the individual. Personal information would be able to be used and shared for internal research, analysis and development without consent, provided that the content is de-identified. These exemptions are too broad.

The bill's default would seek consent where reasonable, rather than exempt the requirement. In fact, there are several instances where the bill vaguely defines terms that leave too much wiggle room for interpretation, rather than for the protection of Canadians. For example, there is a new section regarding the sharing of minors' sensitive information, but no definition of what “sensitive” means is given, and there would be no protection at all for adults' sensitive information. These are both problematic. De-identification is mandated when data is used or transferred, but the term is poorly defined and the possibility of data being reidentified is certainly there.

Anonymization or pseudonymization are the better methods, and the government needs to sharpen the terms in this bill to be able to sharpen those protections. An even more vague wording in the bill is that individuals would have a right to disposal, the ability to request that their data be destroyed. Clarification is certainly needed regarding anonymization and the right to delete or the right to vanish.

There are many more examples. I know my colleagues will certainly expand on some of those questions as posed in the bill. I know my time is running short. I want to speak to the individual privacy rights of Canadians briefly.

Canadians value their privacy even as their government continually seeks ways to compromise it. The Public Health Agency of Canada secretly tracked 33 million mobile devices during the COVID lockdown. The government assured them their data would not be collected, but it was collecting it through different means all along.

Public confidence is not that high when the Liberals start to mess in issues involving privacy. The onus should be on the government to provide clarity around the use and collection of Canadians' private information because, to quote another Yogi-ism, “If you don't catch the ball, you catch the bus home.”

• (1545)

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was mostly listening for the Yogi Berra quotes, but I think there is one the member missed that speaks to Bill C-27, which is, “The future ain't what it used to be”, and that is exactly why we need Bill C-27.

The former member for Timmins—James Bay, Peter Kent, and I worked together on the ethics committee and the privacy committee a number of years ago, and we all shared a sense of optimism around technology and the possibilities of the Internet.

What we have come to learn is that we need much stronger protections. I have two young kids. They are growing up with the Internet. We need our laws to reflect our shared reality. We need age-appropriate design codes. We need the right to be forgotten. We do need a much stronger bill, but we need to get the bill to committee.

What are the member's thoughts on getting the bill to committee and improving the bill? I hope we get it there as quickly as possible. We are at a fork in the road, and “[i]f you come to a fork in the road, take it”.

Mr. Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, maybe I have set a trend here with the Yogi-isms. He said, “The future ain't what it used to be”. It seems, though, that with this government, the future is what the past was.

That was the point of the remarks I made. It is, unfortunately, a pretty apt remark.

What it really boils down to is that we have a government that I think Canadians do not feel they can trust to get the balance right here. Those are the concerns that I am sharing and that I continue to have.

I know that both here in the House and in committee, if and when it arrives there, concerns will certainly be raised there as well. I look forward to hearing them.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague talked about freedom of expression and misinformation. I hope that this will be taken into consideration in this bill when we hear from the experts. This is crucial and essential.

I recently met with researchers at the Université de Sherbrooke who told me that Canada lags far behind Europe in all those areas. At the international level, much remains to be done in Canada with regard to privacy and cybercrime.

Although it is not perfect, this bill needs to be referred to committee. We need to hear from experts. Perhaps even the ones at the Université de Sherbrooke will testify before committee. I hope so.

We need to move forward on this fundamental issue. It is the next big threat for Canada and the world, and it will need to be taken into consideration.

• (1550)

[*English*]

Mr. Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the invitation to be heard from a committee. I am not sure that I would consider myself an expert in any way. I know that there will be many whom people need to hear from. However, one of the groups of experts that we need to hear from is Canadians themselves. Canadians are concerned about their privacy.

Beyond that, the member mentioned the fact that we need to look at what other countries are doing and things like that. I think that is important as well.

I did not get a chance to reference it in my remarks, although I had hoped to, but we know that what is being proposed here is much different from what the EU has in place under its General Da-

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ta Protection Regulation and even what Quebec has in its GDPR-style regime.

I think we will have to consider that and what those implications are in terms of the adequacy of international—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Before we go to the next question, we ask that the people in the courtyard calm down. It is very difficult to hear.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I had the great honour of working across party lines in 2018 on issues of privacy. The idea that citizens somehow opt in through terms and conditions has to be debunked.

I never gave Gmail the right to read my mail. I never gave Google the right to listen in on my phone. The terms and conditions are a fundamental problem.

The question is whether we limit the power of surveillance capitalism to gather data. What data should they be allowed to gather and what should they not be? It really has to come down to dealing with superpowerful corporations. It is not like my data is in the cloud in this little box. Their ability to take everything we do and track us needs to be limited.

To my colleague: Would the Conservatives support putting limits on the amount of data that is collected by the tech giants?

Mr. Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, I think that the member raises some important points. These are questions that need to be resolved. There is no question about the fact that this is a bigger and bigger issue, as more and more data on Canadians is out there.

I think that this has to be dealt with and there needs to be a balance found. However, I just do not think that Canadians trust the current Liberal government to find the right balance.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Madam Speaker, given the interest that we had in this place about Yogi-isms and in honour of that, I hoped to ask my colleague, the previous speaker for Banff—Airdrie, about “It ain't over till it's over.” In this government's case, a piece of legislation is not over until it gets a do-over because the government never seems to get it right the first time. We seem to be revisiting issues when we warned the government in previous parliaments that it was headed down the wrong track. We have, of course, a do-over now with this piece of legislation, redoing some of the work that the government tried to achieve in previous parliaments. However, here I am today talking about Bill C-27, the digital charter implementation act.

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Some members might be interested to know, although I highly doubt it, that when I was a tenured faculty member at Red Deer College, I taught systems analysis and design, programming and database administration. I know it is hard to believe that a guy who likes hunting and fishing as much as I do also sat in a cubicle where they slid pizzas under the door, where I just churned away and developed code and relational databases and did some data architecture work for a handful of years.

It does not seem all that long ago. I got that education just prior to Y2K, and members would remember the scare everyone was going to have with Y2K. I worked in the private sector for a while, but the college I graduated from liked me so much as a student that it invited me back to be a teacher. I taught until 2005 in the information technology field.

I gave a speech a while ago talking about how much and how rapidly technology has evolved and the laws pertaining to that technological advancement. It was 2005 when I left the college, because in January 2006, I was elected to this place. Therefore, I am now a 17-year obsolete data programmer. If I am ever frozen and brought back, it is because I can still program in COBOL and C++, and many of these program languages are still around today.

I am loath to talk about floppy disks at my age. We do not have those anymore. As a matter of fact, I am part of a generation, as are a number of my colleagues, that was probably the last generation on this planet that did not even have cellphones. We had to actually remember people's phone numbers in our heads. When our house phone rang, we actually made an effort to go get it. I do not know if that happens much anymore, but this is where I am at. Long gone are the days of floppy disks, although I do hear that C Sharp and other object-oriented programming languages are still in vogue. That is nice to know.

Today, our information is not stored on floppy disks or hard drives, at least not the same kind of hard drives there were when I was in the business. It is now stored in the cloud, and targeted ads come up on our phones. Every time I bring up Instagram, I do not know where these algorithms get the information from. They must be listening to everything I say because all I get are ads for fishing rods, brand new boats, fish hooks, and I will admit, the cure for plantar fasciitis. Therefore, my phone is clearly listening to everything I say and even the things that my doctor is saying to me in the privacy of a patient-doctor confidential room. However, I am digressing.

This obsolescence in both technology itself and its rapid advancement is something that most of us—

• (1555)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I will interrupt the hon. member.

I will ask for some order. There is a member making a speech, and I am having a lot of trouble hearing him.

The hon. member for Red Deer—Lacombe.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Madam Speaker, I know that the speeches I give in this place generate a lot of interest. We cannot fault everybody else here for the excitement of today.

When I was a teacher in IT, I remember having conversations about ethics and the privacy of information in the basic introduction courses that I would teach to young aspiring IT professionals. That is why the notion of our personal information and protection of electronic documents legislation is so important.

For those who are not aware, the act has not been fully updated since its passage in 2000. Ironically, that was the same year that I started working full time as a tenured faculty member at Red Deer College, which is 23 years ago—

The Speaker: I just want to interrupt the hon. member. I have been listening, and I am not even sure if the noise is coming from inside the chamber or from around the surrounding area. I would ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to take a walk in the hall outside to ask everyone to keep it down, and I will ask everyone who is in the chamber to sit down to listen to the hon. member for Red Deer—Lacombe. I am sure we all want to hear what he has to say.

The hon. member for Red Deer—Lacombe has the floor.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, I thank you for generating that much enthusiasm and excitement for what I have to say because it is riveting. It is going to save our privacy and information, if people would just listen to what I have to say here right now, but I digress.

In that 23 years since I started teaching at Red Deer college and since the passing of the original act, PIPEDA, as it is affectionately known, IT, our information systems and our networks have developed so rapidly that the legislation has not kept up. That lack of urgency is not only in the government in getting it wrong in the previous Bill C-10. I am not talking about the disastrous Bill C-11 we have been talking about recently. I am talking about the previous version of Bill C-11 back when the current Bill C-11 was Bill C-10. As I said earlier in my speech, there are so many pieces of legislation that the government has had to redo that it gets difficult to keep track of all the numbers over the years and over the Parliaments.

I would just urge my colleagues to stop to consider the very important nature of this legislation as it pertains to the protection of our personal information. Are there some things in this bill that I could support and that others in the House should be supporting? Of course there are. The bill presented in the House today allows us to have a conversation about the future of Canada's privacy protection and other technological advances, such as those found in artificial intelligence, which is the next great breakthrough. It will challenge us as lawmakers in this place to keep up with the technological advances, all of the good and bad that come from artificial intelligence.

As I understand it, the EU's 2016 General Data Protection Regulation, otherwise known as the GDPR, is the gold standard for this type of regulation and I hope that, despite some of our differences here, and there are many, we could at least agree to strengthen the privacy protections for Canadians.

• (1600)

The Speaker: I am going to interrupt the hon. member again.

Order. If I can have member's attention please. That is very good.

The hon. member for Red Deer—Lacombe may continue.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, this is the last time I accept a speaking slot before the budget from the whip's office. Let me just say that.

All kidding aside, we need to trace back the history of this bill. Canada's original digital charter was mapped out in 2019. That is why I referenced that this is a redo of something we did just a few years ago. One of its primary principles was the control and consent of one's personal information, as well as transparency. These are the most salient parts of that charter. It also attempted to back them by a regime of enforcement—

The Speaker: The hon. member has been very patient and good. He has two minutes and 19 seconds left, but in all fairness, I am going to arbitrarily make a decision. The hon. member will have five minutes remaining when he comes back if he wants to continue.

It being 4 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Ways and Means Proceedings No. 10 concerning the budget presentation.

* * *

[Translation]

THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.) moved:

That this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government.

She said: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 83(1), I would like to table, in both official languages, the budget documents for 2023, including notices of ways and means motions.

[English]

The details of the measures are contained in these documents.

Pursuant to Standing Order 83(2), I am requesting that an order of the day be designated for consideration of these motions.

Canada's economy has made a remarkable recovery from the COVID recession. Last year, Canada delivered the strongest economic growth in the G7. There are 830,000 more Canadians working today than when COVID first hit. We have recovered 126% of the jobs that were lost in those first months, compared to just 114% in the United States.

When we announced a Canada-wide system of affordable early learning and child care in our 2021 budget, we said that it would create new economic opportunities for mothers all across Canada

The Budget

and thus greater prosperity for all of us. It worked. I am so proud to say that last month the labour force participation rate for Canadian women in their prime working years hit a record high of 85.7%. That is feminist economic policy. Therefore, today there are more Canadians with good jobs than ever before.

• (1605)

[Translation]

Putin and the pandemic drove up inflation around the world. Central banks have responded with one of the fastest and most synchronized monetary tightening cycles since the 1980s.

Today, here in Canada, inflation is coming down. Inflation has fallen for eight months in a row, and fell to 5.2% in February. The Bank of Canada predicts it will drop to just 2.6% by the end of this year.

In February, the average wage for Canadians went up by 5.4%. That meant paycheques outpaced inflation, which meant more money in Canadians' pockets after a hard day's work—from coast to coast.

However, we all know that our most vulnerable friends and neighbours are still feeling the bite of higher prices. That is why our budget delivers targeted and temporary inflation relief to those who need it most.

For 11 million Canadians and Canadian families, a new grocery rebate will help make up for higher prices at the checkout counter—without adding fuel to the fire of inflation.

What all Canadians want right now is for inflation to keep coming down, and for interest rates to fall. That is why the budget I have tabled today will ensure that Canada maintains the lowest deficit and the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7.

We are making sure the very wealthy and our biggest corporations pay their fair share of taxes, so we can afford to keep taxes low for middle-class families and invest in our health care system and social safety net.

[English]

Canada is a country of peace, order and good government. We have strong institutions and a resilient financial system that is the envy of the world. Our country has a proud tradition of fiscal responsibility. That is a tradition we are determined to uphold. We are refocusing government spending while taking great care not to reduce the services and direct support Canadians rely on.

By exercising fiscal restraint, we are ensuring that we can continue to invest in Canadians and in the Canadian economy for years to come, just as we have done since 2015. We know that investments in Canadians are also investments in our economy. This is what the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, Janet Yellen, has referred to as “modern supply-side economics”.

The Budget

[*Translation*]

We are investing in housing, because our economy is built by people and people need homes in which to live. We are investing in Canadian workers so they have the skills they need and can travel to where the jobs are. We are investing in a stronger immigration system and welcoming record numbers of skilled workers to Canada to support our growing businesses. We are also investing in affordable child care for families from coast to coast to coast, so that more Canadian mothers no longer have to choose between their family and their career.

Investments in housing, skills, immigration and child care are not just social policies. They are economic policies.

Health care is another one of those policies, so today we are delivering the comprehensive \$198-billion investment in public health care that the Prime Minister announced last month.

● (1610)

[*English*]

From helping every single Canadian find a family doctor to tackling the unacceptable backlog of surgeries and combatting the opioid crisis that has devastated so many of our families and our communities and has taken so many lives, we will ensure that Canadians receive the care they need. We will ensure that every Canadian can rely on a world-class, publicly funded, universal health care system, one that is deserving of its place at the very heart of what it means to be Canadian.

Just as we are reinforcing the public health care system we have today, we are also expanding its reach. Since December, our investments have helped more than 240,000 Canadian children receive the dental care they need.

Let us just think about that: 240,000 Canadian kids. Maybe their parents could not take them to the dentist before. Maybe their teeth hurt. Maybe they missed days at school. It is so important.

That is why today I am so proud to announce the creation of a new Canadian dental care plan. By the end of this year, by the end of 2023, we will begin rolling out a dental care plan that will eventually cover up to nine million uninsured Canadians. This will mean that no Canadian, ever again, will need to choose between taking care of their teeth and paying the bills at the end of the month. It will mean that one cannot tell the size of someone's paycheque by their smile.

These are significant and necessary investments, because a strong and effective public health care system is essential for a strong and healthy Canadian workforce. We need a strong and healthy Canadian workforce now more than ever because, as we wrestle inflation to the ground, Canada must also navigate two fundamental shifts in the global economy.

First, in what is the most significant economic transformation since the industrial revolution, our friends and partners around the world, chief among them the United States, are investing heavily to build clean economies and the net-zero industries of tomorrow.

At the same time, Putin and the pandemic have cruelly revealed to the world's democracies the risks of economic reliance on dicta-

torships. As a result, our allies are moving quickly to friendshore their economies and build their critical supply chains through democracies like our own.

Together, these two great shifts represent the most significant opportunity for Canadian workers in the lifetime of anyone here today, including our most senior and respected members of the House.

This is not hyperbole or mere turn of phrase. When President von der Leyen stood in this House earlier this month, she said that she wants Canada and Europe to “join forces for the climate, for our economies” and to end what she called Europe’s “dangerous dependencies” on authoritarian economies.

When President Biden stood in this House just last week, he told us that we are at an “inflection point in history”. He said that we had all learned the hard way that just-in-time global supply chains make us vulnerable. He urged us to work together to build a shared future where Canada and the United States can “anchor the most competitive, prosperous and resilient economic region in the world.”

These are our closest friends. These are our steadfast democratic allies. These are our two greatest trading partners. Like so many of our friends around the world, they need the expertise of Canadian workers, the ingenuity of Canadian businesses and the resources that Canada has in such fortunate abundance.

● (1615)

[*Translation*]

Today, and in the years to come, Canada must either meet this historic moment—this remarkable opportunity before us—or we will be left behind as the world’s democracies build the clean economy of the 21st century.

So we will fight for Canadians, and we will fight for Canadian businesses. We will ensure that Canada seizes the historic opportunity before us. We are going to build a clean electrical grid that connects Canadians from coast to coast to coast, protects our environment, and delivers cleaner, more affordable electricity to Canadians and Canadian businesses.

We are going to make Canada the very best place in the world for businesses to invest, because that means more vibrant, prosperous communities, and more good careers for Canadians.

Canada has free trade deals with countries that represent two-thirds of the global economy. We are going to make Canada a reliable supplier of clean energy to the world, and, from critical minerals to electric vehicles, we are going to ensure that Canadian workers mine, and process, and build, and sell the goods and the resources that our allies need.

The Budget

We are going to make sure that the unions who built the middle class can continue to thrive, and we are going to make it easier for Canadian workers to learn the skills they need.

When the Government of Canada buys things from other countries, we are going to make sure that those countries offer Canadian businesses the same access that we give them.

• (1620)

[*English*]

We are building big things here in Canada, from a Volkswagen battery plant in Ontario to the Galaxy Lithium mine in Quebec, to the Trans Mountain expansion in Alberta, to the Atlantic loop, to the LNG terminal in Kitimat, B.C.

Our plan means good-paying jobs, good careers for everyone everywhere, from our biggest cities to our smallest towns, from Toronto, Ontario, to Peace River, Alberta, for our auto workers building electric vehicles and our bus drivers who drive them, for our skilled tradespeople, expanding our clean energy grid and building thousands and thousands of affordable energy-efficient homes, for our miners and energy workers powering Canada and the world, for our health care workers and teachers, who make our communities thrive, for our farmers and fishers, who feed Canada and the world, for our incredible service workers, who are as essential today as ever.

[*Translation*]

Our plan is good for our forestry workers, for our climate scientists, and for our environmental biologists, for our engineers designing hydrogen plants and SMRs, and for our computer scientists who have made Canada an AI superpower.

[*English*]

Our plan is good for indigenous peoples building major projects and sharing in the prosperity they create, for our new generation of small business entrepreneurs dreaming up solutions to the challenges of the 21st century and for their hard-working employees providing for their families all across our great country.

As I travelled across Canada over the past year, I met a lot of incredible hard-working Canadians.

Jeff is an electrician who lives in Etobicoke with his wife Cheryl, an ICU nurse. They are proud of their jobs and proud of the family that their jobs have made it possible for them to raise. As Jeff said to me, “I’ve got the skills to pay the bills.”

[*Translation*]

Léonard, a software developer in Quebec City, who codes charging stations that are used from San Diego, California, to Happy Valley-Goose Bay in Newfoundland and Labrador.

[*English*]

I met two young union women. To Nicholle in Oshawa, who will start her first electrical placement this week, I would say, “Well done, Nicholle.”

Kayla, who I first met in Edmonton and then again in Calgary, teaches apprentices to weld and she gave me a couple of lessons too.

I have met potash miners and early learning and childhood educators. I have met scientists and innovators, and the longshore workers and the truckers who keep Canada’s economy moving.

All across Canada I have met people who value the same things: a good career that pays them well for doing work they are proud of; the ability to live with dignity, to be who they are, to love who they love and to be judged on their character rather than what they look like or where they were born; the belief that if they work hard they can afford to raise their children and launch them into an even more prosperous future; and the conviction that because they live in Canada, by birth or by choice, every single day represents a new fresh opportunity.

That is what this budget invests in: the possibility for every single Canadian to share in the remarkable opportunities that Canada provides and in the new era of prosperity that we will build together.

The brave people of Ukraine have reminded me, I think they have reminded all of us, that we must never take our freedom and our democracy for granted. We have the power to shape our country’s future and we must always be sure to use it.

What a gift it is to call this remarkable country our home. Canada is a land filled with good, hard-working people, people who do big and important things. It is because of us, the people of Canada, and the big and important things we will do in the months and years to come that I have never been more optimistic about the future of our great country than I am today.

• (1625)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L’Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the budget we are being presented with today raises many questions.

First, it bears repeating that, in 2015, this government promised to run only modest deficits before returning to a balanced budget in just four years’ time. This is the same Prime Minister who said that, one day, the budgets would balance themselves. This is the same Prime Minister who said that it was time to invest in Canada because interest rates were low and would stay that way.

Today, the Minister of Finance is tabling a budget that follows last year’s budget, when she said the following:

On this next point, let me be very clear. We are absolutely determined that our debt-to-GDP ratio must continue to decline and our deficits must continue to be reduced. The pandemic debt we incurred to keep Canadians safe and solvent must [and will] be paid down.... This is our fiscal anchor.

Here is what the minister said in English:

*The Budget**[English]*

This is our fiscal anchor.

[Translation]

Last year's figure was 42.4. The minister went on to say:

Canada has a proud tradition of fiscal responsibility. It is my duty to maintain it and I will...

This year's projected ratio is 43.5. The projection for next year is 43.2. In its first budget after announcing its fiscal anchor, the government is exceeding its fiscal anchor. It should never be exceeded.

Given everything I have just said, can the Minister of Inflation tell us why Canadians should believe a word of these budget forecasts or trust them?

• (1630)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, we promised that deficits would come down, and today we have demonstrated that. Last year, the deficit was 1.5% of our GDP. This year, the deficit will be 1.4% of our GDP. To use actual numbers, last year's deficit was \$43 billion. This year's deficit will be \$40 billion. That is still a decrease.

I want to point out, for Canadians who are watching, that Canada maintains the lowest deficit in the entire G7 and the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio. Not only do we have the lowest deficit in the G7—lower than Germany, the United States and the other G7 countries with AAA credit ratings—but our deficit is also lower than Australia and the Netherlands, which have AAA credit ratings.

Let us not be narrow-minded. We need to understand and look at Canada's economic situation within the international context. Our country is strong, and we are very fortunate to be here in Canada.

The Speaker: Before we continue, I would like to remind members that our time is limited.

[English]

I would ask everyone to be as concise as possible with their questions and their answers, so we can get as many questions as possible.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Mirabel.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the aeronautics and aerospace industries are the pride of Quebec. Despite this, Canada is the only G7 country that does not have a comprehensive policy in that area.

This budget contains nothing to correct the harmful effects of the luxury tax on small aircraft, which threatens 2,000 direct and indirect jobs in Quebec. When the time came to help Ontario's auto industry, Ottawa was always there.

Today's budget allocates \$18.6 billion in subsidies, most of which will go into the pockets of oil companies. There is not one red cent for the aerospace sector. Why?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague raised several issues. I will start with the luxury tax. Our government is proud to have introduced this tax because we think that the wealthy should pay their fair share. If the party across the way disagrees, it should say so to its voters.

As far as industries in Quebec are concerned, our government was there, is there and will always be there. Our electricity credit is excellent; it is a fantastic program for Quebec. Quebec has a global advantage thanks to its green electricity, but Quebec will need more and more electricity. That is why we have announced a major investment in green electricity. If the member across the way disagrees with me, then he should talk to Léonard, a software developer I talked to last week at a firm that makes charging stations. He will support our agenda.

[English]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not mention some of the things in the budget worth commending. They are very familiar items to those of us in the NDP caucus who have been calling for affordability measures such as another doubling of the GST rebate; a Canada-wide dental insurance plan, which is now on the way; real and meaningful labour conditions around federal investments in clean tech to ensure that it is not just companies but workers who would actually benefit from the investments we have to make to launch ourselves into the new energy economy; and meaningful investments for indigenous people living in urban, rural and northern communities who are struggling, as many Canadians are, with the housing market.

However, I have to say the budget also rightly includes warnings of a coming recession, warnings that we are hearing from private sector economists as well. We know that when a recession hits and unemployment goes up, the program that Canadians depend upon to pay the bills is employment insurance. In fact, the employment insurance system was so bad, it had to be completely overhauled during the pandemic because it could not get the job done.

In September of last year, the government let those temporary measures drop. The Liberals have been promising EI modernization for the entire seven, or eight, depending on who one talks to, years they have been in government. They have not delivered. Why is it that, as Canada looks down the barrel of a recession, the government is missing in action on employment insurance reform?

• (1635)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by thanking the member for Elmwood—Transcona for his collaboration and his hard work as we prepared this budget. I do want to emphasize a couple of the points he made. I am, as I said, really proud that we are the government that is introducing dental care for every single person. I am glad that we are able to provide support for the most vulnerable Canadians in providing a grocery rebate. These are people who really need the help, and it is so important that we are able to be there for them.

The Budget

I really want to emphasize the third point my colleague made. This is the labour element of our clean economy tax credits. This is an innovation for Canada. We have not done it before, but this time, when the government supports economic growth, when the government supports innovative entrepreneurial businesses, we are going to make sure that we are supporting great jobs for working people at the same time. That is so important.

When it comes to EI, I will say that our government has always been there for Canadian working people, whether it was during COVID, when we had to put in place emergency measures, or whether it has been in the innovative design of these tax credits. So far, let me just say, employment is holding up pretty well, even as the economy slows down, but no one has a crystal ball. I want to conclude by assuring every single Canadian listening to us today that we will always be there for every single Canadian, come what may.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will read what the minister of inflation stated last year: “On this point, let me be very clear. We are absolutely determined that our debt-to-GDP ratio must continue to decline...This is a line we will not cross.”

One year later, she has missed the mark. That is important, because she already admitted a few days ago that deficits would fuel inflation. Today, she tabled a budget of \$43 billion in additional spending that will be paid for by taxes and result in inflation. The Conservative Party will always work for those who work. That is why we will vote against the Liberals' inflationary plan.

[*English*]

The finance minister was telling us only a few days ago that deficit spending would spark even more inflation, higher grocery bills, more expensive housing and other costs for families. Today, she rolls out a bonanza of \$43 billion of new inflation, debt and taxes that will be on the backs of everyday, hard-working Canadians.

We set three conditions for our support of the budget. The first was that it bring home lower prices by eliminating the inflationary carbon tax and deficits. The second was that it bring home powerful paycheques with lower taxes that reward hard work. The third was that it bring homes that our young people can afford by removing gatekeepers to speed up building. None of these three demands have been met.

All that the Liberals have delivered is more debt, more inflation and more costs on the backs of the hard-working and beleaguered people of this country, and that is why Conservatives are proud to announce we will be voting against the inflationary spending.

In fact, the gross cost of all the new spending announcements in the budget works out to \$4,300 for every single family in Canada. That is almost enough to house the Prime Minister in a hotel room for one night. That is how expensive the government has become.

The war on work continues. The inflationary policies intensify. Canadians are living in desperation, skipping meals, living in parents' basements, unable to drive to work, falling into depression and even considering suicide because they cannot afford the pressure and the bills the Prime Minister has imposed after eight long years. The budget would make all of those pressures, pains and costs even worse.

● (1640)

[*Translation*]

This budget adds to the costs, pressures and hardships each and every family is facing. That is why we will be voting against this budget. We are going to bring forward our own common-sense approach that takes into account the common people who work and pay the bills in this country.

[*English*]

We are on the side of the people who work hard, pay their taxes and play by the rules. We want to bring home a nation that works for the people who do the work, bring home lower prices, bring home powerful paycheques and bring homes people can afford. It is the common sense of the common people united for our common home, my home and everyone's home. Let us bring it home.

I now move to adjourn.

(Motion agreed to)

The Speaker: Before moving to adjourn, I just want to remind the hon. members that I know sometimes they get carried away in their speeches, but there were some sarcastic calls at each other. I just want to make sure everybody respects each other.

[*Translation*]

I want to remind members that when they are referring to another member, they must use their title rather than made-up names that are insulting. I do not want to hear any insulting language from either side. That is just some food for thought. I would like members to be judicious in their choice of words.

[*English*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 83(2), the motion is deemed adopted and the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 4:47 p.m.)

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