



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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# House of Commons Debates

Official Report  
(Hansard)

**Volume 151 No. 198**

Tuesday, May 16, 2023

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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, May 16, 2023

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)  
[English]

### CRIMINAL CODE

**Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-48, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (bail reform).

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

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### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, entitled “Main Estimates 2023-24”.

#### CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

**Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 16th report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, entitled “Asylum-Seekers at Canada's Border”.

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

**Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, it is my honour to table, in both official languages, a supplementary report to the 16th report, on the situation at Roxham Road border crossing.

Conservative members wish to reiterate what our leader, the hon. leader of the official opposition, has said, which is that the government could have acted much sooner to close Roxham Road. This inaction was highlighted by the fact that the government signed a secret protocol well over a year ago to close the safe third country agreement, but set an effective date of March 26, 2023. Conservative MPs did ask the Minister of Immigration, in November 2022,

if the government had any intention of closing this loophole, but he kept answering that negotiations were ongoing, claiming that it could not be done easily. This was a statement we now know is false, as the signature had already been dry for half a year on the agreement to close Roxham Road.

We tried to call the minister before the committee on this, but the NDP-Liberals indicated they had no desire to allow transparency on this issue. This, once again, shows how the NDP-Liberal coalition is more concerned about making a media splash than solving problems.

\* \* \*

• (1005)

## PETITIONS

### PESTICIDES

**Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the esteemed chamber to present a petition calling for an end to the use of glyphosate and to stop the spraying of Canada's most widely sold pesticide. There have been many studies on the harm it can cause to people and the environment.

The use of glyphosate harms aquatic and terrestrial species. It causes a loss of biodiversity, thereby making ecosystems more vulnerable to pollution and climate change. It endangers pollinators, including wild bees and monarch butterflies, and exacerbates wild-fires, since coniferous-only forests burn faster and hotter than mixed forests. The results are that the use of the pesticide harms residents in Canada, including infants and children who consume glyphosate residue in their food and water, and people who are exposed to it while outdoors for recreation, occupational activities, hunting and harvesting.

The petitioners call upon the Minister of Health to ban the sale and use of glyphosate and develop a comprehensive plan to reduce the overall pesticide use in Canada. They call upon the minister to stop the spraying.

### VICTIMS BILL OF RIGHTS

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a rare occasion when I rise to present a petition about which I have had conversations in depth with the person who brought it forward. I am really pleased to be able to present it today. I want to thank Elsje de Boer, who brought it forward.

*Government Orders*

Many of my constituents signed this petition; in fact, 553 people did. It deals with the perils of people in situations somewhat like the pre-disaster situation of people in Portapique who feared a neighbour but could not get the police to intervene.

This petition points out that there are 2.5 million victims of violent crime in Canada every year, but that the Victims Rights Act of 2015 does not allow police to intervene in a preventative, precautionary way. Petitioners point out that the Victims Bill of Rights Act of 2015, in section 28, says, “No cause of actions or rights to damages arises from an infringement or a denial of a right under this act” and, in section 29, says, “No appeal lies from any decision”.

In that context, the petitioners ask the House to consider that the Victims Bill of Rights Act is unconstitutional in depriving victims of crime the right to equal protection and equal access to benefits. Victims of violent crime often cannot get protection, and there is no opportunity for the victim or a victim's lawyer to defend their rights or question the statements of the accused or defence counsel.

Therefore, the petitioners ask that the government and all of us call on the Minister of Justice to amend the Victims Bill of Rights Act to conform to the charter and create an opportunity for victims or their lawyers to defend the rights of victims through police investigation and using the courts, including involving custody disputes where domestic violence is an issue.

We are seeing increasing focus in this place on coercive control. This petitioner and all the petitioners who have signed this petition are looking for us to do more.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise again on behalf of the people of Swan River, Manitoba to present a petition on the rising rate of crime. The common people of Swan River are demanding a common-sense solution to repeal the Liberal government's soft-on-crime policies that have fuelled a surge in crime throughout their community. Since 2015, crime has increased 32%, and gang-related homicides have increased 92% in Canada. What was once a safe rural community has now turned into a place where people fear leaving their homes.

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

\* \* \*

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

## CRIMINAL CODE

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-21, An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms), as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

• (1010)

[English]

## SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Deputy Speaker:** There are 13 motions in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-21.

[Translation]

Motions Nos. 7 and 8 will not be selected by the Chair because they could have been presented in committee.

[English]

All remaining motions have been examined, and the Chair is satisfied that they meet the guidelines expressed in the note to Standing Order 76.1(5) regarding the selection of motions in amendment at the report stage.

Motions Nos. 1 to 6 and 9 to 13 will be grouped for debate and voted upon according to the voting pattern available at the table.

[Translation]

I will now put Motions Nos. 1 to 6 and 9 to 13 to the House.

[English]

## MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

**Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC)** moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-21 be amended by deleting Clause 0.1.

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-21 be amended by deleting Clause 1.1.

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-21 be amended by deleting Clause 4.

Motion No. 4

That Bill C-21 be amended by deleting Clause 5.

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-21 be amended by deleting Clause 6.

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-21 be amended by deleting Clause 17.

Motion No. 9

That Bill C-21 be amended by deleting Clause 36.

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.)** moved:

Motion No. 10

That Bill C-21, in Clause 36, be amended by replacing lines 16 and 17 on page 45 with the following:

“must deliver to a peace officer any firearm that they possess within 24 hours or”

Motion No. 11

*Government Orders*

That Bill C-21, in Clause 37, be amended

(a) by replacing line 4 on page 46 with the following:

“or a chief firearms officer”

(b) by replacing line 19 on page 46 with the following:

“cer the firearm to which”

(c) by replacing lines 29 and 30 on page 46 with the following:

“ferred to in subsection (4), deliver to a peace officer any firearm that they pos-”

**Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC)** moved:

That Bill C-21 be amended by deleting Clause 43.

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.)** moved:

That Bill C-21, in Clause 45, be amended by adding after line 5 on page 51 the following:

“(1.11) The portion of paragraph 117(k) of the Act after subparagraph (ii) is replaced by the following:

of firearms, prohibited weapons, restricted weapons, prohibited devices, ammunition, prohibited ammunition, cartridge magazines and components and parts designed exclusively for use in the manufacture of or assembly into firearms;”

**Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to be speaking to Bill C-21 yet again. Last week, the Liberals moved a time allocation motion in the House to limit our ability to debate this at committee. After that passed, and after they forced a closure motion on my ability to speak in the House on that time allocation motion, then time allocation came to a vote. They did not really like what I had to say and wanted to shut me up, which is why they moved the closure motion. This meant that, in committee, every party, but our party in particular, only had five minutes to discuss each amendment and clause. There were many amendments and clauses, and their impacts were very far-reaching.

The Liberals restricted us significantly on time in committee; Conservatives, having only that limited time, were sure to use every last moment of it. We were at committee until, I think, almost one in the morning on Thursday, doing our due diligence on this bill. The bill should have taken weeks to thoroughly examine and question the officials at length on. Our debate was severely limited in many important ways.

Again, there are 2.3 million lawful firearms owners in this country whom many of these measures in Bill C-21 will impact. Therefore, I know the firearms community and their families were deeply concerned about that debate, as well as the fact that the NDP and the Liberals, working together, severely limited it.

However, that was last week, and here we are this week. This is likely our very last opportunity to debate this in the House, and today is the report stage amendment debate. I moved a number of amendments in a last-ditch effort to really fight for the people who are wrongfully impacted by Bill C-21. These are the lawful and good Canadian people who are the target of the Liberal government. Meanwhile, criminals get away free with bills like Bill C-5 and the government's reckless and dangerous catch-and-release bail policies, which were brought forward in 2019.

That is all going on; meanwhile, the firearms community, particularly hunters and Olympic sport shooters, will be deeply impacted by what is happening with Bill C-21. We have made that very clear; they also made it clear when they had the opportunity to come to committee and put words on the record.

Today, with my limited time, I want to address a few of the issues the minister has brought forward in recent days to communicate on his bill, Bill C-21. There are a number of falsehoods, or at least things I believe he is not telling the whole truth on.

The first thing I would like to talk about is that the minister mentioned recently, and it seems to be his go-to talking point, that 87% of Canadians support him in what he is doing. We found out at committee from the parliamentary secretary that this statistic is from one poll. For Canadians who do not follow polls, it is mostly an inside baseball political thing. An average poll has about 400 to 1,500 people. Okay, polls do tell us a lot; however, it is one poll.

Interestingly, a few years ago, the Liberal government spent \$200,000 on a public consultation on its gun control ideology. This consultation was on what it is trying to do with Bill C-21 and its so-called buyback program, as well as the secret firearms advisory committee coming forward, which will ban hundreds of hunting rifles in the coming months. A couple of years ago it spent \$200,000 of taxpayer dollars and consulted about 133,000 people.

There were 133,000 people consulted. Let us say that the poll, which the minister is arguing is the reason he is claiming the support of Canadians to do all this damage on the firearms and hunting community, likely included 1,000 people. There were 133,000 people who responded to this consultation, and 81% responded “no” on the question of whether more should be done to limit access to handguns, while 77% responded “no” on the question of whether more should be done to limit assault weapons.

Of course, “assault weapons” is a term made up by the Liberal government. It is not a real term. The Liberals are trying to make it one. When they say, “assault weapons”, we know they really mean things like hunting rifles and sport shooting rifles. We heard this first-hand from firearms advocates from the hunting, indigenous and sport shooting communities, notably Olympians.

Regardless of Liberals' using their tricky language, 77% of 133,000 people still said they did not want anything more done to limit assault weapons. Moreover, 78% said to focus on the illicit market. This is brilliant, because that is what police and anti-violence groups are saying. We know criminals are being caught and released because of this reckless bail system they brought in a few years ago.

*Government Orders*

• (1015)

Canadians overwhelmingly agreed that we should go after the illicit market. I will say this again: This was based on consultation with 133,000 people. That is what all the data and the evidence says would have the biggest impact when we are talking about reducing gun violence, which I think every single party and every single person in the House of Commons supports. It is just the way that they are doing it that is so contentious, so divisive.

It is not just one thing. The minister also mentioned that he is focusing on the border. Oh, the border—

• (1020)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Does the hon. member have a phone near the microphone? The interpreters are asking us to check.

The hon. member for Kildonan—St. Paul.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Madam Speaker, with the CBSA, he talks about all these investments, hundreds of millions of dollars of investments he says he has made, because gun smuggling is the major contributing factor to gun violence. In this one regard, I agree. We have heard from the Toronto police that eight to nine out of every 10 handguns used in crimes are from the U.S. We know that smuggling is also a huge problem in Montreal and Winnipeg. I have seen them myself from Winnipeg police. If we are going to tackle this problem, of course, we need to focus on the border. The problem is this: Where is all the money really going? Is it having a real impact?

The minister says it is, but if we look at the employment numbers, when the Liberals first came to power in 2015, there were 8,375 frontline officers, or just under 8,400. These are hard-working investigators and all the people who are the last front line at our border to stop drug smuggling, gun smuggling, human trafficking and all other illicit behaviour. Eight years later, with all this spending that he has announced, there are only 25 more frontline workers.

If the money is not going to the frontline workers who supposed to be, and are working on, stopping gun smuggling and drugs and all the other terrible things coming across the border, where is that money going? It is going to middle management. Again, we absolutely respect our public service, but when it comes to stopping gun violence and gun smuggling, we need those frontline officers. However, he has taken the number of middle managers from 2,000 in 2015 to 4,000 in 2023. Those are the numbers that we have. He has doubled the number of middle managers and done nothing for the frontline officers who are actually doing the hard work. Therefore, I am not going to give him a lot of credit when he wants to claim victory on the work he is doing at the border. I am not seeing it reflected in the hard-working and brave frontline officers we need to stop this problem.

Lastly, I will talk about police. The minister mentions police. I have given him credit; I think it is important to be fair. It is important that he has made some investments in police. When I talk to police, what do they tell me? I have talked to police in every corner of the country. Actually, I would love to go to the north. It is the last place I need to go to talk to police.

What they tell me is that funding is great, but what really impacts their day-to-day work is the fact that they are rearresting the same dangerous, violent repeat offenders every single weekend. Sometimes, they know these individuals on a first-name basis, because they arrest them so many times. Sometimes, they rearrest them in the same day. They are getting out and back on the streets, terrorizing innocent Canadians and inflicting violent crime on them.

We see this in Toronto. Last year, 40 individuals were responsible for 6,000 violent crime incidents in this country. Just to be specific, 40 individuals had 6,000 interactions with police that included violent crime in one year. We can imagine how much more good the police would be able to do if we could just tackle those 40 people. How many more drug rings, gun smugglers, human traffickers and all those complex crime rings could they take down if they were not caught up with 40 people causing 6,000 incidents, causing mayhem for the people of Vancouver? That is the same across every city that I have heard about.

Police are burnt out, exhausted and suffering from serious PTSD, because they are overworked. No amount of money is going to fix that. What will fix that is a government that comes in and focuses on getting tough on crime; jail, not bail, for violent repeat offenders; fixing the parole system, so that we are not letting people who are very dangerous out into our parole system and overburdening our parole officers; and fixing conditional sentencing, where people are now under house arrest after raping women. The conditional sentencing issue is because they brought in Bill C-5, which impacted people who commit sexual assaults; they can now serve their sentences from the comfort of home. Those kinds of things would sure help police fight violent crime and really make a difference in fighting gun violence.

That is what they want to see. That is what Toronto police and letters to government are universally saying. Premiers from every political stripe agree and have written multiple times to the Prime Minister, demanding bail reform. Those are the things that would really have an impact on reducing gun violence, not spending what estimates say is \$6 billion on their so-called buyback regime, which is really a confiscation regime. That is where the resources they want to spend are going to go. Those are their priorities.

A Conservative government led by the member for Carleton would actually deliver results to Canadians, clean up our streets and reduce gun violence. That is our commitment to the Canadian people.

• (1025)

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, through you, I would like to address the member opposite, who made some comments on this.

*Government Orders*

First, she asked about the definition of “assault weapons”. I would suggest that she speak to anyone who has lost a loved one to an attack by someone using an assault weapon to understand what those are. More than that, I realize that there has been a lot of communication with the gun lobby. In particular, the member has spoken to them. She mentioned in her comments that she filibustered committee, as well as that gun ownership is a right. Lastly, the member opposite mentioned the inability to debate this. There were two late night sittings, when there was an opportunity to debate these motions; the member opposite did not participate in either of them.

Is there a reason, other than fundraising through the gun lobby, that the member is raising these issues?

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Madam Speaker, perhaps the member has not been paying a lot of attention, but I believe the Minister of Public Safety has met with groups that are advocates for firearms ownership as well. I would be surprised if he did not.

**Hon. Marco Mendicino:** I did.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Madam Speaker, he just mentioned that he did, and I am glad that he has. Perhaps he should talk to the member who just asked the question. Is she suggesting that we do not talk to those who fight for our hunters and sport shooters? I am really unclear in that regard.

I will say that the individuals with whom the minister and the government are consulting are part of a group of doctors for gun control; this group wants to ban all civilian ownership of firearms. This includes banning ownership by indigenous Canadians, hunters and Olympic sport shooters. A main member of that group has met with the Liberals over 20 times; that member has been a key stakeholder in advising them what to do when it comes to firearms and has said publicly, on the record and multiple times on Twitter that all civilian ownership of firearms should be illegal and that it should all be banned. That is their true intention.

Perhaps the member does not represent any indigenous Canadians, hunters or sport shooters, but I would urge her to ask them what they think of that.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am rather surprised to see the amendments that my colleague is tabling today at report stage. Perhaps my colleagues did not follow what happened in committee last week. We spent several hours together debating Bill C-21, and there was a good consensus.

Yes, the Conservatives used every five-minute period they had to rise to speak. They took turns so that new people were coming in and asking the same questions as their colleagues did before. In the end, they voted in favour of all the amendments for ghost guns. They also voted in favour of the Bloc Québécois's amendments to require a valid licence to purchase cartridge magazines. There was firm consensus on the yellow-flag provisions, in particular.

Today, the Conservative Party is saying that there is nothing good about this bill and that it wants to do away with the amendments. I do not really understand the Conservative Party's rhetoric.

[*English*]

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate working with the member. I think that I had a clear record of working very well on the public safety committee until November, when the Liberal government snuck through the largest hunting rifle ban in Canadian history at the eleventh hour. The government blew up committee with that. The minister then made us wait six weeks before we could resume.

It was the Liberals' fault that months went by and then weeks went by before we resumed. When we finally did, they had the support of the Bloc, which has largely abandoned its rural hunting community, unfortunately. The Bloc worked in lockstep with the Liberals and the NDP to call time allocation.

When we only have five minutes to talk about complex things, that can be very concerning. There were a number of times when we could have talked about issues at length, but we were not allowed to do so. The member is absolutely right. We used every five minutes that we could, that they allowed us to have.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it is hard to know where to start with the disinformation. I am perplexed by the issue of report stage amendments. The Conservatives have filed amendments that do the contrary to what their position was at committee. I can understand why the member could not defend the report stage amendments. They are kind of bizarre and contradictory.

On the issue of the filibuster, we have had law enforcement right across the country say, effectively, that we needed to put in place these provisions that combat ghost guns, which are used only by criminals. We have seen this on the lower mainland. There is a proliferation of ghost guns; in some cases, anecdotally, a 100% increase in ghost guns has been seen per month.

Why did the Conservatives, for weeks, block provisions around ghost guns that are desperately needed by law enforcement?

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Madam Speaker, the member is spreading purposeful misinformation or disinformation. I know, for a fact, that I have done more consultation with police than that member has, particularly on ghost guns across the country. I have been on that committee for a year and a half, and we have talked extensively about ghost guns.

What surprises me is that the Liberal government did not include ghost guns in the original form of its bill. If ghost guns were so important to the government, why did it not do that?

Why did it make us wait for months to talk about it? Why did the minister make us wait for six weeks? It is not on us to make up for all the time that he wasted.

*Government Orders*

• (1030)

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to rise today on legislation that I know will help save lives in our country.

I am very pleased to see the member for Kildonan—St. Paul. We missed her at committee the last couple of days.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** There are two points of order, and one is my fault. The hon. member is a bit too early for his speech, which is my mistake.

[*Translation*]

I should have recognized the hon. member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia first.

**An hon. member:** No.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Agreed.

[*English*]

I want to remind the hon. member that we do not refer to the absence or the presence of members both in the chamber and at committee. I believe that is the hon. member's point of order.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, since the subject is about me. I would like to know if the member would like to see a doctor's note. Is he my father now? Do I need his permission not to go to committee—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We do not refer to the presence or absence of members. The hon. member should apologize to the hon. member for making reference to that.

The hon. member for Vancouver Granville.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** Madam Speaker, I apologize to the member opposite unequivocally.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member has the floor for his speech.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** Madam Speaker, as has now become very clear, I am a member of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. We have spent months on the legislation.

[*Translation*]

I thank my colleague from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia and my colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby for their work and their co-operation. We worked together to introduce a better bill for Canada and for Canadians.

[*English*]

It is also important that we remember something the CCFR probably does not want us to know but Canadians should. In committee, the Conservatives voted time and time again to support our amendments on this bill. Many of those good people know that legislation gets done in the committee room and not on social media. It is important to realize that.

I want to thank those members who were there to debate and to ensure that we improved the legislation. I want to particularly thank

the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, who put forward an amendment that we all supported. That is how we should get things done in the House.

The process has been long and challenging, but we have ended up in a place where we have legislation that would keep our communities and our country safer, but would also preserve the way of life of many who hunt.

We have heard from professionals, victims of crime and their families, and also indigenous communities and hunters. Our government promised Canadians that we would provide a comprehensive and effective strategy to protect communities from gun violence, and we are making good on that promise.

Developing good laws is not just about theory. It is about much more than sitting in a black box and making things up. It is about learning and understanding.

When we started debating the bill, I was challenged by members opposite to take my PAL course so I would understand how firearms worked, because that was the claim that some made but, most important, to understand gun owners, those who want be gun owners, hunters and gun enthusiasts.

It was an important process for me to take that time to talk to them, both urban and rural, to build my understanding of what they thought and what mattered to them. I did this because at committee we had folks who would come and claim that they spoke for gun owners across the country. It very quickly became apparent that they did not.

First, the vast majority of gun owners support common-sense gun laws and they want safer communities for all of us. They are not fiercely partisan people with an axe to grind with our government or other governments. They are not interested in fiery rhetoric or in gaslighting people with silly tweets and rage-forming videos of out-of-context clips from the House of Commons.

They are good people who love our country and know that sometimes we must make difficult decisions to keep the country safer. They abhor ad hominem attacks on their fellow Canadians, and they are disgusted by the type of vitriol spread by organizations like the CCFR.

They find it distasteful when they see politicians choosing to use this “taking their guns away” narrative for personal gain or to fundraise by misleading them and taking them for fools. They know better than to be told by members opposite that gun ownership is a right in Canada, that we have some equivalent to a U.S. amendment right. They know that is simply not true. They have my utmost respect, and I want them to know that we have heard them.

*Government Orders*

Second, I learned, and I heard from them, that they take seriously the responsibility of gun ownership, particularly when it comes to getting guns intended to kill as many people as possible off our streets. They know, just as we do, that gun crime is not just an urban issue; it affects Canadians of all walks of life. They know that when it comes to suicide, guns in the home are a major issue we need to address.

The vast majority of gun owners are law-abiding citizens and, contrary to what they might hear, this law would not affect them. The four criteria that make something a prohibited firearm are: first, a firearm that is not a handgun; second, discharges centre-fire ammunition in a semi-automatic manner; three, designed with a detachable cartridge magazine with a capacity of six cartridges or more; four, and the one thing that members opposite conveniently forget to include, that it is designed and manufactured on or after the date on which this paragraph comes into force.

We keep forgetting that. It is really important that Canadians hear the truth. Let us think about that in the context of what we hear from the opposition. If a gun does not meet those criteria, it is not considered to be prohibited. I am not sure why those members choose to mislead Canadians.

Our government understands that for some communities the ability to hunt means being able to feed their family. It is part of the way of life for many Canadians, particularly in the north, where it is a matter of survival. The bill would protect their ability to do that.

We have also ensured that the bill respects the right of first nations, Inuit and Métis communities from coast to coast to coast. It includes a specific amendment that states clearly that nothing in this definition would infringe on the rights of indigenous peoples under their section 35 rights of the Constitution. By including this non-derogation clause for indigenous people, we are reaffirming their section 35 rights and we are meeting our UNDRIP obligations.

● (1035)

We also have to ensure that we do what is required to keep our communities safer. For me, the element of the bill that I am most keen to see us get right is to get ghost guns off our streets.

Law enforcement agencies across the country want us to act quickly. They have seen an increase in the use of ghost guns, and today we have an opportunity to respond to their request and ensure we do what we can to keep pace with criminals and hold them accountable. We have a chance to address unlawfully manufactured, unsterilized, untraceable firearms and their parts.

For those who do not know, ghost guns can be 3-D printed or modified using readily available kits. Blueprints for these guns are available online. People can download them and literally print them at home. With modern 3-D printers, they can produce a durable firearm capable of shooting hundreds of rounds without a failure. Combined with parts they can order online, they have a viable gun ready for use in crimes in no time.

I had the privilege of getting to know and hear from Michael Rowe, an inspector with the VPD. He has been a vocal advocate for

dealing with ghost guns. He is among the experts in the world on this topic. He told our committee:

...one of my teams recently completed an investigation in which we executed search warrants on a residential home. Inside this home, we located a sophisticated firearms manufacturing operation capable of producing 3-D printed firearms. They had firearm suppressors and they were completing airsoft conversions—converting airsoft pistols into fully functioning firearms..

He also said:

...one of the trends we're seeing out here in Vancouver right now is the use of privately made firearms or "ghost guns". During the gang conflict, we're seeing more ghost guns, specifically in the hands of people who are involved in active murder conspiracies or people who are believed to be working as hired contract killers

Let me be clear that the only people using ghost guns are criminals. There is no legitimate reason to have one.

When we previously withdrew amendments to Bill C-21, an important definition was removed, and I am so pleased that the definition is now back and supported by so many in the House. This definition will define firearms parts in the Criminal Code. Ensuring that those buying barrels, slides and trigger assemblies online are subject to the same rules as those buying guns will make it harder for criminals to hide. It will make it harder for criminals to make their guns at home.

The amendments that we have introduced to address ghost guns are yet another reason why Bill C-21 is so important and why we must get this passed. I believe strongly that all members here can agree that this growing issue needs to be addressed urgently. These ghost gun amendments received wide support from all members of our committee, and it is important to recognize that. It is a need that our law enforcement agencies have addressed and we must take it on head-on. Police services across the country have sounded the alarm on this and we have responded.

We have also introduced other provisions in the bill that are important and are aimed at fighting gun smuggling and trafficking. We are going to change the laws that will increase maximum criminal penalties and provide more tools for law enforcement agencies to investigate firearms. We have already made substantial investments and continue to invest in strengthening the RCMP's and CBSA's capacity to intercept guns coming across our borders. We know that it is working, because they intercepted nearly double the number of firearms coming in across the border than they did last year.

A lot of work is being done, but it is also important for us to remember all the people who have asked us for action.

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Today, as I stand here, I am thinking of the important rights that we must preserve for indigenous communities. The ways of life in the north must be preserved. However, I also think of the victims of the Quebec City mosque massacre, of the Danforth families, of the Polytechnique families, of the women who go home and are threatened by intimate-partner violence, of those who turned to their firearms for suicide, and many more. So many of those are victims of gun violence perpetrated by legal guns. To them, we owe a responsibility, and for people like Ken Price who has been an advocate for those parents who will never see their child grow up and for the 17 kids at the mosque in Quebec City who lost their dads.

Every day that I walked into the room to debate this bill, in the back of my mind there was a thought for those and all that we lost as Canadians every time one of these incidents happened: the lost potential, lives cut short, the person who might have been the scientist who cured cancer, the Olympic skier, the friend we could count on when things got tough, the young woman who might have been prime minister, the families that will never be the same and the communities that have been torn apart forever. For them, we must do our part. It is not just about thoughts and prayers; it is actually about stepping up and taking action. If we do not, we will only have ourselves to blame the next time something terrible happened.

In every faith tradition, we speak of the preservation of life. In my tradition, the Quran says, “whoever chooses to save a life is as though he had saved all mankind.” I hope that in the House we will count ourselves among those who make that choice.

• (1040)

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to the member's speech, and I heard much of the same rhetoric as I did during my participation at the public safety committee, although I do not think the member and I overlapped in our time at committee.

However, I do find it somewhat discouraging that, whenever the Liberals seem to be losing on any issue, and it is not limited to this, they simply say that the Conservatives are being partisan. They say things like we are bringing American-style politics into it, when the reality is that we heard from firearms owners across the country, many common-sense Canadians, who are feeling their voices silenced because of the Liberals' refusal to engage with that ownership community and so many others across the country who have valid concerns about Bill C-21 and the government's approach to confiscating, in many cases, the legally owned firearms of Canadians.

How can that member reconcile what he just said with the fact that so many Canadians are being silenced by his actions?

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** Madam Speaker, I do recall overlapping with him, and we had excellent exchanges at committee.

I think it is important for Canadians to get their information where the information actually resides, and not from misinformation. The facts are clear. The legislation is clear, and the amendments are clear. I would invite any Canadian who is concerned about whether they are affected to read the law and what is contained within it. I think they will be satisfied that the vast majority of gun owners in this country would not be affected.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I applaud the government for withdrawing its amendments on assault weapons in February and for tabling a new and, I think, improved version in May. However, not everyone is happy with this new version because it only applies prospectively. It affects only new weapons that will be coming on the market in future.

In May 2020, the government's order in council came under criticism because it was considered incomplete. People would have preferred an order in council banning guns that met the Criminal Code definition of a prohibited weapon. It was missing the definition. Now, the definition is there, but the government has decided to keep 480 models of firearms on the market even though most of them were developed for military purposes.

At this point, with the passage of Bill C-21, the right thing for the minister to do would be to ban these firearms by order in council, taking care not to ban those that are reasonably used for hunting. Would my colleague agree with me that this is what the minister should do at this point?

• (1045)

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her comments and her hard work on this file in committee.

I cannot speak for the minister, but it is important for us to work together to improve our laws when we have the opportunity to do it, so we can protect Canadians' lives. The reality of a minority Parliament is that we have to collaborate with the other parties. I am very proud of the work we have done. I think that this bill is now an excellent bill for all of us, for the country. However, it is always possible to make improvements and to work together to do just that.

[*English*]

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I enjoy working with my colleague, as I do with all members at committee, but there have been concerns about the bill over the year that it has been sitting in the House. We have had an increasingly urgent concern about ghost guns, which criminals are using across the country. Anecdotally, as members are well aware, in some parts of the country, over this period, there has been an increase of 10 times in the use of untraceable ghost guns by criminals, and in other parts of the country, it is up to 40 times. This is an epidemic.

The Liberals tabled amendments without consultation back in November, to the delay of the bill. Then, we had the Conservatives filibustering over the course of the last month, basically blocking clause-by-clause consideration of the bill, and I think I would say that two wrongs do not make a right. Could the member explain why Conservatives blocked putting into place provisions that are so urgent for law enforcement?

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his hard work on this and his partnership in committee.

However, it is not for me to determine why Conservatives would choose to block such an important piece of legislation. The only thing I can say is that it has been a very useful fundraising tool, and I think perhaps that may be their motivation, but I cannot speak to anything beyond that. I am perplexed as to why anyone would want to block measures that law enforcement have been asking for, that are truly creating a—

[Translation]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am going to talk a bit about how—

[English]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Order. A colleague just started her speech. Could hon. members honour that it is her time to speak?

The hon. member has the floor.

[Translation]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Madam Speaker, thank you for your intervention.

I could spend all day talking about how the study of the bill proceeded in committee. I found it very interesting. It was my first real experience with a bill in committee since I was elected in 2019. I worked from beginning to end on the bill with my colleagues Ariane Francoeur, who is a constituency assistant, and Maxime Duchesne, a researcher.

We often see the government and the Conservatives surrounded by their armies of assistants and staff. There were only two of us, sometimes three, and we did what we could. I think we can be proud of the progress we made and the improvements we made to the bill.

Before getting into the details, I want to talk about a motion to amend that we added to the Notice Paper today. It is an amendment we were unable to present in committee because of a little procedural hiccup. We wanted to change a section in committee, but since it had just been modified by an amendment, we were unable to. Since we could not propose our amendment in committee, we went to work yesterday to ensure we could present it during the study of the bill at report stage. It concerns the “yellow flag” measure.

For those who are unaware, the yellow flag measure is intended to protect people who are directly in danger of gun violence, often women who are victims of domestic violence. It allows chief

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firearms officers to revoke a licence in cases of domestic violence or criminal harassment, when a protection order has been issued against the licence holder or when an emergency prohibition order is issued by a judge.

The government had the right intention when it came to implementing the yellow flag measure. However, some concerns were raised. Some people were given too much discretion. In this case, the owner was given the choice to surrender their firearm to anyone and too long a time to do it. We therefore wanted to change the deadline for licence holders to surrender their firearms to 24 hours following the revocation of their licence. That is what we changed by proposing the relevant amendment with the government, the NDP and the Green Party.

Then, when it came time to make a change regarding the person to whom owners would have to surrender their guns, we were unable to do so. That is what the amendment in today’s Notice Paper is about. It is the amendment we are presenting, and I am very happy to see that the government is presenting the exact same amendment. Our goal is the same, namely to protect women who are victims of violence. This reinforces the yellow flag measure.

The study in committee was extremely interesting. We were able to improve the bill. It is expected that the opposition parties will criticize bills, and that is a good thing. A year ago, when the government introduced Bill C-21, it was far from perfect. Instead of simply criticizing it, we made constructive proposals and submitted a bundle of amendments with a view to improving it.

There is more to this than just presenting an amendment in committee; we have to work behind the scenes with our colleagues to make our intentions clear and explain what it will change. Members of Parliament do not work alone. They also work with organizations that are paying close attention to the bill.

We were approached by groups who support gun control, people who have had very difficult experiences and who are familiar with the subject. I would particularly like to mention the work of the National Association of Women and the Law, which filed an entire brief. If everyone prepared such comprehensive briefs, it would help us in our work. Having such well-worded suggestions showed us exactly where we had to amend the bill and the reasons why it would be beneficial to do so. I would really like to thank these groups. I named only one, but there are many of them, and I am sure they know who they are.

The Bloc also made progress in all of this. We were talking about the infamous list of firearms the government wanted to include in the Criminal Code last November. We understood that not everyone was on board. The government failed to properly explain its reasoning. No one could make heads or tails of it and no one understood anything.

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Amending the Criminal Code is not an easy task. It was necessary to include firearms that were prohibited in the 1990s and others that were prohibited in 2020, and to add new ones. All of them had to be lumped together to amend the Criminal Code. We know that the only list of prohibited firearms that is constantly being updated is the one maintained by the RCMP.

• (1050)

This list complicates the Criminal Code for nothing. The same work is done twice, and everyone is confused. We told the government that a list was not the best way to go. It confuses everyone. In addition, it makes hunters nervous. We saw this when a rumour went around that firearms that are reasonably used for hunting might be added to the list. I understand why hunters were afraid that the firearms they use for hunting would be prohibited as a result of this measure. The Bloc said that the best solution was to provide a good definition of a prohibited firearm, meaning a military assault-style weapon, and to make a clear distinction between this type of firearm and firearms used for hunting.

Two weeks ago, the government came back with its proposed amendment. The new proposed definition was not accompanied by a list. That is good news. If any hunters are listening today, they will understand that the firearm they use for hunting will not be included in the Criminal Code. That is very good. It is good news for them. The downside is that we are still leaving the 482 models on the market. When Bill C-21 is passed, we may have better gun control in Canada, but there will still be hundreds of assault-style models in circulation.

We therefore made a suggestion to the minister. We said that we were aware that those models included some firearms that are reasonably used for hunting. The government had identified a dozen of them. We suggested that it take those 12 models and give them to the firearms advisory committee that the government wants to resurrect. We understand that the committee will include people who are in favour of better gun control, representatives of indigenous communities, hunters and various other experts. These experts could issue an unbiased recommendation to the minister. In the meantime, the minister could immediately issue an order prohibiting the remaining 470 models, since we know full well they are military-style weapons that civilians should not have in their possession. That is what we proposed to the government.

Here is another good thing the Bloc Québécois did, and it is really not an exaggeration to say that we worked hard at it. The first version of the definition of a prohibited firearm included semi-automatic hunting rifles. They wanted to prohibit a firearm that is not a handgun, but that is a semi-automatic hunting rifle. How can we tell hunters that their hunting rifle will not be prohibited if the words “hunting rifle” appear in the law and in the definition? I think that removing these words in the French version, which were different in English, also reassured many people. I am very happy they were removed.

In its initial form, Bill C-21 would have prohibited airsoft guns, which are used in games. These airsoft guns could be described as toys. The problem is that, over the years, manufacturers wanted so much to make them resemble real firearms that it has become confusing for police officers. Someone walking around with an airsoft

gun can be confused for someone holding an assault weapon. The government therefore intended to simply ban them all, like the firearms that are already prohibited.

Airsoft aficionados across the country expressed their outrage. We can understand that. Why should they, who use airsoft for sport or as a hobby, be penalized? We succeeded in removing airsoft guns from the bill. That is very good news, a great achievement for the opposition parties. The Bloc Québécois, the NDP and the Conservative Party voted in favour of removing airsoft from the bill. The government abstained, so we were successful. That is very good.

I understand that I do not have much time left, but the good news is that I will be back tomorrow. I will also be here all day for questions and comments. We can discuss the bill further then.

• (1055)

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. One thing we heard from the Conservatives is their refrain that we want to take hunting rifles away from hunters and Canadians living in rural areas. We know that is not true.

I believe that the member also represents a rural riding. Can she explain why she is comfortable with this definition of firearms so we can reassure Canadians from rural areas?

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Madam Speaker, I attended a dinner in Saint-Alexis-de-Matapédia last week at a club for people 50 and over, and one of the organizers is even a member of the Fédération québécoise des chasseurs et pêcheurs.

It was a pleasure talking with him and letting him know that there has been a great deal of disinformation about Bill C-21, and that everyone was under the impression that hunting rifles were going to be prohibited, although that is not at all the case.

At that point, we had just adopted the definition. Hunting rifles were not at all affected by Bill C-21 as amended. This is still true, after the committee study. I want to reassure hunters because the Bloc Québécois worked hard to ensure that hunting rifles are not affected.

Is the definition perfect? No. Could it be? We can never really achieve perfection, but we could certainly do more about the assault rifles that remain in circulation.

However, it would be false to say that hunting rifles are affected by Bill C-21.

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[*English*]

**Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague brought up a very important part of the bill in terms of the red and yellow flag provisions. It is my understanding that both the red and yellow flag provisions could potentially put victims of violence at further risk and have a profound impact on our indigenous communities as well.

I am wondering if my hon. colleague could expand on the potential risks of the red and yellow flag provisions and whether any stakeholders came forward, specifically women's groups, and asked for these provisions to be put into the bill.

● (1100)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Madam Speaker, my colleague asks a very good question. Yellow flag measures are effective measures that can help protect women who are victims of violence. We even improved some of the clauses pertaining to yellow flag measures in the bill. We have no problem with that.

When it comes to red flag measures, however, I do not know how many Quebec and Canadian women's groups appeared before the committee, sent us briefs, wrote open letters and sent letters to the Minister of Public Safety saying that the government thought it was helping them with the red flag measures when it was doing precisely the opposite.

These groups are afraid that this type of measure will put women who are victims of violence at even greater risk, that it will relieve police officers of their responsibilities if, for example, a woman in danger calls the police to ask them to take away her violent spouse's guns. They are afraid that the police will say that a woman can now go see a judge for a protection order or an injunction—I get those mixed up—and that the police officer will not do anything because the measure is now an option. It is an additional tool.

Since all women's groups were unanimous in this, we could not vote in favour of it. The Bloc Québécois voted against the red flags, but the government and the NDP decided to go ahead with them anyway.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I enjoyed working with the hon. member. If this was the first time that she had been involved in such an intensive clause-by-clause study, it did not show. She has always been very professional at all points of the debate during which we studied the bill clause by clause.

At the report stage, I note that some of the amendments proposed by the Conservatives are comical and bizarre, because they contradict what they have always said. The Bloc Québécois, on the other hand, tabled a motion that I think is important and which seeks to close the loopholes that currently exist for manufacturers and importers, which will now have to undergo a process. For the time being, it is an honour-based system.

I want to ask a question of my colleague from the Bloc Québécois. Is it important that we close this loophole that has existed for years and makes it so that manufacturers and importers find ways to circumvent legislation that was put in place?

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Madam Speaker, that is a very good question. This is something that we have tried to incorporate into the bill for reasons that I will not explain, as it will take too long. We were unable to table the amendment. That is why we have returned today, at report stage, with this amendment. It is such an important measure.

I understand that this was rejected by the Chair, but there is still hope because, when the Minister of Public Safety announced the new definition of a prohibited weapon two weeks ago, he also announced his intention to proceed by regulation. There are things that can be done both by legislation and sometimes also by regulation.

I think that ensuring that firearms are pre-classified by the RCMP could be a—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Resuming debate. The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by pointing out that the purpose of report stage is to consider motions in amendment.

As I mentioned earlier, I find it odd that the Conservatives are putting forward amendments that do the exact opposite of what they proposed in committee. It will be up to them to defend their intentions in that regard. The other report stage motions will, I think, improve Bill C-21. That much is clear after this whole process.

Some major gun control organizations, including the Canadian Coalition for Firearm Rights, Canadian Doctors for Protection from Guns and the National Association of Women and the Law, appeared before the committee. They all proposed amendments that improved the bill.

Bill C-21 also provides a technical definition that is important. These are all important elements to consider.

The NDP was instrumental in bringing in an approach far more sensible than that of the Liberal government with the amendments it presented last November. Those amendments were brought forward without any consultation with indigenous communities and hunters.

The amendments that strengthen every aspect of the red flag and yellow flag measures significantly improve Bill C-21. That is extremely important.

● (1105)

[*English*]

I cannot speak about the bill without speaking about the Conservative filibuster. I found it profoundly disingenuous. On the one hand, Conservatives protested that they were not filibustering the bill, and on the other hand, on social media, they were making speeches and saying very clearly how they were filibustering the bill.

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Yes, it is true that the Liberals tabled amendments that were done without forethought and without any understanding of the consequences. Amendments G-4 and G-46 were tabled without any consultation at all. The NDP pushed back against that. I cannot show this, but I have my amendment book in front of me. It would be considered a prop for me to show G-46 withdrawn, so I will not do that, but I find it strange that, since then, Conservatives have continued to act as if those amendments were still on the table. We just heard the Conservative public safety critic, yet again, talk about amendments that have been withdrawn.

The NDP played a key role in this. Members will recall both my statements in the House and the presentation of a motion at committee by the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, which basically put pressure on the Liberals to withdraw those amendments, so they are non-existent, and for the Conservatives to pretend they are there is passing strange. Maybe that contradiction between, on the one hand, Conservatives trying to take credit for withdrawing the amendments and, on the other hand, trying to pretend the amendments are still there plays out with the report stage amendments, which, again, do the opposite of what Conservatives said they wanted to do with the bill. It is very strange.

I think it is fair to say that the filibuster was finally ended with the support of members of the House from virtually every other party, so that we could have a common-sense approach, article by article, with 20 minutes per clause. It is important to note that the 20 minutes was renewed numerous times. It was part of the motion that we could renew it, that if there was all-party agreement we could renew the discussions.

I think it is fair to say that members of the Conservative Party who participated in the deliberations in clause-by-clause were very constructive. The member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound presented an amendment that was adopted unanimously, to provide provisions for those legal, law-abiding firearms owners who may be experiencing a mental health crisis. Conservatives voted with the other parties, so all parties voted together, on the vast majority of the amendments, including those around ghost guns. That is important because ghost guns are of a critical nature. We have seen an explosion of the use by criminals of untraceable firearms across the country, so the ghost gun provisions are absolutely essential.

Law enforcement has been calling for them for some time. In the United States, the Biden administration has seized over 20,000 ghost guns used in the commission of criminal acts over the course of the past year. In Canada, we are not even aware of what the full numbers are. I have requested that the Ministry of Justice start tracking the use of ghost guns, but anecdotally, in some parts of the country, there has been a 10-fold increase in a year. In other parts of the country, it is even higher than that.

The ghost gun provisions were absolutely essential. Again, it is fair to say the Conservatives actively participated in that. They seem to be singing a different song now in the House, but the reality is the committee process worked. The committee process went through all of the amendments, despite the fact, and I think it is fair to say, sometimes the Conservatives were repeating their questions numerous times trying to slow down the process. However, we got through all the essential amendments, with one exception, and that was on indigenous rights. That passed unanimously.

The committee process absolutely worked. The fact one can renew a 20-minute clause discussion absolutely worked, and the Conservatives were not able to block the ghost gun provisions, which law enforcement needs. Why the Conservatives were blocking ghost gun provisions, they will have to explain to the Canadian public.

It is not just that. We talked a few minutes ago about the importance of closing the loopholes for manufacturers and importers. We have functioned on an honour system, and this is something that simply cannot be permitted to continue, so closing those loopholes were absolutely essential.

The NDP tabled amendments, as well as all other parties, and we worked to strengthen the red flag and yellow flag provisions of the bill. It is fair to say, from the comments of the National Association of Women and the Law about those provisions, that those improvements are absolutely critical. There is no doubt the bill was improved. It was over a very intense week, but a week that allowed us to go clause-by-clause and work through the bill. The product is now before the House with a number of helpful report stage amendments and some, as I mentioned, inexplicable amendments from the Conservatives that contradict all the positions they have taken up until now.

The NDP also tabled amendments on airsoft, and this was vitally important to ensure the airsoft community could continue to engage. That is important. Airsoft has approached the whole issue of a framework around it in a very open way. There had been provisions that would have basically pushed airsoft aside. The NDP pushed the motion on that and succeeded in getting it through.

The indigenous rights component is absolutely fundamental. I know my colleague from Nunavut, who has been one of the foremost advocates for indigenous rights in the House of Commons, would say as well that the provisions, which are that nothing in Bill C-21 abrogates or derogates from indigenous rights under section 35 of the charter, are fundamental and should be in place in all government legislation moving forward.

We are tackling criminals. We are ensuring that manufacturers and importers now have a legal process to go through, and we are enhancing indigenous rights. We have also ensured, by pushing the government to reconstitute the firearms advisory committee, that it will include indigenous people, hunters, farmers and people who are advocates for firearms control. Putting Canadians in a room and letting them have those discussions and consultations is absolutely, fundamentally important.

All of these things are extremely essential. The one amendment that needs to be passed, hopefully in the Senate, would be to ensure the International Practical Shooting Confederation is also part of the exemptions around the use of handguns. This is essential. Other countries that have outlawed handguns allow an exemption for that organization.

*Government Orders*

• (1110)

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his work in committee and for his efforts in helping us all work together. I think we can all agree that we have achieved a good piece of legislation together.

The work we did on ghost guns is critically important. Those of us from the Lower Mainland in Vancouver have heard police forces talking a lot about the importance of getting this right.

The member opposite asked me a question after my speech. I have been reflecting on that question, and I would like to ask him a very similar question. We saw the Conservatives, time and again, filibuster and try to delay. They would vote for some of the amendments, but then delay again.

I would love for my hon. colleague to explain to me why he thinks Conservatives filibustered, and why he thinks they continue to pretend that these amendments, which have been withdrawn, still exist. Perhaps, most importantly, why does he think that, today, they are putting forward amendments that contradict their own voting record in committee?

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Madam Speaker, it is really up to Conservatives to defend their record on this, but in committee, I proposed about a dozen times for a time extension to continue clause-by-clause. A dozen times, the Conservatives said no, and a dozen times, I asked to let us keep working.

Even last Tuesday night, we finished at 6:30 p.m., and I moved for unanimous consent to keep working, but Conservatives shut it down. That happened a dozen times, until the House of Commons directed the committee with a structure that allowed us to get through every single amendment, which was a really effective committee study.

I cannot explain how Conservatives acted in committee. I cannot explain how they are acting at report stage. I can say that the parties that have worked together have produced a bill that—

• (1115)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We will continue with questions and comments.

The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I recall over a year ago, when Bill C-21 was introduced, just how giddy with glee the NDP was until it had an epiphany about the impact this was going to have on its rural ridings. Those ridings include Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, Courtenay—Alberni, Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, North Island—Powell River, Skeena—Bulkley Valley, South Okanagan—West Kootenay, Timmins—James Bay and Nunavut. All of those MPs reversed course on Bill C-21 when they, in fact, were supporting it at the beginning.

Canadians are not stupid. Members in those ridings and the citizens in those ridings are not stupid, and they will remember what the NDP did with Bill C-21.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Madam Speaker, my colleague just mentioned some of the best members of Parliament in the House of Commons. They are members of Parliament who stand up for their con-

stituents. They are members of Parliament who actually do things to make a difference in people's lives.

The reality is that it is the NDP who stopped both the G-4 and G-46 amendments. Conservatives pontificated, but they did not move anything procedurally. For weeks and weeks, Conservatives just sat there. They fundraised, of course. They love fundraising off of misinformation, but they did not do anything in the House. The difference between New Democrats and Conservatives is that New Democrats get the job done.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulou, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would like to talk about consistency. Over the past few months, the Conservatives have repeatedly criticized Bill C-21 on the grounds that it attacks sport shooters and athletes. Clause 43 actually mentions these elite sport shooters to protect them from the handgun freeze, but—surprise, surprise—the Conservatives want to delete that clause. I wonder if my colleague can explain to us why they are saying that, on the one hand, we have to protect shooters and, on the other, we have to delete the only clause that protects them.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Madam Speaker, that is an excellent question. The Conservatives say they have to have exemptions, but now they want to get rid of this exemption. That is ridiculous, and it goes to show how the Conservative Party is just not taking the Bill C-21 debate seriously. They did nothing to delete the amendments the Liberals put forward in committee in November. They did nothing to improve the bill. I am glad they supported amendments from the NDP, the Liberal Party and the Bloc, but the Conservative Party contributed absolutely nothing at any point in the process. Now the Conservatives are even contradicting themselves. They are proposing amendments that cancel measures they themselves said were essential.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I request that the ordinary hour of daily adjournment of the next sitting be 12 midnight pursuant to the order made Tuesday, November 15, 2022.

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Pursuant to order made Tuesday, November 15, 2022, the minister's request to extend the said sitting is deemed adopted.

*Government Orders*

[English]

**CRIMINAL CODE**

The House resumed consideration of C-21, An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms), as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is very important that I rise to speak to this bill today for a number of reasons. This bill reflects the will of the House, the will of the committee and the will of Canadians.

On a somewhat personal level, I will say that we are all here as a members of Parliament. Our families have jobs that they do back home, and so do our brothers and sisters and so forth. One of my siblings, one of my brothers, has been a first responder for the Vancouver Police Department for a long time. If I can put a date on it, my brother and the Minister of International Development, the former defence minister, actually went through police training together many decades ago.

I reside in Ontario. My family all resides in British Columbia and, for the longest time, when my brother did his job, I never thought about his safety. Recently though, over the last few years, I do think about his safety quite a bit. My heart goes out to all of those families who have been impacted by gun violence, particularly, of course, the first responders who are doing their job, day in and day out, whether it is in Prince Rupert, Prince George, Halifax, Vaughan or the Lower Mainland in Vancouver as part of the Vancouver Police Department. This legislation we have brought forward, after exhaustive consultation, is another piece of recognizing that we must do something. We must act.

I am glad to see that the committee on public safety has incorporated amendments. I am glad to see that hunters, folks pursuing a traditional way of life, sports shooters and so forth, can continue to do what they do because I know many of them, on both sides, from my time growing up in northern British Columbia in the riding of Skeena—Bulkley Valley. I remember going up to the Skeena River and people going hunting and shooting for moose or deer. As well, in my riding of Vaughan, many folks go up to northern Ontario to go hunting. It is important that they continue to do those pursuits. I am glad to see that.

At the same time, handguns and AR-15 style weapons have no place, in my view, in our society. We need to make sure Canadians feel safe in their community. We need to make sure that Canadians know they are safe and that is what our government is doing.

I wanted to put that thought forward because not a day goes by now when I do not think about my brother on duty and what he does for the Vancouver Police Department keeping the citizens in Vancouver safe. Not a day goes by now that I do not try to call to ask how he is doing and how he and his family and his daughters are doing because that is where we are today. I am glad we are acting.

I am pleased to join the debate on Bill C-21, an act to amend certain acts and to make certain consequential amendments, firearms. We have said all along that this bill is historic. It is the most significant step in gun reform in a generation. Canadians deserve safe,

common-sense firearms laws, while, virtually every day, we see media reports of gun violence in our communities.

Each one is a tragedy involving someone, whether a child, a parent, a partner, a friend, a brother or a sister, who was loved and is now missed by their community. That is exactly why we have taken the time to reflect, consult and discuss Bill C-21 with survivors, indigenous communities, industry groups and hunters, and why, after meticulous study and consideration, we recently brought forward amendments to the bill. We know that gun safety cannot wait, but we have been careful to balance the urgency of this bill with the need to get it right. This government has done more than any other to advance gun safety.

Three years ago, we banned 1,500 assault-style firearms, those that have no place outside the battlefield of war. We introduced the bill before us today, Bill C-21. This bill would inscribe into law the national freeze on handguns.

It would target organized crime, with stiffer sentences for trafficking guns and new charges for altering the magazine or cartridge of a gun to exceed its lawful capacity. It would take much needed steps to address the role of firearms in gender-based violence. While there is no obligation for survivors of gender-based violence to use these laws, they can help prevent handguns from falling into the wrong hands and stop needless tragedies before they occur.

Someone who currently or previously had a restraining order against them would no longer be able to obtain a firearms licence. We are proud to introduce new red flag laws that mean courts could take firearms away from those who are a danger to themselves or anyone else. Bill C-21 also contains new yellow flag laws to allow chief firearms officers to suspend an individual's firearms licence if the CFO receives information calling into question their licence eligibility.

● (1120)

Furthermore, with the support of our colleagues in SECU, we adopted amendments that would help protect victims of violence and those at risk of self-harm by a firearm. Firearms licences would be revoked within 24 hours in cases of domestic or intimate partner violence, and there would be new exemptions for those who use a firearm for their employment. When a weapons prohibition order or protection order is issued, this would be reported to authorities within 24 hours. Further, if a person is undergoing a mental health crisis, they would be able to temporarily transfer their firearm to another person or business, helping to keep themselves or their loved ones safe.

*Government Orders*

Again, survivors of violence are under no obligation to take such actions, and measures would be taken to protect the identity of vulnerable individuals who do provide information to the courts. Canadians' safety is our utmost, paramount concern. Bill C-21 is another step to bring in needed, prudent and necessary measures on ending and preventing gun violence.

We have heard jarring statistics from my colleagues that the more available guns are, the higher the risk of people dying unnecessarily in tragic situations of homicide and suicide. We can all look at the statistics in the United States for that fact. Let me be frank, the only sensible response to these kinds of cold, hard facts is the kind of gun reform we are discussing here today. As soon as we know that something is dangerous and unnecessary, we have an obligation to remove that risk from our communities and protect the people in them. This is particularly true when those who are at highest risk are already marginalized in our society and vulnerable to violent outcomes.

When it comes to assault-style firearms, we are compelled to act now. We know that if the most lethal guns are unavailable for purchase, if they are present in fewer numbers in our communities, we can drastically reduce the number of victims of gun violence. Some folks talk about causation and correlation. One fact we know is that in the United States the use of AR-15 type assault rifles is killing people needlessly. In Canada, we are not going to allow those types of U.S. gun laws to come here. We are going to make sure we have sensible gun laws that make sure that those types of weapons do not exist in our country.

• (1125)

We know that if the most lethal guns are unavailable for purchase, if they are present in fewer numbers in our communities, we can drastically reduce the number of victims of gun violence. This is what Canadians want. The proposed technical definition of prohibited firearms allows us to proactively address advances in the firearms market and keep firearms designed for the battlefield off our streets. Incorporating technical criteria in this definition puts the onus on industry to do their part in protecting our communities from assault-style firearms.

We also brought forward amendments to address emerging threats, such as ghost guns. Bill C-21 would make all illegally manufactured firearms, also known as ghost guns, prohibited firearms, create new offences to prohibit the possession, access, distribution, making available or publication of digital files and blueprints, and regulate the transfer and importation of certain parts to ensure they are not being used to create ghost guns. Again, this is not about taking guns away from responsible handgun owners, hunters or sport shooters. This is about tackling violent crime and preventing senseless, tragic deaths.

That brings me back to the amendments to Bill C-21 we recently introduced that were adopted last week in committee. I applaud the committee members for their hard work on this very important piece of gun safety legislation. It is prudent legislation to prevent needless, senseless deaths by guns. Guns kill people.

As I mentioned earlier, we have taken the time to speak with constituents from coast to coast to coast. It does not matter where one goes in this great country, in every corner, we could find

skilled, experienced hunters who are more than happy to chat for hours about how it is more than a hobby for them, how it is been passed down through generations, and how it forms a key part of their culture and way of life.

That is why these latest amendments provide clarity and protections around responsible gun ownership. We are focused on the most pressing issue, keeping Canadians safe. Again, as we have said from the beginning, no single initiative would end gun violence, but Bill C-21 is a major component. It is one of three key pillars of our plan. The second pillar is strengthening resources to tackle gun crime, including smuggling, preventing firearms from entering our borders in the first place and targeting ghost guns. The third pillar is about investing in communities. Initiatives like the national crime prevention strategy, the gun and gang violence action fund, and the building safer communities fund get straight to the roots of violence. They stop it before it starts.

I look forward to questions and comments.

• (1130)

**Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC):** Madam Speaker, at the very beginning of his speech, the member mentioned that there is no place for handguns in Canadian society. I think I quoted him almost verbatim. While I agree there is no place for illegal handguns that criminals are using to commit crimes, I would like to remind him of a quote, especially since sitting very close to him there is a proud Olympian who might find this quote interesting.

It is by Lynda Kiejko, an Olympian in women's pistol shooting. She said, "I take great pride in representing my country on the—"

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member. The rule applies both ways. We do not mention the presence or absence of members in the House.

The hon. member for Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte.

**Mr. Doug Shipley:** Madam Speaker, I should say the member has a good Olympian on his team over there, who may be interested to hear this.

Lynda Kiejko said:

I take great pride in representing my country on the world stage, as do all athletes. I'm sad that due to the handgun ban, the order in council, Bill C-71 and this proposed legislation, I will not be able to represent Canada on the world stage. Athletes who come after me won't even have an opportunity to compete, as they will have no access to competition firearms.

What would the member opposite like me to tell this Olympian, who has proudly represented our flag at the Olympics in the past?

*Government Orders*

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Madam Speaker, I know that sometimes tempers can rage in this place, but I believe that the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport was using language that, I am pretty sure if you were to look at the Standing Orders, would be deemed unparliamentary. Although I do not think it was meant to be on the record, we need to hold ourselves to a high standard in this place.

I am wondering if you would rule as to whether or not the language he used was appropriate.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I cannot make a ruling because I did not hear it.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Adam van Koeverden:** Madam Speaker, I am deeply apologetic if I offended the member opposite with any words that I used sitting here by myself.

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Madam Speaker, I would now like to answer the question of the hon. member for Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte.

There seem to be some conversations going on.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. parliamentary secretary is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Adam van Koeverden:** Madam Speaker, the member opposite is continuing to heckle, telling me to be a man about it. This kind of misogynistic language in this House of Commons is not welcome. He is telling me to be a man about after I stood and apologized. I do not know what he would like me to do. I was talking to myself and muttered something under my breath.

That type of misogynistic language has no place in this House.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member did apologize and the matter should lay there and we will respect the people who are trying to speak in their allotted time.

The hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Madam Speaker, I very much enjoy watching the highlights at the Olympics for trap shooting and clay shooting. My understanding is that with the legislation, Olympians here in Canada pursuing such sports would have an exemption to do so. If I am incorrect, I will retract that statement, but my understanding is there is an exemption for that.

When I have travelled to visit relatives in Italy, there are police officers and families who practise that sport, and I have watched them. It is interesting to me and something that goes to sensible gun legislation—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Doug Shipley:** Madam Speaker, there is an exemption for Olympians, but not for someone who is not in the Olympics, so no one would be able to train to get there.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** That is part of the debate. The hon. member answered the question.

[*Translation*]

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

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I do not know whether my colleague is aware, but on May 16, 2022, the National Association of Women and the Law sent a letter to the Minister of Public Safety on behalf of dozens of women's associations, including the YMCA of Greater Toronto, the Canadian Women's Foundation, Women's Shelters Canada, and the Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale, to name but a few. In this letter, they tell the government that they do not want the red flag measure, that they are afraid that it will put women at greater risk and that law enforcement will shirk its responsibilities when it comes to removing a gun from a licence holder whose spouse is a victim of domestic violence.

Can my colleague explain to me why the government, despite the advice of all these women's groups, has nevertheless decided to introduce this red flag measure?

• (1135)

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Madam Speaker, it is very important that we invest \$250 million in the building safer communities fund.

[*English*]

In terms of the question on the red flags law, we know gender-based violence exists and we know gender-based violence is a problem. We need to ensure that, when individuals are reporting it to police, proper preventative measures are taken by police officers across this country. We in no way want to put anyone in harm's way after any reports are made, so it is very important that we protect particularly the women across this country from gender-based violence, from any subsequent acts that may occur from the initial one.

**Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, much has been said about the rights of hunters and the rights of guns owners, but perhaps not enough about the victims. The hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge would know that all too well, given the mass shooting that occurred at the condo in his riding; five people were murdered, and my dear friend, Doreen DiNino, was the lone survivor.

Is the hon. member satisfied understanding that the shooter was a PAL owner and did have legally acquired firearms? Is he satisfied that the legislation, Bill C-21, would help prevent the future atrocities and tragedies of a mass shootings like the one that has occurred in his riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge?

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Madam Speaker, there was a mass shooting in the city of Vaughan. It happened just around the Christmas period, and it needlessly impacted so many families. Bill C-21 is, again, another step. We have multiple pillars to reduce senseless gun violence in Canada. That is an example that unfortunately has impacted a number of families and a number of people who were not going to be able to be with their families any longer. Bill C-21 would be a big significant step in combatting gun violence, in terms of the example of what happened in Vaughan where people are still grieving from that needless tragedy.

**Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to be very clear: The Liberal government does not want us to debate Bill C-21. It wants it to be imposed on this House and on Canadians.

Today, we are limited to just a single day of debate, because the Liberal government decided to force a closure motion through the House to prevent parliamentarians from debating this legislation in detail. This is fundamentally undemocratic, and it is certainly not in the best interest of those who will be affected by many of its problematic measures.

When Bill C-21 was announced by the public safety minister last fall, Conservatives were hopeful that this bill would include measures that are tough on crime and that would crack down on illegally smuggled handguns, which are contributing to the 32% increase in violent crime since the Prime Minister took office.

However, the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security was instead presented with a deeply flawed piece of legislation that needed to be amended countless times by the Liberal government and opposition parties. We have heard from numerous witnesses and stakeholders that this bill will do nothing to crack down on the violent criminals who are terrorizing our streets.

The constituents of Liberal, NDP and Bloc members in rural ridings know very well what this legislation does. If it passes, the only people it will materially affect are law-abiding firearms owners who use their firearms as tools to hunt, sport-shoot and protect their livestock, while street gangs and criminals can continue to use their illegally smuggled firearms.

To reiterate, this legislation affects 2.3 million law-abiding firearms owners, thousands of small businesses and jobs, and, as a result, hundreds of millions of dollars of the economy. Before getting into the specific deficiencies of this legislation, I want to take a moment and revisit how the Liberal government made a mess of this situation.

In late November, forgoing the usual practices of doing any form of consultation or technical briefings for parliamentarians and the media, the Minister of Public Safety table-dropped amendments at the eleventh hour that constituted what would be the largest ban on hunting rifles and shotguns in Canadian history.

The Liberal government would like people to believe that the only ones who opposed its misguided amendments were members of the Conservative Party. In reality, the push-back against the Liberal Party's poorly planned amendments and legislation was driven by a grassroots movement of hunters, sport shooters, indigenous groups

and farmers who are concerned about their livelihood, their sport, their culture and, above all, public safety.

Naturally, hunters, sport shooters, farmers, indigenous groups and provincial and territorial premiers from coast to coast took notice and voiced their concerns. Even members of the Liberal caucus stood up and said that they would not be able to vote in favour of Bill C-21 if these amendments were included in the bill. Canadians saw these amendments for what they were: the largest assault on law-abiding firearms owners in Canadian history.

As a result, the Liberals withdrew their amendments, and the opposition parties on the public safety committee began consultations, which the Liberal government had failed to do, on the proposed amendments to Bill C-21. We heard from a diverse range of voices that shared their concerns with the amendments and the lack of consultation from the Liberal government.

I would like to highlight one individual's testimony in particular. Chief Jessica Lazare of the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake spoke to us and stated that no consultations were done prior to drafting the government's amendments to Bill C-21 or prior to Bill C-21 itself. She noted that while she appreciated the Minister of Public Safety taking the time to meet briefly with the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake, she did not consider that meeting to be a consultation.

Unfortunately, the Liberals dismissed legitimate concerns such as these by repeatedly, in the House and in committee, calling them disinformation and misinformation.

My colleagues and I wrapped up these consultations with stakeholders on March 10 and waited patiently for the Minister of Public Safety to come before our committee and testify. In fact, I think many Canadians at home would be surprised to know that our committee waited six full weeks, until April 25, to hear from the minister.

Shortly after, the Liberals introduced new amendments, which, to be clear, are the same as the old ones, and the commonly used hunting firearms targeted by the Liberals in the fall would likely be added to the ban by the new Liberal firearms advisory panel. Conservatives have no confidence that this advisory panel would do anything other than advise the minister to take legally obtained firearms away from law-abiding Canadians.

Now that we have discussed the abuse of process and the failure of the government regarding this legislation, I will go on to outline some of the problematic measures in Bill C-21, which have widespread opposition from stakeholders.

*Government Orders*

• (1140)

First, the Liberal government introduced a regime known as “red flag laws”. We have heard almost unanimously from stakeholders that Bill C-21’s proposed red flag measures are costly, ineffective and redundant. We have red flag laws in this country under section 117 of the Criminal Code. Police services have the authority to act immediately, with or without a warrant, when there is a genuine concern for public safety. However, Bill C-21 attempts to introduce a regime whereby victims would have to stand in front of a judge in a secret hearing without the other party present and without any access to police resources in order to have firearms taken away from a dangerous individual.

During our deliberations on this bill, we heard from women’s and community groups such as the National Association of Women and the Law, PolySeSouvient and the Battered Women’s Support Services, which all said that the proposed red flag laws were unnecessary and counterproductive and could be even harmful.

We also heard from indigenous leaders, such as Terry Teegee from the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations and Heather Bear from the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations, who both expressed concerns with the fact that these provisions do not clearly outline how they would respect the hunting rights of indigenous individuals.

Even further, we heard from medical professionals, such as Dr. Atul Kapur from the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians, who stated, “Placing the onus on victims of interpersonal violence or on a family member of a depressed person...is largely unworkable and an unwelcome hindrance to getting the guns temporarily out of the homes of those in crisis.”

We also heard from law enforcement officers, such as Dale McFee from the Edmonton Police Service, who stated that this law “would pose a significant draw on police resources should numerous applications be granted at a time when many Canadian police services are [already] stretched thin.”

Conservatives on the public safety committee listened to this testimony. They recognized that these measures are harmful and proposed to have them removed entirely from the bill. Unfortunately, the Liberal-NDP coalition voted against that, effectively silencing the voices of women’s groups, indigenous leaders, law enforcement and medical professionals.

Another issue that the Liberal government touted as being tough on crime is increasing maximum sentences from 10 years to 14 years for illegal gun traffickers. While we support these measures in principle, we know that the current government’s soft-on-crime policy means that not a single person has ever received the current maximum sentence for these crimes in the eight years that the Liberals have been in power.

Finally, this legislation targets competitive sport shooters in such a severe way that it would literally lead to the demise of the sport. The legislation effectively means that those who use lawfully obtained handguns to safely participate in an internationally recognized sport would no longer be able to do so. Noah Schwartz, a professor of political science at the University of the Fraser Valley, commented on these measures, noting that “firearms, and the shoot-

ing sports that they facilitate, allow people to connect with family, friends and a broader community of gun owners. At a time when making social connections is more difficult than ever, it seems strange to sacrifice these communities for a false impression of safety.”

Bill C-21 would outlaw competitive sport shooting, except for individuals who are already training for the Olympics. I would encourage the Liberal members to consider how one can become an Olympic athlete without training and practice. Reasonable amendments to this prohibition from the Conservatives to allow members of the International Practical Shooting Confederation to continue their sport were unfortunately voted down.

What may be surprising to many is that members of the Liberal government tried to stop a rural member of their own caucus from speaking out against these measures at the public safety committee. Thankfully, the Conservative members on the committee gave up some of their own time so that he could speak. That member spoke out against the restrictions on competitive sport shooting, stating, “If there is one organization outside of Olympic shooters this committee and indeed this government should consider, I think it’s IP-SC.”

This is more evidence that the government does not want to hear the voices of hunters, sport shooters and farmers. It is not interested in the lives of the rural Canadians whom the legislation would impact.

It is time for the Liberals to get serious about tackling the root causes of criminal violence. In the eight years since the Prime Minister took office, violent crime has increased by 32% and gang-related murders have doubled. I have no faith that this legislation would do anything to reverse that trend. Only a Conservative government would invest in policing and secure borders to address the real root cause of crime, rather than spending billions of dollars on confiscating firearms from law-abiding farmers, hunters and indigenous people.

In closing, we were all elected to this House to represent the voices of our constituents, and the limited time we have today to debate this legislation stifles our ability to do so. I would like to thank the members of my community and individuals across Canada who have reached out to me about this important issue. They can rest assured that I will continue to advocate for law-abiding Canadian firearms owners, despite the Liberal government’s draconian tactics.

*Government Orders*

• (1145)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, one of the things I find most interesting about this whole debate, whether it is Bill C-21 or anything related to guns, is that the Conservative Party members consistently spread misinformation and they do that in order to generate funds for their political party, literally millions of dollars over the year. That is the primary reason for the spreading of misinformation that we see.

My concern or my question for the member is this: Does he not see the benefit in terms of having legislation that would make our communities safer? When will the Conservative Party put the safety of our community ahead of Conservative fundraising?

**Mr. Doug Shipley:** Madam Speaker, there are so many questions there that I am not sure which ones I will answer in the short five minutes I have.

First of all, I have never done any fundraising on this issue.

I have been on the public safety committee now for a year and a half and have sat through hours and hours of discussion on this topic. Do I think this is going to make our communities any safer? No, not whatsoever. This is going to affect law-abiding firearms owners, not the illegal criminals who are bringing handguns across the border. That is really where the issue is, and this will not affect that whatsoever.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I think my colleague would agree with me that the public has an interest in seeing an end to illegal gun trafficking. In Bill C-21, the government increased the maximum penalties for firearms trafficking.

Does my colleague believe that this measure is sufficient?

[*English*]

**Mr. Doug Shipley:** Madam Speaker, as I mentioned in my speech, and if people were not listening I will repeat that part, in the past eight years, I believe, the maximum has never once been given. Yes, we agree with longer sentences, but if the maximum is not being given, what is the point of increasing it?

We need to work on reducing crime, and we believe in giving harsher sentences, especially to people who are committing harsh crimes with firearms across the country.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, there is no doubt my colleague does effective work on the public safety committee.

The reality is that Conservatives worked very productively with the other parties, I thought, once the House of Commons said that they had to end their filibuster and get back to work. We managed to get unanimous agreement on the vast majority of amendments as we worked through clause-by-clause.

However, there are some Conservatives who continue to talk about amendments G-46 and G-4. As members know, I cannot present props in the House, but clearly in my amendment book, G-46 has been withdrawn. I would ask my colleague if he can con-

firm that G-46 and G-4 were withdrawn at the beginning of February, which means Conservatives should not continue to talk about these amendments as they no longer exist.

• (1150)

**Mr. Doug Shipley:** Madam Speaker, what I would like to talk about in response to that is factual information. It was amazing how much the NDP and the Liberals were siding with each other in those debates the member is talking about. We sat in that committee for so long, and I am curious to see what members from places such as Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, Courtenay—Alberni, Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, North Island—Powell River, Skeena—Bulkley Valley, South Okanagan—West Kootenay, Timmins—James Bay and Nunavut all have to say in the next election—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Madam Speaker, those are all some of the best MPs in the House, but the member is mispronouncing every single riding name, which shows a—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** That is not a point of order, unfortunately.

The hon. member for Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte.

**Mr. Doug Shipley:** Madam Speaker, I was not mispronouncing the ridings whatsoever. They are great areas. I have been to some of them and I would like to get to even more. I was in Nunavut last summer and it was very interesting.

What I was pointing out is that all of these rural ridings I am sure will be very interested to know that the members of the NDP were siding with the Liberals at all the committee meetings and on all of the votes with respect to the firearms concern.

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Madam Speaker, one of the concerns coming out of report stage is about the firearms advisory committee that the public safety minister spoke about, and the power it is going to have to potentially ban firearms going forward. Could the member speak to that briefly?

**Mr. Doug Shipley:** Madam Speaker, that is a great question. Yes, there is a lot of concern over that. We have no details on it, which is very concerning. We do not know who is going to be on the committee. We are assuming its members are going to be appointed by the Liberals. We feel that, down the road, the exact same hunting rifles and farmers' tools that were placed on the past G-4 and G-46 amendments will be placed on this ban bill again by the firearms advisory commission once it is up and running.

**Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a real honour to rise in the House to acknowledge the very hard work of the public safety committee and many members in the House who have been tireless in their advocacy and their consultations with various groups across the country, and to speak to the importance of the bill, as we aim to strengthen public safety in our communities and ensure they continue to be safe.

*Government Orders*

I would be remiss if I did not at the onset of my speech acknowledge that my home riding of Milton has been impacted by gun violence in the last couple of years. It has been extraordinarily difficult to come to terms with the fact that guns are making their way into our communities, when criminals have access to more guns. When there are more guns in society, criminals will find their way to these guns.

There have been deaths in my community, and I want to express my condolences to the friends, family and co-workers of those individuals who have lost their lives due to this senseless violence. I committed to them that I would stand in the House and ensure that we would pass fair and responsible laws that would protect families and people in my riding who do not want more guns in their community. They want fewer guns and safer communities.

That is what we are doing today, and I am proud to be supporting the legislation.

Over the last couple of days, there has been a lot of indignation in the House. The Conservatives have been indignant that they have not had enough time to speak to the bill. At the same time, those same members have been filibustering at committee, wasting time and the opportunity to debate. We finally are at place where we can vote on the bill and protect Canadians with more responsible gun laws. I am grateful for all of the members' hard work and their ability to endure that filibuster. It is really unnecessary.

This indignation is the result of the progress being made collectively with all other parties in the House. Every other party except the Conservative Party supports these responsible gun laws moving forward. I want to thank them for that.

I also want to express disappointment that the gun lobby has found so many strong voices in the Conservative Party. Time and time again, the Conservatives have stood in the House to say that they are standing up for indigenous hunters or Olympic athletes, when all they are really doing is parroting lines from the gun lobby. Many of the members have been keynoting fundraisers for the gun lobby. They have been speaking at their events.

At the same time, the member for Carleton, the leader of the Conservative Party, will send out tweets saying that the Liberal government wants to take their guns, that they should sign a petition or that they should sign up with the Conservatives and send them a donation if they disagree. That type of fundraising on the back of the gun lobby and that NRA-style of politics has no place in Canada.

I would like to move on to a very difficult to talk about issue, and that is domestic abuse and suicide and the role that guns play in households across the country with respect to that.

Abusers with guns in the home are five times more likely to kill their wives and children. It does not matter if they are legally owned or if they are licensed firearms, that statistic rings true. Domestic abuse continues to be an absolute plague. I will also call it "men's violence against women". Domestic abuse does not put a fine enough point on it in my view.

More guns in society means more gun murders. I used to live in Florida, where there were hundreds and hundreds of guns in every

community. There are more guns in the United States than there are people. People often say that Canada is nothing like the United States, and thank God for that. Let us ensure we continue to be different than the United States, where there are mass shootings on a daily basis, where there are tragic school shootings on such a frequent basis that people try to ignore it when it is on the news.

We need to acknowledge that we have had some really tragic shooting events in Canada as well. We need to stand and say that these are preventable with more responsible gun laws. This bill, Bill C-21, and the amendments henceforth will strengthen those laws and ensure that we build a country going forward that has fewer guns and fewer tragedies as a result.

I want to move on to another very difficult to talk about issue in Canada, and that is with respect to suicide and mental. Studies show that homes that have guns in them are far more likely to experience death from suicide. It is a terrible fact that in some cases, and this is very challenging to talk about, it is easier to pick up a gun than a phone.

• (1155)

It is true that we need to ensure there are better services for people with mental health who are struggling with suicidality. The statistics really bear this out. If there are more guns in society when people are struggling, it results in really horrible outcomes for people and families.

There needs to a phone closer to peoples' bedside tables than a firearm when they are struggling. That is true in cases of domestic violence and suicidality. However, when I think about the country I would like my kids to grow up in, if I am lucky enough to ever have kids, it is one with fewer firearms and a safer community where we do not need to worry about these types of consequences and tragedies happening so often.

I will move on to something a little less difficult for me to talk about, which is sport. I am the parliamentary secretary for sport and I have a lot of friends who have gone to the Olympics for sport shooting. Repeatedly, over the last hour or so, I heard the Conservatives talk about how we are taking guns away from Olympic athletes, and that just could not be further from the truth. There are a number of categories of individuals who are licensed to carry certain firearms in Canada, and Olympic sport shooters and those training to go to the Olympics are a part of those.

There are about 4,000 athletes in Canada, with whom the federal government works, on national teams for the Olympics and the Paralympics, but over 8,000 athletes are licensed to own certain types of firearms and use those firearms in the context of sport. I want to ensure that everybody in the House is aware of the fact that in the 10 events at the summer Olympics, because there is one in the winter Olympics as well if we include the biathlon, of the 10 types of guns used, four of them are air guns.

*Government Orders*

The modern pentathlon has moved to a laser gun. They do not want to worry about various restrictions in some countries and bringing these guns on planes and across borders and so on, so they are taking a more modern approach to the sport and using a laser gun. In the 10 sport shooting categories, four of those guns are air pistols or rifles. They are not in those banned categories. The rifles are bolt action, so single shot, which are also not banned. The other ones are shotguns, which are also not on any list.

All of the hysteria from the other side about how this law will make it more difficult for athletes to train for their event at the Olympics is a false narrative. Those members have continually said that they are standing up for Olympians and pointed over at me, as the Olympian in the House, as to say I should be standing up for my friends and colleagues. I had a lot of meetings with them.

I was talking to members from the Canadian Olympic Committee as early as today about this issue. Those athletes are exempt and protected, and we will continue to work with athletes if they have other concerns, because these laws are not meant to take guns away from sport shooters or certainly not Olympians.

I would like to move on a bit and talk about hunting and indigenous rights. Hunting is a way of life in Canada. It is a matter of food security. It is a matter of tradition. It is a matter of a way of life in Canada. That is why, over the last couple of months, the Minister of Public Safety has taken time to meet with hunters in Yukon and the Northwest Territories, as well as in closer urban centres. The measures we have taken reflect that work. They reflect that engagement and that communication so we respect the traditions of northerners, not just indigenous people but a lot of people who rely on firearms to ensure there is food in the freezer over the course of the winter. These amendments do not touch guns commonly used for hunting. They apply for a forward-looking definition to protect our communities.

I also heard the Conservatives repeatedly say that they are standing up for indigenous rights. I do too. Ensuring indigenous people and their traditional ways of life are protected is a priority of mine and many people in the House. I want to reiterate that these amendments do not touch guns commonly used for hunting. In addition to that, these amendments also respect the rights of first nations, Inuit and Métis, including a specific amendment that states clearly nothing in this definition will infringe on the rights of indigenous people under section 35 of the Constitution. The non-derogation clause for indigenous people is reaffirming the section 35 rights of indigenous people and reinforcing our UNDRIP obligations. I do not need to point out for members of the House that Conservatives voted against this, which is very sad.

I am thankful for the opportunity to speak to Bill C-21.

• (1200)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague said that he wanted communities to be safer.

In Bill C-21, the government is increasing the maximum sentences for firearms trafficking. However, it is very rare for an individual to get the maximum penalty for such an offence because

criminal networks use people with no criminal records who are then given shorter sentences.

My colleague says he wants to live in a safer community. Does he believe that increasing maximum sentences that are never actually imposed will be enough to accomplish that?

**Mr. Adam van Koevorden:** Mr. Speaker, it is very important to reassure our community about how important this bill is in preventing firearms trafficking.

[*English*]

A record number of guns last year were seized at the border, but we need to do more. Bill C-21 would do more. It would invest in the CBSA, after the Conservatives cut so much of the funding for our border services agency. They like to say that all these guns are coming in from the United States, yet we are standing up and ensuring that does not happen.

I hear the member's comment with respect to the maximum sentence, which also needs to go up so that the worst offenders spend more time in prison. I know that bail reform is forthcoming from the Minister of Justice, and I am looking forward to that as well, because it has been a topic of conversation in the House and elsewhere.

• (1205)

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am gratified that the NDP was able to force the withdrawal of amendments G-4 and G-46 in February, which caused such consternation to law-abiding gun owners across the country. What has replaced them, as members are well aware, are provisions that tackle the ghost guns used by criminals. We have seen an epidemic in various parts of the country, like in my region where we have seen a tenfold increase in the use of untraceable firearms by criminals. That has to be addressed immediately. Law enforcement is calling for the powers that have now been put in through amendments to Bill C-21.

I would ask my colleague this. Why do the Conservatives seem so hell-bent on filibustering the bill and filibustering the considerations around ghost guns, so law enforcement can actually take action against criminals who use these ghost guns?

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Adam van Koevorden:** Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge the hard work of my colleague on the public safety committee. I know he is always committed to ensuring that the NDP gets credit for its good work, but a lot of great rural members of Parliament from other parties, including mine, stood up and said that it did not reflect the will of a lot of their constituents. I am grateful for all of those voices. That is how this place works, and I thank the member for bringing those voices forward.

However, to the substantive question, I do not know why the Conservatives are so hell-bent on preventing this bill from going forward. It is responsible gun legalisation. We are standing up and ensuring that the voices of law enforcement, victims and many other groups are heard.

The only group that the Conservatives are standing up for is the gun lobby, and very consistently. They have been keynoting at gun lobby events. They have been fundraising off its back. They have been using the same rhetoric in the House of Commons and on their social media. It is disgraceful to be using that NRA-style rhetoric in the conduct of our work as Canadian parliamentarians. This is not the United States. We do not want to have outcomes like they do in the United States with respect to gun crime. We have a safe country because we have responsible gun laws, and these are the next steps to that.

I would like to thank the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby for his hard work.

**Mr. Parm Bains (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, over the last decade, 81% of violent crimes have increased with the use of guns. The member mentioned future generations being impacted by this. I would ask him if this bill would help alleviate the concerns around an American-style gun culture in the future of Canada.

**Mr. Adam van Koevorden:** Mr. Speaker, one thing I did not get to talk about is all of the investments and programming that the government has made with respect to changing culture and ensuring that there is a place to go and an alternative to crime, particularly in urban areas, so that young men, primarily, have access to sport, the arts, mentors and role models. That is what is missing in so many of those communities: making sure there are services and programs available. I used to work with a justice-involved youth organization called MLSE LaunchPad, in downtown Toronto. It was an extraordinary organization that made sure there were options for kids so they could make good choices. That is exactly what Bill C-21 would do.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about Bill C-21, which was tabled by the Liberal government in May 2022. When Bill C-21 was tabled, the Prime Minister stated that its purpose was to stop gun crime before it starts. Canadians now realize that the purpose of the bill was never to improve public safety, and the proof is in the details.

Since the Prime Minister came to power, his party has said one thing and done another. Violent crime is on the rise, street gangs do not fear law enforcement due to the Liberals' revolving-door justice system, and Canadians have reason to be afraid.

The Conservatives never supported this bill because we knew that it was more about Liberal ideology than the safety of Canadians. We knew that it was about confiscating the property of hunters and law-abiding Canadians, because it is not the first time the Liberals have tried to do that. With Bill C-21, the Liberals also added amendments without allowing for debate in the House. It was not until Carey Price spoke out against them publicly that the Liberals cancelled their decision.

It is now clear that they did not learn anything from that public humiliation, because they are proposing to create an advisory committee that will do their dirty work for them. At the end of that exercise, hunters, sport shooters and law-abiding Canadians will have their property confiscated by this government. Step by step, amendment by amendment, the Liberals will achieve their end goal, and that is why they must be voted out.

The “red flag” measure in the bill has been rejected by law enforcement and victims' groups like PolyRemembers. This just makes the stench of Liberal hypocrisy even more blatant.

The government always does the same thing. It claims to have solutions and solemnly promises that it will fix everything, but, as we can see from Bill C-21, it does the opposite. Regulating people whose weapons are already very well regulated will do nothing to improve public safety.

The “red flag” measure is also being implemented. It is a rule that could potentially have been useful. I thought that the “red flag” measure would apply to cases where a gun owner who has mental health problems is reported, for example. The problem is that, the way the measure was designed, it is the victims who bear the burden of proof.

This week, we mark Victims and Survivors of Crime Week. We should think about the victims a bit more often. Victims bear the burden of filing a complaint with the court. That makes no sense. It has been denounced by groups like PolyRemembers and many other victims' groups, as well as by the police. Initially, doctors' groups supported the idea but, after taking a closer look, they ultimately said that it made no sense.

I was at committee when the vote took place. The Bloc Québécois agreed with us on it. We listened to the same presentations from victims' groups. The Conservatives and the Bloc members voted against the “red flag” amendment. We do not know why the Liberals dug in their heels, with the support of their NDP buddies.

When discussing public safety, we should always put victims and potential victims first. What we understand from the philosophy behind Bill C-21 is that law-abiding citizens are being controlled and victims are not even being listened to, even though they are the main people involved. I look at it from every angle, but I still cannot understand.

Why is the government, with the support of the NDP, still taking a path that defies all logic? Who is it trying to please and, above all, to what end?

Ultimately, what we all want, or should want, is to protect public safety and Canadians. Think about what has been done in recent years. Think about the rules that were put in place under Bill C-5, which was implemented last fall. It is a disaster. Even our friends in the Bloc said that they should not have supported the Liberal government with that bill and that changes needed to be made.

Bill C-75 was passed a few years ago. At the time, the Conservatives once again pointed out that the legislation was shoddy, particularly with respect to bail. Today, the government sees that it did a bad job drafting the legislation and that it is no good.

Every time, the government accuses the Conservatives of wanting to be hard on criminals.

• (1210)

Meanwhile, it develops and passes legislation that gives criminals a lot of latitude. Ultimately, criminals make a mockery of the justice system—and again, the victims pay the price. The victims do not understand.

As proof, since the government took power in 2015 and implemented all these changes, there has been a 32% increase in violent crimes. That is quite clear.

We can see the signs. Criminals are not afraid. Criminals are making a mockery of the justice system. They are making a mockery of law enforcement. Unfortunately, the police must enforce the law and the courts must apply the law as it is passed here in the House. Their hands are tied. Criminals see that and scoff at the whole thing.

A few weeks ago, I introduced Bill C-325, which will be debated when we return in two weeks. My bill addresses three things. The first is conditional release. I recently learned that some prisoners accused of serious and violent crimes, drug trafficking crimes or other crimes who are granted conditional release face no consequences when they fail to comply with the conditions. The police arrive, they see a criminal who is not complying with their conditions and all they can do is submit a report to the parole officer. I learned that, in 2014, one of our former colleagues had introduced a private member's bill to address that. Unfortunately an election was called. My bill seeks to change the law to bring in consequences for breaching conditions of release.

The second element of my bill provides that parole officers must report to authorities when one of their "clients" is not complying with their conditions. In such cases, the parole officer must report to the police so there can be an arrest. We are talking about violent offenders.

### *Government Orders*

The third element of my bill seeks to correct the problem that was created by Bill C-5, namely allowing violent criminals to serve a sentence in the community, watching Netflix at home. People saw what happened last fall. This makes no sense. It does not work. One of the components of Bill C-325 amends the Criminal Code to put an end to these situations that show the public how criminals are laughing at the justice system. That is not how we should be living in Canada. I will discuss my bill in greater detail in two weeks.

I will come back to Bill C-21. Me, I am a gun owner. When the Liberals accused us of being in the pay of the gun lobby, I felt personally targeted, since I am a gun owner myself. I have my licences. I have everything required. I am not a criminal. I passed my tests. Moreover, Quebec has the Act to protect persons with regard to activities involving firearms, the former Bill 9, which contains additional measures to ensure compliance. Membership in a gun club is mandatory. People must go there to shoot at least once a year to abide by the law in Quebec.

Therefore, when we look at all the rules in place that people must obey, I do not see why we should suddenly feel like criminals. Bill C-21 is directly aimed at people like me. I began shooting at the age of 17 in the Canadian Armed Forces. I have always obeyed the law. I have always done what I was asked to do. Daily checks are conducted in the RCMP system to ensure that law-abiding people with registered licences obey the law. That is what is done.

Why am I now being targeted by people saying I am a criminal and in the pay of lobbies when I have my licences and obey the law?

• (1215)

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will get a chance to expand upon this, but members should not try to fool anyone who is following this particular debate. The Conservative Party of Canada has consistently spread misinformation, whether it has been by trying to give the impression to hunters that we are after their guns, or whether it has been on indigenous rights. I believe it is being done intentionally for one reason, and that is to raise funds.

The question I would put to the member opposite is the same question I asked his colleague: When will the Conservative Party put the safety of Canadians ahead of raising money for its political party?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Mr. Speaker, I want to come back to my colleague's question. What disinformation have we spread?

When the G-4 and G-46 amendments were presented in November, everyone wondered what that was about. First, Carey Price posted great social media posts to ask why he was being attacked.

*Government Orders*

Everyone, even the NDP, had to work very hard in the corners. The Bloc Québécois said that this was not going to work. Where is the disinformation? Were some models of guns on that list common hunting rifles used by hunters and indigenous peoples? The answer is yes. That is why the amendments were withdrawn.

Now they have come up with another way of reworking it. They will ask a committee to draw up a new list of firearms, in the end. That is how they will wash their hands of any responsibility. Where is the disinformation? They have directly attacked hunters and indigenous peoples.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I do not strictly have questions. Instead, I have comments on what I have learned from my colleague's speech.

He began by saying that the Conservative Party never supported Bill C-21. I would remind him that in committee, the Conservative Party voted in favour of most of the amendments that were on the table. However, it is understandable that they were particularly in favour of measures on ghost weapons and yellow flags, so it is not entirely true to say that they are against everything in it.

Next, I have a lot of respect for my colleague, but I would be careful before praising Carey Price. He knows that very well. We remember that when Carey Price posted his photo with a firearm in hand that was not even affected by Bill C-21, he did so praising a firearms lobby that offered a promotional code to its members for lobby promotional material or equipment by using the code "Poly". This is a reference to the Polytechnique killings that took place some years ago and it offered this to its members. I find that disgusting.

Now, the Conservative Party says that Carey Price knows what he is talking about. I am a hockey fan and I have a lot of respect for Carey Price's talent, but I would be careful before praising someone who praised a firearms lobby and uses the promotional code "Poly". I will reassure him. He says that the government takes him for a criminal because he has a permit and he will no longer be able to be a sport shooter and continue to practice. If he has a permit at this time, he can continue to practise his sport. The freeze means that there are people who do not have a permit at this time and they will not be able to get one in the future.

• (1220)

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Mr. Speaker, indeed, Carey Price did not know that the whole story behind the Canadian Coalition for Firearm Rights' Polytechnique discount code. I believe that if Carey Price had been aware of it, he would not have endorsed it in this way.

The fact remains that the principle is quite clear. Setting aside the promotional aspect, which was inappropriate, Carey Price's message essentially was to flag the story about amendments G-4 and G-46, which were in fact changed. That shows that there was truth in what Carey Price said.

As far as Bill C-21 is concerned, we are against it. However, we proposed some amendments and supported others, just as we would for any other bill. Still, in the end, we cannot support the bill as a whole. It is a bit like a budget. There are things in a budget that we

can support, but if there are too many things that do not suit us, we will vote against it.

We have never been against gun control in Canada. We are already one of the best-controlled societies in the world with the rules in place. As I said earlier, we have permits, we are monitored and that is great. We are not asking for less. It is just that sometimes, things are done in a way outside of what should be done to ensure general public safety.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak to Bill C-21. It is important for us to recognize that often legislation, like the budget, is brought into the chamber that is a reflection of what Canadians expect of the Government of Canada.

Leger did a poll regarding the manner in which the Government of Canada is moving toward the issue of gun control. There were 84% of Canadians who feel that this government is on the right track when it comes to gun control and the legislation being brought forward.

I would like to quote an article. The headline is, "MCC report calls for stricter gun laws", and it states, "The final report of the Mass Casualty Commission (MCC) investigating the April 2020 mass shooting in Nova Scotia that left 22 people dead makes several recommendations to meaningfully change Canada's gun laws." This is significant.

The commission is a non-partisan body. The chair of the commission, Michael MacDonald, is a retired Nova Scotia chief justice and the other commissioners are Leanne Fitch, who served for seven years as the chief of police for Fredericton Police Force, and Kim Stanton, a lawyer and legal scholar. Many recommendations called for stricter gun laws. This was earlier this year. The article went on to say, "The commission also determined that the safety of women survivors of intimate-partner violence is 'put at risk by the presence of firearms and ammunition in the household.'"

One of the Conservative members was critical of the red flag. When I think of the red flag component of the legislation, I think of a domestic abuse victim having to be put into a position where the spouse is a gun owner. Under the red flag now, this individual would be able to raise the issue in court and have the person's name kept off the record. I see that as a positive thing. If not directly, indirectly the commission refers to that. Those are the types of things in the legislation.

We hear members talk about ghost guns, something very real. If we were to check with law enforcement agencies from coast to coast to coast, we would find there is concern about the growing appetite to produce these ghost guns. We need this legislation. It would assist law enforcement officers to deal with this very serious issue. Let us think about it. A 3-D printer and someone with a mischievous criminal mind are a bad combination. The legislation before us would deal with that.

*Government Orders*

I want to pick up on a question that I posed to members opposite, because I really do believe that the Conservative Party's primary motivation in opposing this legislation is not because of gun owners, but because of the way Conservatives have manipulated the issue to the degree that they have raised millions of dollars for their party over the years. It is somewhat ironic when we stop and think about it. When the gun registry, for example, came into being, it was actually a Conservative idea. A Conservative senator brought it to Kim Campbell and Kim Campbell moved forward with it. She was a Progressive Conservative prime minister, and I underline the word "progressive".

● (1225)

The current Conservative Party has abandoned that word. It has taken such a hard right turn. The other day, someone sent me a Twitter feed of the current leader of the Conservative Party. I could not believe it. Do we want to talk about motivation to run in elections, feeding conspiracy theories? It is totally amazing how far-fetched the leader of the Conservative Party is. He is in the non-reality zone, if I could put it that way, absolutely fact-free.

If we take a look at the gun issue, I genuinely believe that the Conservative Party is using this legislation as a mechanism to continue to spread information that just is not true. The member says, well, what kind of information? Trying to give hunters the impression that the government is after their guns: it is hard to believe. It is not true. We are not. There is absolutely no doubt about that, but we would not know based on some of the social media postings that we hear about coming from the Conservative Party.

At the end of the day, whether it is issues such as the gun registry from many years ago or other types of legislation that have come forward, the far right within the Conservative Party wants to use anything and everything that it can feed to that grouping of people in order to generate funds.

I think that when we listen to some of the reports that have come out, like I cited at the very beginning with the MCC, an apolitical, non-partisan commission, a commission that everyone supported, the report that it came forward with is very clear.

If we take a look at the information that we received from Canadians as a whole, such as, as I say, the Leger poll, 84% are saying we are on the right track.

When we talk about gun crimes, we have actually seen a decrease by 5% between 2020 and 2021.

Unlike the Conservative Party, we are after illegal guns that are coming up from the United States. Last year, 1,200 guns and tens of thousands of weapons were seized at the border. I will compare that to any year of Stephen Harper.

It is a combination of things that this government is doing to make our communities safer when it comes to gun violence, whether it is budget measures, supporting our border control officers, providing supports for law enforcement officers or enhancing the tools that are going to make a difference.

These are all the types of actions that this government has taken in response to what we know Canadians are genuinely concerned about.

I would suggest that my Conservative friends need to put the safety and concerns of Canadians ahead of political party financing and fundraising, to look in the mirror and understand the true value of this legislation, which is supported by all members, except for the Conservative members, I must say, and get behind it.

This is a good opportunity for them to take a flip-flop and support this legislation. By supporting this legislation, they would be telling Canadians that they support safer communities. They support legislation that is going to make a positive difference.

That is a powerful message and, coincidence would have it, it is factual and it would be nice to see coming from the Conservative Party.

● (1230)

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as a rural member of Parliament, I find it deeply troubling that it seems to be that, of all the left-leaning parties in this House, the only people the Liberals can get to speak to this legislation seem to be urban members of Parliament. There are Liberal members of Parliament who have a very different view, but the Liberals even tried to silence those opinions from being shared at committee. They are censoring them and it is absolutely shameful.

The conversation around flip-flops is something. Can the member acknowledge that the Liberals have flip-flopped so many times on the gun issue? It was the Liberal Prime Minister, when he first ran in 2015, who promised Canadians that he would not come after their guns and promised that he would not bring back a front or backdoor gun registry. He bragged about being able to play with the weapons of his protection detail when he was a kid. Supposedly, at one point, he understood it, yet now we have the Prime Minister who has said there are farmers and hunters who will lose their guns because of this legislation.

He wants to talk about flip-flops. Can the member at least acknowledge that the Liberals have flipped and flopped so many times on this issue? They are playing politics that are damaging the rights of so many Canadians who are simply looking for security when it comes to firearms ownership. The law-abiding individuals who own those guns in our communities, the indigenous folks who own those guns in our communities and so many others, are sick and tired of being targeted by the Liberal partisans.

● (1235)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Again, just a reminder to keep questions and comments as short as possible so everyone can participate.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, the member just made my point. He is giving a false impression. He is trying to say to farmers, hunters and indigenous people that we are going to take away their guns. That is balderdash. That is not the case.

Does the member not realize that he is doing a great disservice to the whole debate, a debate that Canadians from coast to coast are concerned about? They want safer communities. This legislation would provide safer communities.

*Government Orders*

On the record, in terms of rural versus urban, the member might note that I periodically get the chance to stand up and address legislation. I always welcome that. I never look at it as an urban-rural split. I like to think that I am very sensitive to all rural issues. It is one of the reasons I spend a lot of time talking about agricultural issues.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased with some of the changes made to Bill C-21 along the way, and I really want to highlight the extraordinary work of my colleague from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia. We saw her take charge and manage this file for the Bloc Québécois. We are all very proud of what has been done on this file, which was very complex and whose path was very chaotic. I believe that the final result is very impressive.

One of the issues of great concern to people in my riding, and probably in many others as well, is that of airsoft guns, the controversial replica toy guns. Many people back home will be satisfied. As we worked on Bill C-21, we also raised the issue of smuggling, crime and gun trafficking at the border. I would like my colleague from Winnipeg North to tell us more about this.

What will Bill C-21 do to fight organized crime and gun trafficking at the border?

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, right off, I would mention the issue of ghost guns. That is a growing issue that has been raised by law enforcement officers all over the country. I believe this is a great attempt to deal with that specific issue.

I want to pick up on the member's comments that there has been a great deal of co-operation, in good part because of the NDP and the Bloc. We have seen stronger, healthier legislation than when it was first introduced. It goes to show that if the opposition works with the government and the government works with the opposition, we can have better legislation. We do appreciate that support.

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, I am very proud of the work that my NDP colleagues have done in ensuring that indigenous peoples' rights are protected, that hunters and lawful gun owners are also protected.

Why is it so important to make sure that this bill is passed right away so we can make sure there is a better sense of public safety in urban settings?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, there is a sense of urgency to the legislation. One of the reasons it is going to be able to pass is because of the support of the New Democrats to bring in the time allocation that will be necessary.

The Conservative Party of Canada has made it very clear that Conservative members will not support it; they will go out of their way to ensure that this legislation never sees the light of day. Without the support of at least one opposition party, the Liberal government would not be able to get the legislation passed, because we need time allocation. Otherwise, the legislation would not pass because of the commitment by the Conservative Party not to see it pass.

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to be able to stand in this place and debate the issues that are so important to my constituents and Canadians.

It is interesting. As we enter into debate on this subject, I have heard, today and over the course of the last number of months, an emphasis on a massive disconnect that exists. I have heard this in the previous members' speeches. I have been hearing it in questions and comments. I heard it at committee. I was a regular member of the public safety committee in the previous Parliament, but not in this Parliament. However, I had the chance to participate in some of those meetings.

We are seeing a massive disconnect between rural and urban Canada. There are many Liberals who would try to diminish that and use fanciful language to suggest that they are somehow listening to those voices and whatnot. However, I can say very clearly that when I have canvassed and spoken with many constituents, they feel entirely abandoned by the Liberal government and say that its political and ideological agenda is unfairly targeting them.

We are debating Bill C-21. Many Canadians have followed this debate very closely. It is interesting, because the debate has evolved quite substantially. I am going to go back to 2015; at that time, we had the then leader of the Liberal Party, who is now Prime Minister, making it very clear that he thought that the situation with firearms in Canada was in a good place. He promised not to bring back a gun registry. He was quoted saying that his protection detail used to let him play with their service revolvers and that he had a great deal of respect for those firearms owners.

However, it seems that as the years have gone by, scandals have erupted, and there has been a gradual diminishment of Liberal support from across the country. Thus, the Liberals seem to fall back on an old tactic. When they are failing, they go back to attacking those whom they think they can score political points against.

I would suggest that with the introduction and the amendments that were initially proposed, and now as the Liberals have rammed through this legislation that is supposed to be about firearms and is messaged in the guise of public safety, it is really just an attack. It is an attack from a government that is floundering and needing to change the channel from scandals, mismanagement and where the country is at, because so many Canadians are suffering.

Instead of dealing with the real issues that Canadians are suffering from, the Liberals are saying, "Look over here." They are simply going to something that they think they can score political points on. That is cheap politics. It increasingly furthers that rural-urban divide that I mentioned. Moreover, when those sorts of games are played, it does not actually create good public policy. We have seen that here.

*Government Orders*

We have a very large bill with a significant level of complexity, with far more than I would be able to fit in a 10-minute speech. However, while the Liberals say that this is about Canadians' safety and taking guns off the streets, it is ironic that they absolutely fail to acknowledge that the problem is not law-abiding firearms owners. The problem is not those who go through training, who keep up their certification and licensing, and who are legally allowed to own firearms in this country.

There are more than two million firearms owners, many of whom I am proud to represent, coming from a rural area. Those individuals are hunters, sport shooters and farmers. In fact, for many farmers and ranchers, a firearm is a tool. I am not sure the Liberals quite understand this. It is a tool like any other. It is important to acknowledge that.

Yet, we have the Liberals attacking these individuals with this gun-confiscation regime, and they are saying that it is about public safety. The reality is that it does nothing. In fact, when I asked at committee whether some of the policies that had been brought in at a provincial level had resulted in any reductions in crime, the Liberals could not answer those questions.

• (1240)

I think it is ironic and unfortunate that we see the politicization of this issue. We see a Prime Minister who is bogged down by scandal, corruption and mismanagement targeting 2.1 million Canadians for cheap political points. When Canadians can hardly afford to put food on the table, what do the Liberals do? They go back to talking about guns.

However, I want to talk about the public safety issue specifically, because that is a huge issue. We have seen a massive increase in violent crime. We have seen a massive increase in the illegal use of firearms, yet we see how, instead of the Liberals addressing the real root of the problem, they just go after the easy target of law-abiding firearms owners. They target them instead of doing the hard work that is required to deal with smuggled guns, violent criminal behaviour or a broken bail system.

The unfortunate reality is that there are Canadians who are dying as a result of violent crime. There are victims, and it is because of a soft-on-crime agenda that the Liberals refuse to acknowledge as part of the problem. My constituents are sick and tired of it. They see how damaging the soft-on-crime agenda is to the public safety of our entire country, including rural and urban areas and everywhere in between. However, instead of doing anything about it, the Liberals say it is those who are trained and vetted, those who have a check run against them in the police system every single day to ensure that they continue to be allowed to own those firearms.

The fact is that law-abiding firearms owners are some of the least likely individuals in this country to commit a crime. Members from the Liberal Party talk about not wanting to import American-style politics into the debate. It is that party that is playing those sorts of divisive games and trying to throw 2.1 million Canadians under the bus so they can score a few points. Further to that, it was not Conservatives who had a former presidential candidate come and speak to their party convention, it was the Liberals. Since they are spouting off rhetoric about firearms, I would simply ask the question of whether they agree with Hillary Clinton's position on the second

amendment, because she is pretty pro-gun compared with some of the things they are saying.

The hypocrisy is rich, and the consequence is that the Liberals' dividing for political gain is putting many of my constituents in an untenable position. I have many constituents who are proud of that rural heritage, that sporting heritage and that conservation heritage. I do not have time to get into the conservation aspect of hunting and how important it is for wildlife management across this country. We see how the Liberals are throwing that away.

I would just note a point I made in committee yesterday. We see a virtual ban on handguns. We see so many firearms, including hunting rifles, that will be confiscated. We see that the Liberals have devastated many small business owners across the country, those who would own gun shops and sporting goods stores. The Liberals are pretty quick to accuse regular, law-abiding Canadians of all the worst possible things, yet even in the bill there is a carve-out for federal police forces.

For example, there is the ability of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission to allow its peace officers to carry firearms. Moreover, all of us in this place very much appreciate the good work that our security personnel do around here. They carry guns, and that is okay. We have the RCMP, municipal police forces and provincial police forces; their officers all carry guns, and that is okay. The Liberals are saying that they want the protection but that they do not trust Canadians.

We have here a massive disconnect between how one would actually solve concerns related to public safety and how the Liberals are simply taking an easy path, playing cheap politics and targeting many of my constituents. I would suggest that there is a clear difference in the way Conservatives would approach issues of public safety in this country. There is a political party that will go after those who do not commit the crimes and let those who do commit them back out on the streets, with weak bail and parole systems that are literally seeing people killed. That is not an exaggeration.

What is the Conservative plan? We hear often from the Liberals that they want to hear the Conservative plan, so I will give a bit of what that looks like. We would stop going after those who are least likely to commit the crimes and put the violent repeat offenders behind bars, where they belong. We would ensure that a true balance was met so that Canadians could trust the fact that they are not being targeted simply because they go through the process and are trusted to own a firearm, unlike those who are not.

• (1245)

**Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we can talk about cheap politics, petty games and filibusters. Indeed, my colleague opposite talked about some of the petty games, but he did not reference the fact that so much of the time that they have been asking for has been wasted by the Conservatives through this filibuster process.

*Government Orders*

As the gun lobby is attacking members of Parliament like me on social media for standing up for public safety and responsible gun laws, it is simultaneously retweeting Conservative MPs and the leader of the Conservative Party. It seems to me now that, similar to the United States, the Canadian gun lobby and the Conservative Party of Canada are one and the same. They are clearly bed buddies.

My colleague said that we are all urban MPs on this side, but I am not. I am a semi-rural MP, and I have a lot of avid hunters and farmers in my community as well.

However, I have two questions. First, do Canadians need AR15s to protect their farms? Do they use them for hunting? Do they use assault-style weapons and weapons of war for these “sports”, as he put it? Second, has the member opposite ever benefited from fundraising? Has he ever keynoted a gala for the Canadian gun lobby, as many of his colleagues have?

• (1250)

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Mr. Speaker, the member would certainly be welcome to come and visit some of the rural communities that are absolutely furious and frustrated with how they are so quick to attack those who choose to follow the law versus those who do not.

If the member wants to talk about American-style politics, who headlined their convention? It was a supporter of the second amendment, Hillary Clinton. The hypocrisy is rich coming from that party. Specifically, it is interesting that the member was pretty quick to brag about his history in the Olympics in his pre-political life, yet what the bill would actually do, and a common-sense amendment—

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

The hon. member for Milton.

**Mr. Adam van Koeverden:** Mr. Speaker, every time the member gets up, he accuses me of bragging about something. I do not have to brag about going to the Olympics. I represented Canada four times. That is not bragging; it is a fact. I am not bragging—

**The Deputy Speaker:** That is not a point of order; we are getting into debate.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, I certainly would brag about the member going to the Olympics. I wish I could accomplish such a feat.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Again, we are descending pretty deep into debate here.

The hon. member for Milton.

**Mr. Adam van Koeverden:** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand up in this House to make sure that the rights of both responsible gun owners and those who aspire to compete in the Olympics are upheld, which the legislation does.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Again, we are into debate.

The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Mr. Speaker, when a common-sense amendment was brought forward to expand the exemptions to vari-

ous associations related to sport shooting, including those who went to the Olympics, the Liberals voted against it. In fact, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety said that they want to ban handguns. Therefore, it is a little bit rich to have the elitist-type attitude coming from members opposite, who would target law-abiding Canadians, while we see criminals walking free on our streets. Canadians can judge for themselves.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech and his passion in this particular area. One of the things he mentioned was the training aspect, which is interesting, along with the amendments to the bill. I would also like to commend my colleague from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia for her leadership in getting hunting guns removed from the bill, for example.

Could this aspect be strengthened? What is the role of a shooting range in a given municipality or region? Is it too easy to get a permit? These are legitimate questions that are being raised under the circumstances. I myself obtained a firearms possession and acquisition licence without ever having fired a shot in my life, which is a bit ironic. Hunting has become a hobby for me, a way to spend some quality time with my family in the woods.

Can this aspect be strengthened? Who does this gun possession legislation apply to, other than the black market references? How can we make sure it targets the criminals?

[*English*]

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Mr. Speaker, there are unique constitutional exemptions that place some of the roles of the chief firearms officers directly into the hands of provinces. I am sure the member from the Bloc Québécois, especially with his attitude toward Quebec, provincial autonomy and whatnot, would be very much onside with ensuring the Liberals would respect provincial jurisdiction. It is pretty evident that they do not.

I do applaud him because he, unlike so many in the House, has taken the time to get what I am assuming is a possession and acquisition licence, which would require going through a course to learn how to use a firearm and the respect required. Those of us in the House, who are making the rules, regulations and laws surrounding so many different issues, all make an effort to engage on the subject matter. We may not be able to become experts, but we should do our best to learn and engage with the subject matter.

I applaud any member of this place who would take the time to get their PAL to understand the rules and regulations as they are now. Those who go through that process would learn that maybe we have a pretty good system designed to keep Canadians safe. While they target those individuals who follow the law, they are letting criminals out on our streets and people are dying as a result.

*Government Orders*

• (1255)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thought the logic of the last argument made by the member for Battle River—Crowfoot was quite fascinating. According to him, I should not be able to make any laws on CPP or OAS, for example, because I have never been the recipient of either of those programs. Nonetheless, I digress.

This bill—

**The Deputy Speaker:** There is a lot of noise going on in the anteroom. I want to make sure the lobbies know to keep their doors closed, and if there are people coming to visit us, they keep them closed.

There we go. I will be able to hear the member now. The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, Conservatives are trying to paint this bill as something else, but in their defence, they have spent so much time doing that, that it would be literally impossible for them to try to backtrack on it. The member for Battle River—Crowfoot has shared so much misinformation about this bill, as have so many other Conservatives, that to try to reverse that position now would be blatant hypocrisy. They have no choice but to continue to push the same agenda. I feel for the situation they are in.

This bill would primarily do three things: put a freeze on handguns; introduce the red and yellow flags, which I will speak about in a couple of minutes; and combat smuggling. In particular, for crimes related to smuggling, there would be an increase in the penalty from 10 years' imprisonment to 14 years' imprisonment.

Let us start with some of the statistics from Statistics Canada, which are quite contradictory to what the member for Battle River—Crowfoot said a few moments ago. According to Statistics Canada, gun crime in Canada is down 5% between 2020 and 2021. In 2022, as the other parliamentary secretary said before me, 1,200 guns and 73,000 weapons were seized at the border. Those are 100% and 50% respective increases from 2021. In Toronto, one of the major cities in Canada, gun violence dropped by 22% between 2020 and 2021.

Eighty-four per cent of Canadians believe that the government is on the right track in its reforms to gun control. The 16% of Canadians that remains, whom the Conservatives are apparently working hard to make so much money off of through fundraising, must be incredibly important to them for them to be laser-focused on this particular issue and that 16% of Canadians.

The red flag provisions, as I alluded to in my opening, would allow for the petition of an individual to the court for emergency prohibition purposes. That is extremely important because another statistic is that a woman who lives in a household that has a gun in that household is statistically five times more likely to become a victim of violence that involves that weapon. That is a statistical fact. What we are trying to do with this red flag provision is give potential victims the opportunity to flag to the court that perhaps this gun should not be in the household. How do Conservatives respond to that? The member for Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner,

in committee, said that this would increase “malicious false claims”.

The default reaction of the Conservatives is not how do we help protect women who we know are the victims more often than not? How we protect them is not the member's concern. His default concern is about the malicious people who are out to get their former spouse or former partner and that people are going to make a fake report so they can get that weapon taken away. That is the Conservatives' concern. Their concern is not the potential victims of the violence, and I find that extremely troubling. The 16% of the population in Canada who do not agree with the gun control reform we are bringing in must have a lot of money because that is whom the Conservatives are laser-focused on.

I am reminded of the 2021 election. I really wish I could use a prop in the House because, if I could, I would hold it up and show it to everybody, but I will not. I will describe it to members. It came into my riding.

By the way, I am in a semi-rural riding. I hope it is rural enough for the Conservative members who were making fun of the member for Milton during his last question for claiming that he has a semi-rural riding. The islands in my riding, in addition to pretty much all of the areas north of the 401 and east of the Cataract River in Kingston and the Islands, are rural areas.

• (1300)

I come from a strong family of hunters. All three of my mother's brothers hunt and own hunting properties in Ontario. My late father-in-law grew up in a hunting lodge where visitors from Canada and the United States would come to be taught how to hunt, fish and explore the outdoors responsibly, so I take great offence to the members who come into the House to try to lecture other members because they believe their ridings are not rural enough.

Nonetheless, the National Firearms Association showed up in my riding, as it did in many other ridings in the 2021 election, dropping off pamphlets at doors that looked an awful lot like the pamphlets we were already delivering. It had literally copied the Prime Minister's stock photo, put the Liberal red on it, and had “Meet Your Liberal Team” written on it, with a QR code to get to the website. By the way, that website is still up right now, as I just went to it.

I heard the back-and-forth earlier with the member for Battle River—Crowfoot, who challenged the assertion made by the parliamentary secretary and member for Milton that the gun lobby in Canada and the Conservative Party are one in the same. If we go to that website, we can literally see every single question from Conservatives in period question on it. That website does not only talk about gun laws. Literally every Conservative grievance is there, so, yes, there is a lot of money to be made in this, as the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader said earlier.

*Government Orders*

Conservatives are laser-focused on that. They had no problem encouraging their partners to go to ridings to drop off these pamphlets to try to trick Canadians into thinking it was a genuine “Meet Your Liberal Team” flyer to go to the website to see the candidates who were running. However, this was a flyer that was printed, manufactured and links to a website that is all under the control of the Canadian Coalition for Firearms Rights, a branch of the Conservative Party of Canada.

I think it is extremely unfortunate, as members have said before me, that time and again Conservative members get up in the House to misrepresent the law we are creating, the facts and the statistics, all in the name of raising more money. They are trying to capitalize off this as much as possible. Who knows, maybe later today we will have the Leader of the Opposition filming a video as he is running out of the House of Commons, with the mace in the background, as he did with a previous bill we had, just to raise a last bit of money before the issue is dead. It is shameful that His Majesty's opposition operates in this way, yet we see it time and again.

Canadians should take great comfort in knowing that, despite the differences that exist between the Liberals, the Bloc Québécois, the NDP and the Green Party, we are all united around this legislation because we know it is what Canadians want. We know it is the right step forward, and there are adults in this room who are making sure that we do everything we can for the safety of Canadians throughout our country. Unfortunately, the Conservatives are not acting that way.

• (1305)

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, I am very proud of the work the NDP has done to ensure that the rights of indigenous peoples are being protected. I wonder if the member could educate us on what the NDP amendment to add section 35 rights would mean for indigenous peoples.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, the primary objective of the NDP was to ensure there were no unintended consequences of the bill that would affect indigenous communities throughout our country and their ability to continue to hunt and use firearms in a safe manner for their intended purpose of hunting.

I applaud the NDP, quite frankly, for working with the government and doing the right thing at committee by trying to put forward meaningful amendments to the benefit of the intent of the bill, as opposed to Conservatives, who were going to committee and criticizing amendments as tools that would result in people making false claims to the courts about weapons in their household.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the change-up in the routine here. I wanted to ask my hon. colleague from Kingston and the Islands about this. I am good friends with the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot. On both sides of this House I want to identify this particular type of polarization and hope that we can arrest it.

My friend from Battle River—Crowfoot said that the Liberals did not care what rural Canadians think and so on and so forth. Rural Canadians are just as much at risk from gun violence as anyone else. I think in our language and the way we talk about things in this place we should be mindful of the mass casualty report of the killings in Nova Scotia from April 2020. It is very clear, about

those horrific days, that the report revealed that for more than a decade before various reports went into the RCMP that this particular individual had guns, legal guns and illegal guns, and no one followed up. The whole thing was in the context of gender-based violence and domestic violence and the police took the view that that was a lesser offence than other things.

I just want us to find a way in this place to get over what I think is societal long COVID and start working together to protect Canadians.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member made a very good point. For some reason, people tend to think that gun violence is something that only happens in downtown Toronto. Gun violence happens right across our country in urban areas and in rural areas.

In particular, the example that she referenced would have been a situation where the red flag provision could have come in, such as with a petition to the court in an emergency circumstance where an individual has grave concern over weapons in a household that are being stored or could potentially be used in a violent manner.

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as we come to report stage on this piece of legislation, one of the concerning things that the Minister of Public Safety has said is that there will be a creation of a firearms advisory committee. It is unknown at this point, in advance of this bill passing, what the makeup of that committee will be like, who is going to be on it and what decisions it will be making.

We do know that it is going to look at certain firearms and make recommendations to the government. Then it will be up to the government through an order in council to determine whether in fact it is going to ban these firearms. It is effectively a backdoor way of banning firearms that the committee would advise to be banned and that the government wants to ban.

I am wondering if the hon. member has any opinion as to whether in fact this should be the case in the absence of any information and whether this is a good idea or not.

• (1310)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, other than the fact that the minister has indicated he is going to do something, the rest of the question is based on a hypothetical situation that the member suggested might be the case or may happen. I would be reluctant to comment on the hypothetical situation other than to say that I do not have any other information than he would at this point with respect to what the minister will be bringing forward exactly. When that does come forward, I look forward to reviewing it and discussing it at that time.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it was December 6—

**The Deputy Speaker:** There is a point of order.

*Government Orders*

[English]

The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Mr. Speaker, I am very sorry to interrupt my colleague from the Bloc.

In one of the previous questions, the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands referenced that the worst shooter in Canadian history was legally allowed to own guns. That is false. He was under a prohibition order. They were not legal guns. There should be an apology.

**The Deputy Speaker:** That is a part of debate so it is not a point of order.

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

[Translation]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** Mr. Speaker, it was December 6, 1989, at École Polytechnique de Montréal, January 29, 2017, at the Quebec City mosque and so many other dates. Those dates need to resonate with my colleagues when they consider voting on this bill.

The Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of Bill C-21. We can say without hesitation that the Bloc Québécois's contribution is undoubtedly why this bill is finally acceptable. I would like to note the exceptional work of my colleague from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, without whom this bill would certainly not have progressed in the same way.

That said, it is far from perfect, as it was initially botched by the government. We can see that, as with Bill C-10, Bill C-11 and so many other bills, the Liberal signature is to introduce flawed bills and be able to brag about having done this and that. In reality, it is others who improve them and deal with the problems and shortcomings of each bill that the government proposes. Bill C-21 is a flagrant example.

The bill was tabled in May 2020. It was essentially a freeze on handgun acquisitions and a grandfather clause. In that respect, the government did in effect prohibit most models of assault rifles with its order in council on May 1, 2020, which was issued quickly, a short time after the killings in Portapique, Nova Scotia, but several models were not covered, while new models continue to enter the market. Also, the prohibition on May 1, 2020, did not cover all “modern” assault weapons, thus allowing weapons like the very popular SKS, which is frequently used in mass shootings in Canada, to remain legal.

In the briefing to members and political staffers, officials also confirmed that the government planned to amend the bill to add other measures, which was unheard of for a newly tabled bill. There was no rhyme or reason.

In other words, the bill was not at all ready and the government only tabled it to ride the wave of support for gun control following the latest unfortunate shooting. That is called opportunism. I would even add a real lack of desire to be truly effective. In short, the government was not necessarily able to bring forward a fair and reasoned bill, but action was required because it was the right time and looked good. The results are there.

In fall 2022, the government tabled a package of amendments to its own bill. More than 400 pages of amendments were submitted to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, although the studies were already completed. These amendments included new measures to combat ghost weapons, but also a definition of a prohibited assault weapon and a list of more than 300 pages of prohibited weapons.

Here is another demonstration of what the Liberal government has made us accustomed to: anything. These amendments were tabled without explanation, without briefing and without a press scrum. Even Liberal members of the Committee seemed unable to explain these amendments. The various positions of the advocacy groups have become entangled—that is normal, of course—in a mish-mash of various readings and interpretations, most of which were justified or unjustified, since we were in a sort of grey area.

By drawing up this list, the government created a host of ambiguities and possibilities for circumvention, and, at the same time, penalized hunters and airsoft sport shooters. This does not include the weapons market already trying to circumvent the list. The concerns kept growing.

Hunters' fears are a good example. The Bloc Québécois listened to hunters. We therefore proposed reopening the study so that experts could be brought in to testify on the matter of assault weapons. The Bloc Québécois opposed the list in the Criminal Code because it made it needlessly long. The Criminal Code is not a real-time reflection of models of weapons and their classification.

It is my colleague from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia who was a guiding light and kept the reason for logic throughout the process. Through pressure from all over, her team's research and her consultations with scientists and advocacy groups, she and the Bloc Québécois research team made a big difference in the study process of this bill.

It makes me very proud, today, to take the floor and re-tell the entire story. The government then tabled a gag order to quickly conclude the study of Bill C-21.

● (1315)

However, the government itself is responsible for the slow progress of Bill C-21. It preferred to bring forward an incomplete bill quickly after the killings rather than take a few more months to table a complete bill.

Despite these shortcomings, the Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of Bill C-21. Initially, the bill was criticized by hunters, firearms control groups and air gun enthusiasts. Thanks to the Bloc Québécois, it was improved and satisfied most of the groups. Again, the Bloc was proactive and made such fair proposals that they could not be refused.

*Government Orders*

The government has acted softly for years, leading to gun violence everywhere, particularly in Montreal. Prohibited weapons are circulating illegally. Bill C-21 is a poultice on a wooden leg, as my father would say. It is not nothing, but it is little, and the time wasted with the parliamentary exercise of cobbling together a badly designed bill does not save time. However, time is running out.

It was a mistake to try to create a bill full of shortcomings, that practically put hunters, sports enthusiasts and killers in the same boat. What a lack of will and respect for the afflicted, the victims, and for the innocent. In fact, the ultimate urgency was to table a bill developed by experts and scientists and improved by consultations with associations and as many representations as needed. The government is proposing quite the contrary, and that is unfortunate.

As usual, the Bloc is being valiant. We have done the work by bypassing and adapting the limitations and mistakes of the government. The next step is urgent. Weapons are flowing into Canada. What will the names of the next victims be? Who will lose a mother, a father, a daughter or a neighbour? What does the Liberal government plan to do to prevent illegal weapons from crossing the border?

I hope it will learn from its mistakes. Above all, I hope that the next steps in the fight against crime will be firm and frank gestures, based on clear legislation and taking into account the realities and needs of organizations that oversee, that work and that intervene in the area of public safety.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate a number of the comments that the member has put on the record, but I would like to emphasize that, as a government, it is more than just the legislation. She expresses a little bit of disappointment. Maybe I can give her some words of encouragement.

We have seen, for example, a very high number of guns being confiscated at the border in the year before. I would suggest that this was probably one of the higher years of gun confiscations that we have seen, maybe, in the last decade-plus. I think that we have seen budgetary measures that support our border controls, as well as enhancements for law enforcement officers. There has been the legislation that we are talking about today. I think that, for the first time in a long time, we actually have a government that understands the issue, and 84% of Canadians, through a Leger poll, are indicating that the Government of Canada is on the right track.

Could she provide her thoughts in regard to the overall approach of the government in dealing with this very serious issue?

• (1320)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** Mr. Speaker, I will not list what is happening in Montreal.

Although I applaud the efforts of our government, this obviously does not solve the problems, since killings are causing the dead to pile up. It is absolutely necessary to do things that I would describe

as more focused and more draconian, and probably invest more in all kinds of areas.

It is not just border control. There is also education. There is also psychological support in social matters. I welcome the government's efforts, but clearly, in Montreal alone, the feeling is that it is not enough.

**Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague for her speech. That called to me when she said that they listened to people, hunters and so on.

I remember very well that from the beginning, they were in complete agreement on Bill C-21. One of her colleagues was even in favour of amendment G-4 and was very comfortable tabling it. All of a sudden, they turned right around.

What happened for them to, first of all, be in full agreement with the Liberals and the NDP and then, after seeing that there was some grumbling, they went back over their work?

I would like to know what my colleague thinks of the decision by her colleague, who was very comfortable with amendment G-4.

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his constructive question.

We agreed on the principle of the bill and on the urgent need to pass a bill until we realized the shortcomings of the bill. Consultations were then held. It was in light of the consultations on the ground that we revised our priorities and adjusted the steps taken in committee so that the bill would best reflect what the representatives of each group had told us. That is the direction of our party.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the bill will ban ghost guns. It will also close loopholes for manufacturers and importers. As members know, right now, firearms can be imported and classified by the companies themselves, which makes no sense.

I know that the Bloc Québécois is tabling an amendment at report stage to change that. That is something we agree on. Can the member talk about the importance of closing these loopholes and ensuring that ghost guns are no longer available in Canada?

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** Mr. Speaker, there are obviously all kinds of variables that dictate whether we feel we can align ourselves with the NDP and the government. Sometimes we can and other times, we cannot. I would like to point out that, throughout the process, the NDP also insisted on watering down the ban on assault weapons and the handgun freeze, but that the Bloc Québécois succeeded in thwarting most of the NDP's tactics in this regard. There are times when we oppose their position and there are times when we agree with them. That is part of the parliamentary process.

[*English*]

**Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise to speak on behalf of my constituents of Niagara West once again. I never take this privilege for granted and I always want to thank them for their trust in me.

*Government Orders*

This time I rise to relay my constituents' concerns on the Liberal government bill, Bill C-21. My office received hundreds of regular mail, phone calls and emails disagreeing with what this bill would do. Since its introduction, Bill C-21 has had a long journey. I want to assure folks in my riding who are watching today that I have fought against this bill every step of the way.

Let me start by acknowledging something that always comes up in conversations around firearms, perhaps rightly so. Yes, gun crime in Canada is a real problem, but let us not forget that gun crime in Canada is almost always committed with illegal guns, trafficked and smuggled over the border from the United States. Last month, a police operation in Toronto seized 173 firearms and over 1,400 rounds of ammunition. All of that was smuggled across the border.

Since the Liberals were elected in 2015, violent crime has increased by 32%, and gang-related murders have doubled. Let us contrast that with the previous Conservative government, which saw a record 33% drop in gun crimes. That is a huge difference and a huge difference in approaches. Today, in cities like Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal, there is a real and concerning gang presence.

Criminals and their illegal guns put Canadians at risk every single day. This is a problem that needs to be addressed, yet somehow the Prime Minister cannot seem to figure it out or does not want to. In fact, the government is making life easier for violent criminals by repealing mandatory minimum sentences for gun crimes with Bill C-5, and made it easier to get bail with Bill C-75. On top of everything, the Liberals continue to fail to stop the flow of illegal guns across the U.S. border.

We also need to acknowledge that legal firearms in Canada are very tightly regulated. The process to obtain one is long and can take several months. Someone who wants to obtain a firearm legally must take safety courses, exams and go through rigorous background checks. After the process is complete, the firearm can only be used at a range and to hunt.

We would think that with all these safety precautions, legal gun owners would be the least of the government's worry. However, they are not. The government seems to think that gang members are attending firearms safety classes and studying diligently for their exams so they can go hunting or shooting on the range after.

The logic of the Liberals use on legal firearm owners is mind-boggling. It does not seem like they understand a simple fact, which I will repeat. The overwhelming majority of guns used to commit crimes are smuggled into Canada through the U.S. border and are obtained illegally.

Instead of addressing the root cause of gun crime, the Prime Minister takes the easy route and groups our law-abiding gun-owning grandpas with some of Canada's worst criminals. While the government attacks hunters and sport shooters, criminals and gang members stock up on guns and continue to use them to cause mayhem on our streets. For some reason, the government believes that taking away legal guns will solve crimes committed by illegal guns.

Over eight long years of the tired government, it seems the Prime Minister just cannot stop taking things for himself. He wants to take

Canadians' money by skyrocketing taxes, their freedoms and, now, their legal firearms.

Back in 2020, the then Minister of Public Safety's office said the government would not target guns designed for hunting. In 2023, it has done exactly the opposite. In 2020, it also said it would treat law-abiding gun owners with fairness and respect. In 2023, that could not be further from the truth.

For millions of Canadians, legal firearms ownership is a way of life. It is a culture that feeds families and ties communities together.

For example, sport shooting clubs in my riding and across the country provide opportunities for people to learn about firearms. They train and learn how to use them safely and responsibly. These clubs are not a hub for criminal activity, but rather they give both recreation and education to folks who are interested in hunting or sports shooting.

For hunters, guns are not just a tool of recreation, but also a tool with which they feed their families. For millions of Canadians, hunting is a means to feed their family, bond with others and connect with their culture. Humans have lived off the land by hunting for many generations, but the Prime Minister wants to end this lifestyle. Hunters, farmers, sport shooters, indigenous people and so many others all use their firearms for benefit, yet the government seems to think they are one of Canada's biggest threats.

• (1325)

As I mentioned earlier, I have received an incredible volume of correspondence from constituents who are all against this bill. These are usually folks who acknowledge the risk illegal and smuggled firearms pose to the safety of our communities. However, they are also very clear that legal gun ownership is not the issue. These folks are also confused as to why they are being targeted and are worried their legally obtained hunting rifles will be taken away.

As we heard throughout the day, the opposition to this misguided bill is not just in my riding but also across the country, and even in some ridings of the Liberal Party. Even some NDP members oppose it. However, do they admit that anymore? They will need to answer to their constituents when they return to their ridings. I would love to hear the reasons they will give their constituents. More than likely it will just be Liberal talking points.

*Government Orders*

In the face of the strong opposition to the bill, the Prime Minister is trying to do everything he can to ram this bill through Parliament. He knows Canadians are against it. In my view, I think he is just desperate to make it seem like he is in control. It is a destructive pattern I have noticed over the last eight years of trying to gain control over the lives of Canadians, while simultaneously infringing on some of their most basic freedoms.

This is where I will repeat something I said many times in this place, especially in the last three years, which is to let folks live their lives. Leave them alone. At this point, the Liberals have pushed and rushed Bill C-21 through committee because they do not want to hear some of the views and opinions of hunters, farmers and indigenous people. The government knows what committee witnesses will say about the bill.

However, this is not happening just in committee. The Liberals are rushing Bill C-21 through the House, to have as little debate as possible here as well. What is even more interesting is their ever-changing terminology. To dodge scrutiny, they are redefining Bill C-21 as a ban on "assault-style" firearms when they are just trying to take the firearms away from law-abiding gun owners. It is that simple.

The government is trying to make it seem as if this new definition will save hunters and legal gun owners. Instead, all this definition does is give the Liberals more time to reapproach the issue in the fall and come up with another ill-defined and ineffective ban. All this definition does is put hunting rifles and shotguns at risk of being confiscated in the future.

I also need to mention that farmers are also deeply affected. Farmers use firearms for various important purposes on the family farm, such as protecting cattle from predators or handling pests. Let us be clear that Bill C-21 is not about stopping criminals and it is not about fighting gang violence. The Prime Minister has already admitted and is on record that he wants to ban legal hunting guns, and he said so himself in an interview on CTV.

This is about the Prime Minister doing everything he can to take more rights away from Canadians. He is not satisfied after three years of wedging, dividing and stigmatizing Canadians at every opportunity possible. If it really were about fighting crime, the Prime Minister would stop removing mandatory minimum sentences for gun crimes. It is that simple. He would stop making it easier for criminals to get bail and get back on the streets. Once again, it is that simple.

Already in 2023, half of the murder suspects in Toronto were out on release. The Liberals try to paint Bill C-21 as being tough on crime. This is ridiculous and they know it. They want the country to believe they are coming in like a knight in shining armour to save the country from an evil dragon, the hunting rifle of one's uncle.

Canadians see this bill exactly for what it is, a fairy tale. Canadians are tired of the government's fairy tales. They are tired of seeing their rights be diminished and stepped on by the power-hungry, overreaching and intrusive government.

Let me share what Bill Baranick, a volunteer firearms safety instructor, said about Bill C-21. Bill lives in my riding and he is also a grape grower. He said, "Bill C-21 appears to be nothing more

than a wedge issue to be used in the next election. By banning the sale and transfer of legally owned handguns, entire collections and family heirlooms etc. have zero value now, taking hundreds of millions of dollars out of the economy. These firearms cannot be passed down to the next generation or sold. It's a devastating blow to shooting sports in this country as well as affecting thousands of jobs in the firearms industry. C-21 in its current form needs to be redrafted to be tougher on criminals and addressing root causes of gun violence, and not going after the safest demographic in Canada...legally licensed, daily vetted women and men of the hunting and sport shooting community."

I am absolutely in when it comes to fighting crime with tough measures. None of us on this side of the House do not support that issue. We very much thing that when it comes to fighting crime we need to have tough measures.

I think I can speak for my Conservative colleagues that we must work together as a country to fight gun violence and work toward safer streets. However, how do we do this? It is simple. We need to do this by tackling illegal guns used in criminal activities, targeting gun smugglers and being tough on gang activity. We must bring back serious sentences for violent gun offenders, while supporting common-sense policies for farmers, sports shooters and indigenous peoples.

● (1330)

What we must not do is take away the rights and freedoms of lawful Canadians. The rights of lawful gun-owning Canadians must be respected.

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the people I know in my community who are gun owners are among the most sterling citizens. They have a tremendous sense of responsibility. I would say that if their civic duty was shared by all Canadians, we would be better off as a society.

I take the member's point that many people who are killed by guns are killed by illegal guns. However, I am sure that the member would agree that some people are killed by legal guns, whether it be in the context of domestic violence or suicide.

Is the member saying to this House that it is absolutely outside the realm of possibility that a red flag or a yellow flag made possible by this law could ever save a life?

*Government Orders*

• (1335)

**Mr. Dean Allison:** Mr. Speaker, as we look at trying to reduce violence and at trying to get illegal guns off the street, we need to go to where these issues are happening.

Time and time again, as stated in my remarks, we have seen that over half the people have been out on bail. That is a great place to start. We need to deal with the people who are actually perpetuating most of this crime. That would help to make our streets safer.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague, but it is rare to see so much disinformation in a short speech.

If Conservatives were actually concerned about criminals, they would not have tried to block all of the provisions that hit only criminals around ghost guns. For the last few weeks, we have had Conservatives waging a filibuster to block those provisions that law enforcement is calling for.

The reality is the bill targets criminals' use of ghost guns. What the bill does not do is what my friend has referred to and keeps talking about, as other Conservatives do, which is about amendments G-46 and G-4. Clearly, in the amendment pages, they have been withdrawn. I have asked this question to other Conservatives and have yet to have a clear answer. Will Conservatives admit that G-4 and G-46, thanks to the NDP push, were actually withdrawn? Most of the member's speech really is not relevant to what is in the bill.

**Mr. Dean Allison:** Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we are concerned about is the continual change of definitions.

At the end of the day we talked about how this would be a ban on assault rifles, but what we have now seen creep into this is hunting and sport shooting, etc.

The question would be, as we return in the fall and down the road, what guns would get added into those definitions that the Liberals have left wide open?

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I really want to follow up with the member for Niagara West, from an earlier moment when you were presiding over a point of order that was not really a point of order.

I am waiting to use the opportunity where I do have the right to speak to the member for Niagara West to confirm that what I was trying to point out to the hon. parliamentary secretary, in an earlier exchange, is that we do not want to see Canadians divided, rural versus urban. There are legitimate issues to discuss in this bill.

My point was that in order to really understand the threat to rural Canadians, one should read the mass casualty report on the horrific events in Nova Scotia on April 18-19, 2020. To correct the record, as far as I am aware, the person who committed those offences, killing those people, was under no prohibition order that he could not own weapons at the time. He owned many weapons, all of them illegally but some of them were legal weapons. Just to clarify the record, that is more of a comment than a question.

Maybe the hon. member has some thoughts on the importance of not allowing us to be polarized along rural-urban lines.

**Mr. Dean Allison:** Mr. Speaker, it needs to be clear that the shooter did not have a licence, so he was in possession of illegal firearms, full stop.

We support safety measures in this country. We support training. We support the fact that there should be a number of steps that need to be taken to be able to obtain and use firearms safely. At the end of the day, if some or all of these measures are not followed, therein lies the breakdown in what has gone on here.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I always get a kick out of listening to Conservatives talk about Liberal talking points while they are reading a speech written by God knows who. I would remind the member that the actual number of weapons that have been seized at the border, both weapons and guns, has actually doubled in this year alone from last year, despite his comments.

**Mr. Dean Allison:** Mr. Speaker, it is great that it doubled, but I guess the question would be how many we are missing, at the end of the day. That is one aspect we need to do. We need to deal with the border, but we also need to deal with this revolving door of bail and the fact that people are out on bail who should not be. We have seen many people's lives endangered as a result of that.

• (1340)

**Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on Bill C-21, a piece of legislation that I have engaged with very closely over the last seven months as a member of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

From my many months of working on the bill, I can only conclude that Bill C-21 is not about public safety. If it was about public safety, the bill would have sought to deal with the disastrous bail and parole policies, which have led to many violent repeat offenders being released back onto our streets to commit more acts of violence. Unfortunately, it did not.

What Bill C-21 is really about is politics. It is about pitting one group of Canadians against another through fear, misleading policies and willful ignorance about the reality of lawful firearms ownership in this country.

Canada is a peaceful country. Since the 1970s, Canada has experienced a significant reduction in violent crime. Only the past eight years of the current Liberal government have broken that long-standing trend, with a staggering 32% increase in violent crime since 2015. Unfortunately, instead of addressing this staggering 32% increase, the Liberals have chosen to target hunters and sport shooters instead.

*Government Orders*

Now, Statistics Canada has released very interesting data on firearms and violent crime. A report released this past December dealt specifically with violent crime in Canada involving firearms in 2021. The data showed that of all instances of violent crimes recorded in Canada, a rifle or shotgun was only present in 0.47% of cases, less than half a per cent. Out of this 0.47% it is not clear how many of them could be classified as so-called "assault-style firearms". The number could be very close to zero, but it is likely less than that 0.47% that includes all rifles and shotguns.

Bill C-21 is not public safety legislation. The amendments that define an assault-style rifle do not address the firearms that are being commonly used by criminals. The guns being used by criminals are primarily smuggled illegal handguns and high-capacity magazine weapons that are already illegal in Canada. While Bill C-21 would formalize the so-called "handgun freeze" that prevents any new registration certificates for handguns, it is quite obvious that the handguns being used by criminals to commit violence in our streets are not registered firearms. This so-called "freeze" does nothing to stop the criminals; it only prevents law-abiding people from owning a handgun. When I asked the officials at committee to provide evidence to demonstrate that this handgun freeze would reduce violent crime, they could not provide any evidence.

Now, the Liberals have been clear that their end goal is to eliminate legal ownership of guns in Canada. Other than possibly reducing instances of legal guns being stolen or straw purchased, which is extremely rare for obvious reasons, this would do nothing to address the real problems, which are smuggled handguns and the emergence of ghost guns.

There was agreement at committee that the issue of ghost guns needs to be dealt with, and that is why Conservatives supported multiple amendments that would make it an offence to distribute instructions to manufacture ghost guns with the intent to produce illegal firearms. We also supported adding regulations and penalties regarding essential firearms parts, which can be used to assemble ghost guns. Unfortunately, despite the best intentions, I fear these policies would do little to deter those who plan to use this emerging technology for criminal purposes. After all, anyone who is in illegal possession of one of these ghost guns is already in contravention of the Criminal Code. Additional charges for the possession of schematics or essential firearms components are unlikely to dissuade criminals who are already committing a crime.

Bill C-21 is also not about public safety, because the so-called "yellow and red flag laws" are unnecessary and potentially harmful to victims. In fact, the Liberals and the NDP both rammed through these so-called "red flag laws" over the very strong opposition of women's groups, which rightfully pointed out that forcing women to go to court to obtain an order to seize firearms is not practical, nor is it safe. In fact I received a very kind message from one of these advocacy groups thanking Conservatives for voting for what, in their words, was their most important amendment, and they noted that the Liberals voted against this amendment.

Police have already been clear that they—

**The Deputy Speaker:** We have a point of order from the hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, I have been listening attentively, and I want to continue to do that, but there is a lot of background noise. Perhaps we could ask some people to deal with that.

• (1345)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, I actually sent someone out there.

Just a reminder to all the folks in the chamber to tell our folks who are outside in the lobbies that when we are coming into the chamber to make sure that we try to keep our friends quiet as we check out the nice glass door that is on the front there.

We will go back to debate with the hon. member for Sturgeon River—Parkland.

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** Mr. Speaker, another reason why these red and yellow flag laws are so unnecessary is because police have already been clear that they have the authority without a warrant to act immediately to seize firearms if they determine there is a risk. Canada already has red and yellow flag laws. I even read recently about a gentleman in the Ottawa area who has hunted his entire life. However, during the pandemic, sadly, his wife and a sibling died, and the mental toll caused him to check into a local hospital. While he presented no threat, his firearms were seized proactively. He had to go to court and convince a judge that he should be allowed to have them back, and the judge sided with him. Clearly, we already have yellow flag laws in existence in Canada, as this case demonstrates.

Now, it should go without saying that Canada is not the United States. While going to court to seize firearms may be necessary in the United States, it is not the case in Canada. As I said before, in Canada when there is a threat, the police have the authority to act immediately without a warrant to secure firearms. Unfortunately, these Liberals will spend more time role-playing as members of the U.S. Congress rather than addressing the distinct issues that exist here in Canada.

Finally, and what I see as the clearest demonstration of the punitive nature of Bill C-21, is the exemption for Olympic sport shooters. Groups like the International Practical Shooting Confederation, IPSC, came to committee to plead for an exemption for their sport, but they were rejected by the Liberals. There has been no evidence presented at committee that IPSC, cowboy-action shooting or any other high-level sport shooting discipline posed any risk to public safety, and yet they were treated with utter contempt by the Liberal Party.

*Government Orders*

Now, the pressure is so high in the Liberal caucus to shut down any shooting sport in Canada that they even tried to silence one of their own members at committee who expressed concerns about this heavy-handed ban. The MP for Kings—Hants raised a very good point about a constituent who competed internationally with IPSC, and through no fault of his own, his sporting firearm was lost by Air Canada. Now, because of Bill C-21, he would never be able to pursue his passion again. Even in countries like the United Kingdom, where handguns are completely banned, there are exemptions for IPSC and sport shooting.

The Liberals provided no public safety justification for this move. They have determined that their objective is to eliminate all legal handgun ownership in Canada, and they could not allow an IPSC exemption, because it would allow a small group of people to continue pursuing their passion, which brings me to the real reason Bill C-21 was created.

The Liberals can try and point to raising maximum penalties for smugglers, but this is just a fig leaf to cover the real purpose of the bill. The real purpose of the bill is the sterilization of the culture of legal sport shooting in Canada. It is well known in the firearms community that ranges are funded by dues-paying members who are required by legislation to be a range member as a condition of a restricted licence. Without any new licence-holders, the income for gun ranges will dry up, leading to the closure of almost every gun range in Canada. The prevention of any sport shooting exemption beyond Olympic-level sports ensures that only a very elite few, we are talking about maybe a couple of people, would be able to legally acquire a handgun in Canada.

I am also very concerned about the Liberals' Canadian firearms advisory committee. It appears to me that this advisory committee would not be very independent and that the Liberals have already prejudged what kinds of firearms will be banned, including many commonly used hunting rifles. The effect of this will reverberate throughout the country as firearms retailers shut down, trade shows close shop and sport shooting clubs close due to a lack of members. That is the Liberal agenda in black and white: the wholesale elimination of an entire part of our country's culture and heritage, and passions enjoyed by millions of Canadians through generations. Maybe if there were a public safety reason for all of this we could do a cost-benefit analysis, but there was no evidence provided, and there is no truth to the claims that this will improve public safety.

This legislation demonizes a group of law-abiding Canadians for the political benefit of the Liberal Party. It provides a convenient distraction from the abject failure of Liberal ideology to keep our communities safe. After all, has the country ever become safer since Bill C-71 has been implemented, or the May 2020 OIC or since the handgun freeze has come in? Has it stopped handgun violence in our streets? Absolutely not. This country has only descended further into violence and lawlessness.

NDP members had an opportunity to take a stand on the side of hunters and sport shooters and instead they sold out. They would not support Conservative amendments to ensure exemptions for sport shooters and hunters. Instead, they chose to prop up the Liberal government. The fact is, they had the support. We could have united together. I have been getting calls in my office from people who live in the riding of Edmonton Griesbach, because they cannot

get through to their NDP MP to tell him how upset they are with the NDP stance on the bill.

● (1350)

The Conservatives will always stand up for law-abiding firearms owners. We are going to stand up against this punitive Bill C-21 legislation, which would do nothing to improve public safety in our country.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in his discussion today, the member specifically said that this was Canada, that it was not the United States. I find this interesting because another member earlier referenced the United States and an American politician. This is not the United States. In the United States, the ownership of a firearm is a right; in Canada, it is privilege. There is a big difference between the two.

Could the member comment as to whether he believes that a privilege is the right system and the right environment to own firearms in Canada or does he believe it should be a right, like it is in the United States?

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that Canada has a robust system of firearms laws that have largely worked for generations. It is ironic because it is the Liberal Party of Canada that is intent on importing American culture war politics in our country. I cite none other than the member for Markham—Unionville, when he brought forward the amendment that the Liberals had to withdraw, who said that we needed California-style gun control laws in Canada.

I am a Canadian, I believe in Canadian solutions and I reject American solutions for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech, particularly when he talked about sport shooting. I really wonder about that.

Clause 43 of Bill C-21 protects sport shooters so that they can continue to practise their hobby. The Conservatives moved Motion No. 12, which seeks to remove this clause that exempts sports shooters and protects them so they can continue to practise their hobby. I am wondering about the consistency of saying that they are not protected while removing the very clause that protects them.

*Government Orders**[English]*

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** Mr. Speaker, what the government really put forward was that anyone who currently had a restricted licence, who had possession of one of these firearms, could continue to use these firearms. However, part of this legislation is that there can be no new applications, other than a very narrow exemption for Olympic sport shooters. A Liberal member talked earlier about this great Olympic exemption. I would ask that member how people could become Olympic-level kayakers if the government said they were never allowed to buy kayaks in the first place to practise.

What the government is really doing is putting a time limit on the culture of responsible firearms ownership in our country. Over a number of decades, it is going to die out and we are going to lose this important part of our culture. Therefore, it is not a protection in the least.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the member's work on committee. The Conservatives voted with the Bloc, the NDP and the Liberals on almost all the amendments that were brought forward in the marathon sessions last week.

I also appreciate that the member has been the first Conservative to admit that G-4 and G-46, the Liberal amendments that have been part of the Conservative talking points now for months, were actually withdrawn. I appreciate his honesty in admitting that the Conservative talking points were false.

I get calls from Alberta. These are constituents in Alberta ridings who cannot reach their Alberta Conservative MP at all, so they contact me in British Columbia. One of the concerns they raise is about criminal activity and ghost guns. The reality is that Bill C-21 deals with ghost guns in a substantive way.

The member was talking about cracking down on criminals. Criminals use ghost guns. Law enforcement needs this legislation. Why did the Conservatives filibuster it for weeks and weeks?

• (1355)

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** Mr. Speaker, the New Democrats were quite thankful for the filibuster back in December when they were still deciding what stand they were going to take in support of our hunters and sport shooters. They had no idea which way they were going to swing on this issue, and I was thanked by them at the time. They thanked me for giving them time so they could take it back to their caucus and figure out what they were doing on this. The Conservative Party says they are welcome, that it gives them the extra time so they could finally find the right path forward.

As for the withdrawn G-4 and G-46 amendments, the government is introducing a backdoor mechanism so it can achieve the very same ends, and the NDP supported it on that. I fear that the firearms advisory committee is not going to be an independent committee. I believe the government has already prejudged what kinds of firearms it is going to ban and it is just putting forward this front group so it can do the dirty work for the government.

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking all the firefighters in Alberta. I want to also thank all the communities that have stepped up.

There are fires across northern Alberta. Many communities that I represent are dealing with fires or they are dealing with the evacuees. They have opened their homes and evacuation shelters. They have opened up spaces for pets, horses and livestock from across the area. I want to recognize the Alberta spirit in that. When neighbours are in trouble, other neighbours step up, help out and do whatever is needed.

Members of the legion in Fox Creek have stepped up to feed all the firefighters and first responders, and I thank them for doing that.

I want to thank the Alberta government for being at the ready in the midst of an election to help fight the fires. I want to thank all the Canadian Armed Forces members who are on the ground, doing good work in Alberta and doing all the things necessary to fight these fires.

Like you, Mr. Speaker, I am praying for rain and for the growth of the new grass so we can get out of this fire season and get on with seeding and getting this year's crop in the ground. I note that in most places it is going fairly well, but the fires are definitely putting a damper on it.

My heart goes out to all those families that have lost property, lost their life's work with respect to building up a place, or an acreage or a farm. In some cases, businesses have been lost due to the fire.

I also want to recognize the wildlife officers who are doing yeoman's work in managing the wildlife that is being chased around by these fires as well. Some interesting things have happened with that as well.

My thoughts and prayers are with all those who are dealing with the fires in northern Alberta at the moment, including some of my family members who are on the firefighting crews.

That brings me to the bill at hand, Bill C-21. I do not think there can be any more stark difference with the way the parties have dealt with the bill in the House of Commons. The Conservatives are the only party that stands up for law-abiding firearms owners in our country. The Liberals are fundamentally opposed to firearm ownership. They have basically said that out loud.

We have said that the firearms of hunters and sport shooters must be protected. It is the right of Canadians and it is a big part of our Canadian heritage to own and use firearms. We have been concerned that the Liberals are targeting law-abiding firearms owners, wanting to take away their firearms.

Fundamentally I think Liberals are just opposed to firearm ownership across the board. This goes against all our Canadian heritage and history. We have enjoyed firearm ownership for the entire history of our country. We are not the wild west and we are not the United States. Canada has always had a good regime of firearm ownership.

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

### PATHWAYS CLUBHOUSE

**Mr. Wilson Miao (Richmond Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on May 11, I had the honour to attend Pathways Clubhouse's 16th annual gala.

Pathways Clubhouse is a non-profit organization that aims to create an inclusive community and provides mental health assistance for Richmond residents. Its mental wellness program helps people who seek support in mental health, by helping them develop an active lifestyle and a healthy diet.

Mental health is health. I am very fortunate to have such an organization in the Richmond community to care for those in need and to champion an accessible and diverse health care system for residents in Richmond

I thank Pathways Clubhouse for all it does for our community, and I thank all the staff, volunteers, supporters and donors for putting together an amazing gala, "Building Pathways for Hope".

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### WILDFIRES

**Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for the last while, communities in Brazeau, Clearwater, Lac Ste. Anne, Parkland and Yellowhead counties have experienced severe wildfires. I have answered emails and phone calls from people who fear what they will see when they return home. The emotional toll this is having on Albertans breaks my heart. It is truly a strenuous time for thousands of families.

Today, I commend the businesses, communities and farmers who have come together during this difficult time. Firefighters, rescue squads and community members continue to work tirelessly. They bravely put their lives on the line to ensure everyone's safety.

The support shown to one another during such a difficult time is a reminder of what it means to be an Albertan. I cannot imagine what it would be like to lose my home and belongings.

It is truly heart-wrenching to know the suffering my friends and neighbours are living through by what these fires have mercilessly destroyed.

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### PAKISTAN

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to speak in support of all Pakistanis advocating for free and fair elections, the rule of law and the protection of human rights. Political leaders, journalists and demonstrators should not fear unlawful detention, violence or death. I want to assure Pakistani Canadians that Canada stands in support of their right to fairly elect a leader.

We stand in solidarity with Pakistani Canadians, especially those in my riding who have approached me with their concerns, - many

### Statements by Members

of whom fear for the safety of family members and friends in Pakistan.

We have a large Pakistani Canadian population in Canada and welcome newcomers from Pakistan. The mental health and peace of mind of these Canadians is affected by what is happening in Pakistan.

Working through our international alliances and with individual allies in the region, we must do our part to ensure that the human rights of Pakistanis are protected and to address the concerns of Pakistani Canadians. Canada has always been a strident defender of these values, and I am proud to continue to speak out against violations that threaten some of the core foundations of democratic constitutionalism, regardless of where they are committed.

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[Translation]

### NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we have been celebrating National Police Week since 1970. On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I want to express our gratitude and recognition to those who keep the peace in our society.

Times have been tough for our peace officers since September. Across Canada, 10 of them have sacrificed their lives for the common good. As parliamentarians, we have a duty to not only better protect those who ensure our collective safety, but also give them all the resources they need to stay safe on the job.

Let us not forget that our police officers are also responders, confidants, psychologists and social workers during their shifts. The work they do to keep our communities safe is essential. I saw that myself recently in Amqui when the tragedy unfolded there. More often than not, police officers lend their support to help people overcome the horrors they have witnessed. For these reasons, we owe them a debt of gratitude for their dedication.

To all members of law enforcement, to our everyday heroes, we wish you a happy National Police Week.

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### 34TH EDITION OF FESTIVAL D'ÉTÉ FRANCOPHONE DE VANCOUVER

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the 34th edition of the Festival d'été francophone de Vancouver will be held from June 14 to 25 at the Centre culturel francophone de Vancouver, which is in Vancouver Granville, and at other venues across Vancouver.

This year, there will be 12 concerts featuring francophone artists from British Columbia, Quebec, Ontario and elsewhere. As usual, the festival will draw big names in French music, established artists and local and national rising stars. This important festival is supported by our government and celebrates our francophone communities and their diversity.

*Statements by Members*

It is also a wonderful way to celebrate music, creativity and the incredible talent of francophone artists from across Canada. I look forward to attending many events, and I invite everyone to attend.

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• (1405)

[English]

**WALTER CHARLES NELSON**

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a great Canadian farm business leader, Walter Charles Nelson from Avonlea, who recently passed away at the age of 95. He accomplished more than most could dream of and touched the hearts of many, while making transformational changes in the agricultural industry. He founded what is now the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association. His belief that farmers should have the choice to market their own commodities was a fight he took up in 1970 and finally won in 2012. For his many accomplishments, he was awarded the Saskatchewan Order of Merit in 1990, and he was inducted into the Saskatchewan Agriculture Hall of Fame in 2015.

He leaves a legacy that will positively impact his family, his community, his province and our entire country for lifetimes to come. Wally was not only my mentor, but he was also a friend. My heart goes out to his son, Bill, his daughter, Janet Day, and his many grandchildren as they mourn his passing.

May Wally rest in peace knowing that what he fought for has prevailed. Farmers will always remember him as a true champion of free marketing.

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**PALESTINE**

**Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 75th anniversary of the mass displacement of Palestinians known as “the Nakba”, or “the catastrophe”. During this time, around 750,000 Palestinians were expelled from their homes by Israeli forces, and over 400 villages were demolished as land was taken from Palestinian families; 78% of historic Palestine was captured, while the remaining 22% was divided into what is now the occupied West Bank and the besieged Gaza Strip.

Today, there are more than seven million Palestinian refugees, and this is the longest-standing refugee crisis in the world. Many Nakba survivors and their descendants still live in refugee camps or in exile. The legacy of the Nakba continues and deeply impacts many Palestinian Canadians, many of whom sought out refuge in Canada after their families were displaced in 1948.

Canada will continue to condemn the injustices and violence towards innocent Israeli and Palestinian civilians, including children in Gaza, who suffer the most as they are forced to grow up in the face of grave conflict. In all circumstances, civilians must be protected, and international law must be upheld. Our government will continue to work diligently with our international allies to maintain the de-escalation of this conflict and protect innocent lives from harm.

**NATIONAL PHYSIOTHERAPY MONTH**

**Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, May is National Physiotherapy Month; it is an opportunity to celebrate and recognize the incredible work physiotherapy professionals do to improve the health of Canadians. This year's focus is on pain management and rehabilitation. Nearly eight million people are affected by chronic pain in Canada. In recent years, the convergence of the opioid crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic have intensified the urgent need for a new approach to pain care in this country. Canadian physiotherapy professionals are taking the lead in implementing innovative approaches to non-pharmacological pain management.

It is an honour to be here today to speak about National Physiotherapy Month and to recognize the 27,000 physiotherapy professionals in Canada for their groundbreaking collaborative work across the health care system.

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**VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF CRIME WEEK**

**Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as we mark Victims and Survivors of Crime Week, we are reminded that individuals and families often feel the fallout long after a crime is committed. Victims and survivors of crime can carry undue burdens, such as physical or psychological trauma, financial loss or property damage.

The federal government has a critical role to play when it comes to protecting victims and survivors of crime. In 2014, the Conservative government of the time created the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights. This enshrined the rights of victims into federal law for the first time in Canadian history. Conservatives remain committed to ensuring that the voices of victims and survivors of crime are heard, that their rights are protected and that community safety is always the top priority of our justice system.

Conservatives will never abandon victims and survivors of crime. We will restore balance to our justice system and demand accountability from anyone who threatens the public safety of Canadians.

• (1410)

#### LIVING AND LEARNING IN RETIREMENT

**Hon. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate a monumental milestone: the 50th anniversary of Living and Learning in Retirement at York University's Glendon College. For five decades, LLIR has been a beacon of intellectual growth and community engagement for seniors in Don Valley West and across Toronto. LLIR is lifelong learning at its best, proving that education knows no age limits. On the Glendon campus, it has nurtured curiosity, fostered friendships and expanded horizons through courses, seminars and lectures, empowering seniors to explore new passions and get new ideas.

My thanks go to the dedicated staff, volunteers and cherished members who have made LLIR a leader in lifelong learning. Investing in seniors enables them to make invaluable contributions to our society while inspiring the next generation.

As we celebrate 50 years of LLIR, let us reaffirm our support for seniors' initiatives across Canada, creating a better and brighter future for us all.

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#### LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the current Prime Minister is out of touch and Canadians are out of money.

With summer just around the corner, many Canadians are too worried about how they are going to put food on the table or pay their bills, let alone afford a vacation. In the meantime, the Prime Minister has taken five lavish vacations this year alone. He has travelled to New York, living it up with celebrities and taking selfies. He has vacationed in Jamaica, where his accommodations, at a cost of \$80,000, were paid for by Trudeau Foundation donors. This is all while the cost of his government has been driving up the cost of living here at home.

With his plans for a 41¢-a-litre tax on gas, heat and food, Canadians are planning their staycations. They have never had it worse.

Canadians are out of money; the Prime Minister is out of touch and out of the country.

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#### LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

**Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the current Liberal government continues to play a game of over-under with Canadians.

While the Liberals gamble with our future through overtaxation and overspending, Canadians receive underwhelming results and overwhelming debt. While the Liberals and their elite friends rule over us, Canadians are under the heavy burden of doubling mortgage and rent costs, as well as record-high credit card debt. The Liberals remain above the law, despite scandal after scandal. They tell us what we can own, watch, read, drive, say and even think. Canadians are quickly getting over it, and they are tired of being under it.

#### Statements by Members

Conservatives know how overwhelmed Canadians are and how undermined they feel. The common-sense people of this great country are rising up to take over the people's House and elect a prime minister who can see beyond our perils and speak to our potential. Such a leader will realize that the key to us overcoming the challenges we face is in using what is under our feet, whether that be our oil and gas or the land itself, to produce, grow and develop our path to a more prosperous, secure and self-reliant future.

Let us bring it home and, together, let us get over it.

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#### PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

**Mr. Jaime Battiste (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, health care and long wait times at emergency rooms are top of mind in Nova Scotia. Investing in physician assistants or PAs is key to reducing wait times in Canada and extending the careers of physicians. However, every year, there are fewer than 70 spots available for close to 3,000 applicants who apply to be PAs.

There is good news. Our federal government has invested over \$46 billion in new funding into the Canadian health care system. This historic funding, in partnership with the province, will mean the first-ever PA program in the Atlantic, with 24 new spaces at Dalhousie University. I would like to thank the members of the Canadian Association of Physician Assistants for their advocacy and their important work. I will continue to work alongside them.

Addressing the health care crisis is crucial, but because of transformational investments in our health care system, PAs will increase in Canada and wait times will decrease.

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#### SENIORS

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in the 2021 election, New Democrats made a promise to senior citizens that we would fight to implement a national dental care plan, and this year, that promise will be made a reality.

When I went door to door, I met seniors who told me that they could not afford to get their teeth fixed. Dental care is fundamental for health, dignity and well-being. We know that Conservatives will fight us all the way to stop seniors from getting what is rightfully theirs, but we will follow through on our commitments. However, that is just part of the job ahead of us.

### Oral Questions

Seniors are falling behind. Their pensions are not keeping up with inflation, and the government has created a two-tiered status for senior citizens. New Democrats say that those under age 75 deserve as much support as those over 75. We also need a full overhaul of the pension system, particularly for those who are still working. Conservatives may denounce pension deductions as a tax, but workers fully understand that they are a necessary investment into their retirement future.

New Democrats will always stand up for the dignity and rights of senior citizens.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

[Translation]

#### FRANÇOIS GUY

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, certain artists, certain songs take us back in time, maybe even to our youth. There are even some that bring us back to a specific era, perhaps to an important milestone, for example.

I do not need to sing the following lines; it is enough to recite the following:

Quebec's future will be sound,  
if it does let itself get pushed around.

We all know how it goes and immediately want to sing, “Quebeckers, we are Quebeckers”.

This takes me back to the 1970s, to the excitement of René Lévesque's first term in office and the Parti Québécois.

That was François Guy.

Although François Guy embodied a past era of Quebec song, he also embodied its future. François Guy was about the Société pour l'avancement de la chanson d'expression française, or SACEF. He was about mentorship and “Ma première Place des Arts” awards. He was about love for the French language and the desire to see a new generation of artists sing in French.

François Guy passed away on Friday. To his family, to his wife, Isabelle Lajeunesse, to all his loved ones and all Quebeckers, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I extend our deepest condolences.

Thank you for the memories, but, more importantly, thank you for mentoring the François Guys of the future.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

**Mr. Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians cannot find much comfort at home lately. Rents and mortgages have doubled, and the out-of-touch, jet-setting, climate-crisis hypocrite is out of the country again.

We will soon have a new Conservative prime minister. He will bring home lower prices by ending inflationary deficits and scrapping the carbon tax on heat, gas and groceries. He will bring home powerful paycheques by lowering taxes and clawbacks to reward

work again. He will bring homes workers can afford by firing the gatekeepers and freeing up land to build on. He will bring home safety by ending catch-and-release policies for repeat violent criminals. He will bring home freedom from foreign interference and woke government censorship.

Conservatives will fix what the Liberals have broken. For Canadians' home and our home, let us bring it home.

**The Speaker:** Order. I just want to remind the hon. member that calling others names is not parliamentary behaviour. I just want to remind everyone in the chamber of that.

The hon. member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook.

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#### VETERAN HOMELESSNESS PROGRAM

**Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, veterans and their families deserve a safe and affordable place to call home. That is why I am so pleased that the newly announced veteran homelessness program will provide comprehensive support to veterans experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness.

A total of \$79.1 million in funding will be available by way of two streams. One will provide rent supplements and wraparound services, while the other will support research on veteran homelessness and capacity building. Eligible recipients, including veteran-serving organizations, can apply to either or both funding streams through an online portal on the Infrastructure Canada website. Applications are open until June 23, and I encourage all organizations to make an application.

Canada's veterans have long served and sacrificed for our country, and it is our duty to support them.

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

#### FINANCE

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, not long ago, the Prime Minister told us that inflation was falling, and his finance minister said that deficit spending would simply pour gasoline on the inflationary fire.

A few weeks later, however, she did pour \$60 billion of new inflationary fuel on the fire in her budget, at an additional cost of \$4,200 to each Canadian family. Today we found out that inflation is rising again.

When is the government going to reverse this Prime Minister's inflationary policies?

● (1420)

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the reality is that inflation is going down. Inflation was 8.1% in June and 4.4% in April. That is a big difference.

*Oral Questions*

The Bank of Canada expects inflation to reach 3% this summer and to drop below 3% by the end of the year. As for our economy, our AAA credit rating remains intact.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, she is the one who said that deficits add to inflation. In fact, she said that inflation and rising interest rates were related to the deficits, the same types of deficits that she was going to introduce a few weeks later in her budget. She added \$60 billion of inflationary deficit spending.

In the Prime Minister's city, one in five Montrealers can no longer pay their monthly bills.

Will the Prime Minister finally give Montrealers and Canadians a bit of a break by eliminating these deficits?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Once again, the Conservatives do not want to talk about the reality of the Canadian economy.

The reality is that Canada has the strongest economy of all the G7 countries. We also have the strongest fiscal position and the lowest deficit of all the G7 countries.

It is thanks to the work of Canadians that we have a very low level of unemployment. Inflation is dropping—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

[*English*]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, not long ago, the Prime Minister told us that inflation was falling, and his finance minister said that she would avoid deficit spending because that would simply pour gasoline on the inflationary fire. She did pour \$60 billion of new inflationary fuel on the fire; as a result, today we see inflation is rising again, led by higher mortgage payments for the average Canadian.

Will the government stop pouring fuel on the fire so that Canadians could afford to pay their bills?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yet again, despite the best efforts, which actually are not that good, of the Conservatives to mislead Canadians, the Canadian economy is strong. We have the strongest fiscal position in the G7, and our AAA credit rating was reaffirmed after I tabled the budget.

On inflation, I know that the party opposite does not really know too much about the Bank of Canada, but the Bank of Canada follows CPI-trim and CPI-median; those are the core indicators. CPI-median and CPI-trim went down between March and April.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, actually, when I said two years ago that deficits would cause inflation, that was controversial. Now, everyone agrees that I was right, including the Governor of the Bank of Canada, who now says that inflation is caused by deficits. The finance minister has agreed that I was right, when she said that deficits pour fuel on the inflationary fire. She poured \$60 billion of that fuel. That is \$4,200 per family.

Canadians cannot afford to eat, heat their homes or house themselves. Will that minister stop pouring the fuel on the fire so Canadians can again pay their bills?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have another request: Would that ex-minister stop leading Canadians astray, urging them, recklessly, to invest in crypto? That is an area where we actually really do disagree.

I want to talk about the core inflationary measures that the Bank of Canada follows, which determine the path of interest rates. One of them is CPI-trim. CPI-trim peaked at 5.6% in June of last year. It was 4.4% in March, and fell to—

• (1425)

**The Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, actually, the Governor of the Bank of Canada said that his measure of inflation is CPI. CPI is up today, even though she said it would be down. It is up, interestingly, after the \$60 billion in new spending that she brought in her budget. What is up the most, though, is mortgage payments, and she can tell us why, because she admitted that deficits “make inflation worse and force rates higher for longer.” They force rates higher for longer, and that is why Canadians are paying 28% more in mortgage payments.

Will she get off the backs of Canadian homebuyers so they can put a roof over their head?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians know better than to listen to the Leader of the Opposition when it comes to money, because he did, after all, urge them to invest in crypto. They know better than to rely on the Leader of the Opposition when it comes to the Bank of Canada, because his answer is to fire the independent Governor of the Bank of Canada. What the Bank of Canada looks at is CPI-trim and CPI-median. CPI-median peaked at 5.2% in June. It was 4.5% in March and went down to 4.2% in April.

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[*Translation*]

#### IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, they called their gimmick the Century Initiative. It does not translate well, and that is by design. They want everyone to become English. They said—

**The Speaker:** I am going to interrupt the hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly. There are discussions happening between the two sides, and we cannot hear the question. I am going to ask everyone to calm down and take a deep breath.

The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly may start his question over again.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet:** Mr. Speaker, the government agreed to a gimmick it called the Century Initiative, which we will not bother translating into French. It does not deserve to be translated because, at that point, we would all be speaking English. The Liberals said that they would drop the slogan. That is fine.

*Oral Questions*

Then, the Liberals said that they would abandon the idea of 100 million Canadians by the end of the century because we did not like it. In any case, we will all be dead in 77 years. However, they decided to keep the target of 500,000 new immigrants per year as of 2025. That is what is going to shrink Quebec and bring about its permanent downfall.

Do the Deputy Prime Minister, the voice of reason, and her government really think that Quebecers are that stupid?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to be very honest and straightforward with our Bloc Québécois colleagues and all Quebecers. French in Canada is very important and the Quebec nation is a priority for our government and for me personally. We truly understand how important the linguistic and cultural vitality of the Quebec nation is, and I must say that, as the Minister of Finance—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we have an expression in Quebec that essentially means people need to walk the talk. I will explain that some day.

That being said, this government has messed up on immigration, with one million cases being backlogged. The Liberals are incapable of managing the foreign students file. They are incapable of managing the temporary foreign workers file. In a year and a half, they have been unable to do it. What would make us think that a year and a half from now they are going to suddenly be competent enough to deal with 500,000 immigrants?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue by saying that we truly believe in Quebec. We truly believe in the importance of the Quebec nation. That is why we are investing in the French language across Canada. That is also why we are investing in Quebec's economy.

We are investing in health care. We are investing in child care. We are investing in the green plan for industry. All these things are priorities to Quebecers, and they are our priorities as well.

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[English]

**HOUSING**

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a very simple and direct question for the Minister of Housing. I am going to give an example of a single mom with two kids in the city of Toronto, paying the average rent, which is \$3,300 a month for a two-bedroom, and earning an average salary, which in Ontario is \$62,000 a year.

How much money would this single mom with two kids have left over, after paying her rent, to buy groceries for her kids?

• (1430)

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, helping that single mother with two kids is a priority for our government. That is why we have invested in early learning and child care, and brought the fees down by 50%. That is why the grocery rebate is so important, and I am glad people will get their cheques on July 5. I absolutely agree with

the member opposite that housing is a very significant challenge for Canadians. That is why I am glad we have delivered on the tax-free first-time homebuyers savings account. That is why we have guidelines to protect Canadians with mortgages who are facing—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Burnaby South.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the answer is \$470. That is not very much.

Let us take another example, of a single mom with two kids in Vancouver, earning an average income in the city of Vancouver and paying the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment, which is \$3,800 per month. How much money would that single mom have left over? The answer is that she would not have anything left over. That is how serious things are in this country for renters.

People are not earning enough to pay their rent, so when will the government understand how serious it is and do something about it?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows very well, supporting families with children is one of the greatest priorities of our government, and for that single mother in Vancouver, child care fees coming down by 50% is meaningful. That single mother in Vancouver, depending on the age of her children, could be getting \$12,000 a year through the Canada child benefit. I bet that helps.

I do agree that we have more work to do on housing. That is why I am glad that, in the budget, we created an additional \$4 billion to implement a co-developed urban, rural and northern indigenous housing strategy.

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**FINANCE**

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, government members should stop arguing among themselves. Liberals have delivered many gut punches to Canadians over the past eight years, including their failed carbon tax scam, a housing crisis and \$1.2 trillion in debt. This morning, Canadians woke up to another one because the finance minister has no fiscal restraint, and her \$63-billion budget bonanza gave Canadians another inflation rate increase. The finance minister gave every struggling Canadian household an extra \$4,200 of cost because of her failed budget.

What did the minister think was going to happen when she threw a \$63-billion jerry can of fuel on the inflationary fire she started?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let us talk for a minute about fiscal responsibility and about inflation, which is coming down. In terms of Canada's fiscal position, the truth is, moving past the overheated and, frankly, metaphorically challenged Conservative rhetoric, that Canada has the strongest fiscal position in the G7. Our AAA credit rating was reiterated by S&P after I tabled the budget. We have the lowest deficit in the G7.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** I am just going to wait until all the chirping goes down. There is some chirping going back and forth. It is just the odd voice, and it is making it very difficult to really concentrate on the questions and the answers. We all want to hear what the question is, and we all want to hear what the answer is. Let us all stay quiet and listen.

The hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the finance minister must be practising dodge ball with the Prime Minister, the way they duck, dodge and deflect questions in here. They sound like a broken record on that side, but not as broken as what Canada feels like after eight years of their failures.

The finance minister just gave \$4,200 of debt to struggling Canadian households, and she made the inflation rate go up. Now, she looks like she is auditioning for her next career. This is not a part-time job.

If she does not want to do her job anymore, why does she not just get out of the way so Conservatives can fix everything the Liberals have broken?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am standing in the House right now, doing my job, and it is a privilege to do it. I was in Japan last week, at the meeting of the G7 finance ministers, where we talked about the global economy, where we talked about continuing to support Ukraine against the illegal Russian invasion and where we talked about economic security in the face of an aggressive China. I was proud and privileged to represent Canada there.

Are the Conservatives proposing that finance ministers should not attend meetings of the G7?

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

• (1435)

**The Speaker:** Before I go to the next question, we have been noticing there are a few members who have been banging on their desks. That is loud, and it is difficult for the interpreters to begin with. We want to be friendly to our interpreters. After all, without them, it would be very hard for us to conduct business.

The hon. member for Thornhill.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have bad news. Canadians are seeing even higher inflation today. Now we know for sure that Liberal deficits drive Liberal inflation, and the finance minister's last budget is driving every Canadian household 4,200 bucks more into debt.

Where is the accountability? Where are her answers? Why does she talk to Canadians like they are in kindergarten? The effect of her own failures is playing out right in front of her very eyes. Does she not see what everybody else sees?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the people who talk to Canadians as if they are in kindergarten are the Conservatives. The Conservatives behave as if Canadians do not understand that the judge of Canada's fiscal responsibility is not overheated Conservative rhetoric. The judge is the ratings agencies, and they have reaffirmed Canada's AAA rating.

Conservatives do not understand that we, in fact, have the lowest deficit in the—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** I am sorry. There is just too much chatter going on.

Could the minister go back about 15 or 20 seconds and start from there, if she does not mind?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland:** I do not mind at all, Mr. Speaker.

Canadians understand that Canada has a very strong fiscal position. We have the lowest deficit in the G7. Our AAA rating was reaffirmed by S&P after I tabled my budget.

Canadians also understand that, contrary to what the member opposite suggested, it is not the government that sets interest rates. It is the Bank of Canada, and the Bank of Canada looks at CPI-trim and CPI-median, both of which went—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Thornhill.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the judges of the Canadian economy are the families who cannot pay their bills. The finance minister's budget of broken promises speaks to her own credibility. She told Canadians that we would see a declining debt-to-GDP ratio, a line that she would not cross. She crossed it.

She projected an eventual surplus, and she spent \$60 billion instead. She told Canadians that she would balance the budget in five years, and now it is never. Today, again, inflation is on the rise. That means everyone in Canada will pay more for everything. She is not the victim. Canadians deserve answers. When will they get them?

**Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what we see day in and day out, as the world reels from the effects of the pandemic, and while we deal with the global effects of inflation, where Canada is doing better than the G7 average and the G20 average—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Mark Holland:** Mr. Speaker, they can yell across the way as much as they want. The difference is that we have a finance minister who is trying to protect and ensure that children get dental care. We have an opportunity when we are dealing with child care.

What they are talking about is cutting these programs. Therefore, they can attack and be partisan, as that is what they do, but underneath it is about cuts. It is about not being there, and it is misrepresenting world events.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance herself said that spending too much would fuel inflation. There are more than 20 Liberals, including ministers and the Prime Minister, who represent the Montreal area.

After eight years in government, their record is appalling. There are 360,000 families in the greater Montreal area, or one in five households, who do not have enough money to pay their rent and meet their basic needs. The situation is so serious that Marie Leblanc told *Le Devoir* that “suicide is around the corner”. Ms. Leblanc has almost nothing left for food and clothing.

Why are the members from Montreal abandoning her?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is important to reiterate that our budget is fiscally responsible and agencies such as S&P reiterated our AAA rating. As for the average Canadian, it is our government that shows them compassion. It is our government that invests in families. It is our government that invests in health care. It is not the Conservatives, who only want to cut, cut, cut.

• (1440)

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about her responsible budget, but not a single Montreal-area MP rose to answer this question.

Inflation is still on the rise, causing prices to go up across the board, including food and basic necessities. The system safeguards, interest rates, have slashed housing starts by almost 50%. The housing crisis will get worse. More and more people will have trouble making ends meet, yet the 20-odd Montreal-area MPs have not said a word about the Prime Minister's inflationary policies.

When will the Prime Minister, the Montreal-area member for Papineau, clue in to common sense and stop sending more and more Montrealers to food banks?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government knows that a lot of people are going through tough times. That is why we have responded with a range of programs for child care, health care and more.

Here is the real issue. Where exactly are the Conservatives, who have a habit of leaving Canadians to their own devices, going to make their cuts? It is all well and good to say we are spending too much, but when they say that, what they mean is that they are going to spend on their programs.

What program are they talking about? Support for seniors, for youth, for families, for housing? Which is it?

**DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

**Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about Chinese interference.

On Saturday, *The Globe and Mail* reported that CSIS has contacted at least two other MPs who may have been threatened by Beijing in 2021. That means that at least three elected members of the House were known targets, and none of them were informed until now. This is serious.

It was hard enough to believe that the Prime Minister had not been informed about the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, but three members, frankly, is unbelievable and unacceptable. Why did he withhold this information for two years?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I share my hon. colleague's concerns. That is why the government, with help from CSIS, will continue to provide briefings. That is why, in budget 2023, there are federal resources to set up a coordinator to fight foreign interference. That is why there are additional resources for the RCMP to protect all Canadians.

We need to protect our democratic institutions. That is not just the job of the government, but of all members of the House.

**Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the government is going to set up a committee that will think about making a plan.

It is only right that elected officials be informed if they are targeted by foreign intimidation or interference. It is not right for them not to be informed when they or their loved ones are being victimized or threatened.

Finding out this kind of news two years after the fact raises even more questions for the Prime Minister. First, why did the government not inform these MPs sooner? Coincidentally, it was two Conservatives and an NDP member who were targeted.

Had they been on the right side of the House, would they have been informed in a timely manner?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as my colleague from Public Safety mentioned, we take these threats of foreign interference very seriously, particularly when they affect members of the House.

That is precisely why we gave clear, specific instructions to the intelligence agencies. We did that to ensure that the intelligence agencies inform us when they become aware of such circumstances affecting MPs or senators. We will ensure that the elected officials in question are informed and that the appropriate measures are taken.

*Oral Questions*

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are still waiting to hear back from their rapporteur, but what alternative does he have except to recommend an independent public inquiry?

There is no other option. China targeted three members with threats. One Liberal was alleged to have been involved in the Chinese interference somehow. Interference is making headlines every day. The matter obviously warrants an inquiry. At this stage, waiting for the rapporteur is nothing but a waste of time, or a stalling tactic.

When can we expect an independent public inquiry?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we are working to secure our democratic institutions. From the time we formed the government, we have worked to strengthen the mechanisms needed to counter foreign interference, something the Conservatives never did during their years in power.

We constantly look for new ways to strengthen the existing mechanisms even further. Like our colleague, we are eagerly awaiting the report of the Right Hon. David Johnston in this matter.

\* \* \*

• (1445)

[English]

**JUSTICE**

**Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' Bill C-75 entrenched the catch-and-release bail system that is devastating Canadian communities. Violent crime has shot up 32% under the Prime Minister's watch. Premiers, police officers and victims groups have been desperately calling on the government to fix their broken bail system, but the bill they introduced today is nothing more than a slap in the face. It will not keep repeat violent offenders behind bars. The Liberals' catch-and-release system remains in effect.

When will these Liberals finally end catch-and-release for violent criminals?

**Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question, as misguided as it is. I had the honour today to introduce in the House Bill C-48, which represents targeted measures to strengthen our bail system to meet the concerns raised by provincial premiers, our counterpart justice and public safety ministers across Canada, police associations and others.

Let me read to members what Tom Stamatakis, president of the Canadian Police Association, has said. He said, "we appreciate that [the ministers] have worked collaboratively with stakeholders and introduced this common-sense legislation that"—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Kildonan—St. Paul.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the fact remains that this minister celebrated when the Liberal government's catch-and-release policies were brought in by Bill C-75. We need an entire overhaul of the Liberal system that has created

the violent crime surge across the country and has led to the deaths and harm of innocent Canadians from violent repeat offenders.

The reality is that the only way this gets fixed, the only way that violent repeat offenders get jail, and not bail, and the only way that the rights of victims are put first, is with a Conservative majority government. Is that not right?

**Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that on the other side of the House, they believe that complex criminal justice policy resolves itself into a simple, silly slogan. That is not true. We resolve complex problems in criminal justice by working with provinces, territories, stakeholders—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** I am sorry. The chirping is starting again, and it is getting a bit loud.

I am going to ask the hon. minister to start over again, so everyone can hear the answer, please.

**Hon. David Lametti:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that on the other side of the House, justice policy resolves itself into a simple, silly slogan. That is not the case. It is complex. One has to work with provinces, territories, experts and police associations, and that is exactly what we have done.

I will tell members what Jon Reid, president of the Toronto Police Association, has said. He said, "Ensuring the public maintains its confidence in the administration of justice is paramount, and I believe the introduction of Bill C-48, and the clear message being sent by the government that public safety remains a top priority, will help victims of crime, as well as all Canadians".

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, ever since Bill C-75 was passed by the NDP-Liberal coalition, criminals no longer fear law enforcement officers because they know they will be released the same day.

We are currently marking Victims and Survivors of Crime Week. Since 2015, under the Liberal government, this seems to be the era of repeat offenders, while victims come second.

The premiers are certainly going to ask that the Prime Minister fix this colossal mistake, this legislation resulting from C-75. Will he do it?

**Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I had the honour of introducing Bill C-48 precisely so we can work with the provinces, with the territories, and with police associations across Canada to strengthen the bail system in Canada.

### Oral Questions

Let me read from Tom Stamatakis' statement today. He wrote, "we appreciate that [the ministers] have worked collaboratively with stakeholders and introduced this common-sense legislation that responds to the concerns that our members have raised."

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, all the government is trying to do is fix the mistakes it has made in the past few years.

The legislation resulting from Bill C-75 is a mistake; the government is trying to fix it, but has not yet succeeded. Bill C-5 is a serious mistake; it must be fixed. All the government is doing at this time is making mistakes that cause problems in the system of checks and balances for public safety.

Can the minister confirm today that the bill he introduced will completely solve the legal problem arising from Bill C-75, yes or no?

**Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times, the justice system and the penal system cannot be reduced to a mere slogan. To improve the system and ensure that Canadians have confidence in the system, we must work with the provinces, territories, stakeholders and police associations.

That is exactly what we did for Bill C-75. That is exactly what we have done for Bill C-48. That is exactly the government's approach, and it will yield results.

\* \* \*

• (1450)

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, an environmental disaster is unfolding in Kanesatake.

Toxic water leaking from an illegal dump is spreading across Mohawk territory and draining into Lac des Deux Montagnes. The smell is terrible. The damage is real. Community members are fed up. They are being intimidated and left to fend for themselves. Federal action is urgently needed.

Will the Liberals listen to the community of Kanesatake and call a parliamentary inquiry to determine the specific causes of this disaster?

[English]

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Indigenous Services Canada, indeed the federal government, has been working with Kanesatake leaders to determine a solution to move forward in a way that protects the health and safety of the community. We agree that we must do better to protect our lands together, and that is exactly what I am doing with the leadership of Kanesatake.

\* \* \*

### AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Windsor families are worried. There are 2,500 good-paying union

jobs at risk at the new Stellantis plant, because this Liberal government cannot seem to get its act together. It is pointing fingers at the provinces instead of fighting for working-class Windsor families. This government cannot say that it stands with workers and they play political games with their livelihoods. They need real leadership now.

When will this government get back to the table, live up to its commitments and finally make Windsor workers a priority?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, no government has invested more for our car sector and our auto workers than our government. We proved that with the NAFTA negotiations, we proved that when we got Canada carved into the U.S. EV incentives and we proved that with the VW investment. We are doing the same thing with Stellantis.

We are going to ensure a fair deal for Canadians across our whole country, and that does mean that Ontario needs to do its fair share, and it means that Stellantis needs to do its fair share as well.

\* \* \*

### JUSTICE

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is easy to make up empty slogans and unrealistic promises, but it is harder to do the work diligently and concretely address the complex issues in order to protect Canadians and ensure our justice system is fair and efficient.

Can the justice minister update this chamber on the bail legislation he promised in March and actually introduced today?

**Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge for his hard work on this issue.

Canadians deserve to be safe and they deserve to feel safe. That is why today I introduced Bill C-48, a targeted bail reform bill to address violent repeat offenders, gun and knife violence, as well as gender-based violence. It is the product of collaboration with the provinces and territories.

We have had input from mayors, police, parliamentarians as well as indigenous leadership and the legal community. The police associations are already reacting favourably. It is proof of what we can do when Canadians work together.

## HEALTH

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Liberal inflation has sent food, housing and gas prices soaring, but there is one substance that has gone down in price by 90%: powerful opioids. After the Prime Minister announced \$100 million—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** I am sorry, but I am going to interrupt the hon. Leader of the Opposition. We are just getting distractions from all over.

I would ask him to start from the top please.

Order.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, while the Prime Minister has sent inflation for gas, heat and groceries soaring, there is one product that has actually come down in price: powerful opioids.

The Prime Minister has spent \$100 million on so-called safe supply. One Global News reporter went into the street to find out where all these drugs were going. It turns out they are being resold to other addicts in order to raise the money to buy deadly fentanyl.

Will the Prime Minister cancel the dollars for drugs and instead put the resources into treatment for addicts?

• (1455)

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are pretty fed up with this fight against evidence-based programs that actually are saving lives. We cannot allow the Conservatives to take us back to the failed ideology of the past. Even Harper's adviser, Ben Perrin, thinks they are speaking nonsense. So just stop it and save lives.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, no common sense.

The evidence is seen in the tragic faces of addicts who lie overdosed on the pavement in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver where, after this Prime Minister spent \$100 million handing out free drugs to addicts, he has led to a 300% increase in overdoses.

Will he stop giving dollars for drugs and instead follow my common-sense plan to put the resources into treatment and recovery to bring our loved ones home drug free?

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, people are dying—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order. One person at a time in this chamber, please.

The hon. minister.

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett:** Mr. Speaker, 46,000 overdoses have been reversed in safe consumption sites. The member says that he will stop that. I want him to speak to the parents of the people who would have been lost if there were no safe consumption sites and no safe supply. This is ridiculous.

## Oral Questions

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, people are dying because the minister and the Prime Minister are flooding the streets with dangerous drugs and killing these people. Since they brought in this policy, there has been a 300% increase in drug overdose deaths, and 30,000 people have lost their lives. Investigative journalists have shown that the drugs that she is funding with Canadian tax dollars are flooding the streets and being sold for a dollar—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order. I am hearing yelling on both sides.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition can start from the top, please, so we can hear the whole question. I do not want to hear any screaming or shouting in the background, and then we can hear an answer as well.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, people are dying because the policies of the Prime Minister are killing them. His policies are flooding the streets with drugs that now go for \$1 a hit. Someone can buy 26 hits of hydromorphone, which is an analog to heroin, for \$30. These are drugs paid for by Canadian tax dollars under a program by the government that has led to a 300% increase in drug overdose deaths.

Why will the Liberals not get some common sense, end dollars for drugs and put our people in treatment?

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, people have to stay alive long enough to get treatment. People are dying because of the toxic drug supply. Safe supply allows people to stay alive long enough. In a CMHA study—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

• (1500)

**The Speaker:** Order. Please start from the top, the same courtesy I gave to the opposition leader.

The hon. minister.

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett:** Mr. Speaker, people have to stay alive long enough to get to treatment. People are dying because of the toxic, tainted drug supply. When people are on safe supply, the CMHA article from yesterday talked about how there is less drug use, fewer overdoses and less petty crime. This is an evidence-based project and program that meets the test of evidence and science, not a journalist who will only speak to the people who agree with him.

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the theory is that if we flood the streets with hydromorphone, an opioid, then people will not use more dangerous drugs like fentanyl. The reality—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order. We want it to be quiet on both sides. I want everybody to take a deep breath. We want to hear the question, as well as the answer.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition, from the top.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, the theory is that, if the Prime Minister puts \$100 million of hydromorphone on the streets, people will not use more dangerous drugs. The reality is that, in both reports from the National Post and The Globe and Mail, and the data from the ground, the addicts are taking the hydromorphone, selling it to kids, and taking the profits to buy fentanyl and dying of overdoses. The kids then get bored of hydromorphone and they take the deadly fentanyl. That is why people are dying.

Will the government stop the policies that are killing people and put our people in treatment instead?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, some things are just beyond the pale.

Our Minister of Mental Health is one of the most respected members of this House. Unlike the Leader of the Opposition, who is a career politician and has done nothing else, she is a doctor. She devoted much of her life to delivering babies and bringing forth life.

I heard the Leader of the Opposition shout across the aisle, “You are killing them.” That is shameful. That is entirely unacceptable.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change announced consultations to develop a plan to meet the biodiversity commitments made at COP15. At the same time, that same minister—

**The Speaker:** I am sorry, but I must interrupt the hon. member. I still hear members yelling on both sides of the House.

[English]

There is shouting going on, talking really, just loudly. It is not a place where you have a conversation, while somebody else is talking, across the floor. Listen to the one person who is speaking. If members really want to speak to each other, they could cross over and whisper or go into the hallway.

[Translation]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change announced consultations to develop a plan to meet the biodiversity commitments made at COP15. At the same time, that same minister is authorizing BP to drill for oil right in the middle of the largest marine refuge on the east coast.

On the one hand, the minister wants to protect marine areas, and on the other hand, he is authorizing drilling in those same marine areas. Dr. Jekyll of the environment has become Mr. Hyde of the government. He knows full well that drilling does not protect marine areas.

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question, which gives me a chance to remind the House that no other country on the planet was ready to step up and host COP15. Canada was there for the international community, for science and for the protection of nature. We succeeded where everyone thought we would fail. We managed to secure an international agreement that most people would call historic. That is what leadership in Canada looks like when it comes to protecting nature.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, with his government's approval, 14 drilling permits will be auctioned off to allow drilling in areas that encroach on the most important marine refuges on the east coast. If the Minister of Environment and Climate Change does not see the contradiction in authorizing drilling precisely in areas that are supposed to be protected, then his pandering to the interests of big oil truly knows no bounds.

He needs to explain this. If the designation “marine protected area” does not protect marine areas from oil drilling, what are they protected from, real estate speculation, perhaps?

• (1505)

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, to begin, I want to make it clear that we are talking about exploration, not production. Before our government took office, less than 1% of our oceans were protected. Today, over 14% of our oceans are protected and we will get to 30% by 2030.

If members want to talk about this subject, then we can talk about the fact that, when the leader of the Bloc Québécois was serving as the Quebec minister of sustainable development, environment, wildlife and parks, he allowed drilling on Anticosti Island. He said, “I will tell you in no uncertain terms, the Government of Quebec intends to make progress in developing the oil industry in Quebec.”

\* \* \*

[English]

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is utterly shocking that the Liberal government believes the only treatment for addicts in this country is palliative care. No other treatment required, just move straight to palliative care.

Since this reckless plan, using taxpayer dollars for high-potency drugs, was introduced, seven people a day, in January alone, in British Columbia, have died. The overdose crisis cannot be fixed by giving people more drugs. It is only making it worse.

When will the Liberal government realize that the Conservative common-sense plan to give addicts rehabilitation and not free drugs is the way to end the overdose crisis?

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadian drug policy and international drug policy have all four parts: prevention and education, harm reduction, treatment, and enforcement. We lived through 10 years of the Conservative government taking harm reduction out. We are now having to build back. As Ben Perrin said, “rehashing Conservative, war-on-drugs tropes that have been long since discredited and have been found to be not only ineffective but costly and deadly.”

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister says that spending tax dollars to give free hard drugs to addicts is safe. He is wrong. Instead, he supercharged the drug crisis that is killing our sons and daughters, seven dying a day in B.C. alone. There is no time to wait. We need a common-sense plan that saves lives. Stop flooding our streets with crack, heroin and cocaine. Addicts need rehab, access to treatment beds and a path to a drug-free life.

The Prime Minister is out of touch and our youth are at risk. Will he do what it takes to bring home our kids drug-free?

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we cannot allow the Conservatives to take us back to the failed ideology of the past. Our government will use every tool at our disposal to end this national public health crisis. Supporting a safer supply is just one of the evidence-based, comprehensive public health responses to the toxic drug and overdose crisis. They do include prevention, treatment and enforcement.

Our government is working with stakeholders that help support a safer supply and build that evidence, like the recent CMHA study around this promising, life-saving practice.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, even though this situation is raging in British Columbia and across Canada, every Canadian, every Canadian family and every Canadian parent is concerned about this issue.

What we are seeing is that over the years, under this Liberal government, the situation has gotten worse. Not only is it not improving, but it is getting worse.

Is it not time for the Prime Minister and his government to realize that since the situation is getting worse, it is time for a new common-sense approach?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from the Quebec City region for asking that question.

Like me, he must know that in Quebec City, there are people in my riding and all over who save lives not only with early intervention and not only with harm reduction, but also with supervised consumption sites.

If my colleague is willing, he is welcome to come visit these people. Many of them are in Quebec City's lower town. Every day,

these people, who are far removed from the ideology of his leader, fortunately, are there to help people in our region.

\* \* \*

• (1510)

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, at COP15 last December, Canada and 195 other countries adopted a historic framework, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. This framework aims to protect nature around the world and halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity by 2030.

Yesterday, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change launched consultations with Canadians on the 2030 biodiversity strategy for Canada.

If my Bloc Québécois friends are willing to listen, would the minister tell us more about these consultations?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Canada has demonstrated leadership by being one of the first countries to launch its 2030 national biodiversity strategy and kicking off its consultations.

I am proud not only to launch these consultations with Canadians, but also to honour our promise to protect at least 30% of Canada's land and water by 2030. We also launched consultations about adding the monarch butterfly and the bumblebee to Canada's list of species at risk.

There is still much work to be done, and we must act now.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

## HEALTH

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the so-called safe supply policies of the Liberal-NDP coalition are deadly. Seven people a day are dying in B.C. alone. Unsafe tent cities abound. Kids are being sold the safe supply drugs and overdosing at an alarming rate. Then users have the cash to buy deadly fentanyl. Our sons and daughters are paying the price.

*Oral Questions*

When will the Liberals make treatment beds a priority, not free hard drugs, so that we can bring home our loved ones drug-free?

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again I will quote from Ben Perrin, the public safety and justice adviser to former prime minister Stephen Harper:

There is no indication that prescribed safe supply is contributing to illicit drug deaths.

Safer supply has been tested and found to be beneficial for people who have been unable to have treatment for whatever reason, and are long-term substance-abuse users. We're talking about essentially substituting a contaminated street drug with a drug that has known contents and potency to help people stay alive, first of all, and also to be able to stabilize.

**Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the careless attitude the Liberal government has taken toward the overdose and addiction crisis in Canada is unacceptable. In British Columbia alone, as I mentioned previously, seven people a day were dying in January. We have heard the Liberal addictions minister refer to the reckless distribution of hard drugs without mandatory treatment as a necessary step.

When will the Liberal government listen to science, realize that its decriminalization experiment is a failure, give addicts rehab, not free drugs, and bring our loved ones home?

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is impossible to bring one's loved ones home if they are dead. I am—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order. Please continue.

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett:** Mr. Speaker, the toxic drug supply means that people in construction or in the mines are using once and dying. We have to move to a safer supply of drugs, as we have with alcohol, cannabis and the other ways people actually use substance to numb their pain. Former prime minister Stephen Harper's adviser said, particularly on using people using drugs as props, "I was really disgusted by it. I honestly was so disturbed to see Pierre—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

Time had run out long before. I just want to remind hon. members, when they are referring to someone, to refer to them by their titles or their ridings. I know it gets emotional in here and we forget sometimes, but I just want to remind everyone on all sides.

The hon. member for Essex has the floor.

\* \* \*

**LABOUR**

**Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government continues to disrupt people's lives and cripple companies like WestJet. The labour and transportation ministers have once again failed to bring union and management to the table. Now Canadian travellers may be stranded over the long weekend. The Prime Minister's high taxes and high inflation continue to destroy this country while our air pilots are leaving to work abroad.

Our pilots are vital. When will the ministers do their job and ensure our pilots are back in the cockpit?

● (1515)

**Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, right now the employer and the union are at the bargaining table. They are trying to reach an agreement, one that is going to work for everyone. Our federal mediators are very good at what they do. Last year, they resolved 93% of federal disputes without any work stoppage. Right now they are focused on the bargaining table, and so am I.

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**DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

**Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians across the country are concerned about foreign interference, and we know diaspora communities are especially vulnerable. Chinese Canadians worry about the impact on the local community and about friends and family abroad. Canadians I have spoken to want real solutions.

Can the Minister of Public Safety share what the government is doing to protect and reassure Chinese Canadians and indeed all Canadians?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking my colleague for her work and her leadership on this issue. Obviously, any form of foreign interference is unacceptable, and we have a concrete plan that is focused on prevention, protection and accountability, including and up to expelling foreign diplomats when they cross the line, but we are not stopping there. We are going to continue with the creation of a foreign agent registry, but we are going to do it in the right way, so that communities are not stigmatized or marginalized. We are going to do this work to protect Canadians, and we need to do that work together.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the leader of the NDP and I heard from B.C. municipal leaders about the need for more reliable and affordable public transit in metro Vancouver. The mayors have a strong plan for necessary transit expansions, but the Liberal government is putting that plan at risk by delaying promised funding until 2026. Commuters are the ones who pay when the Liberals delay. Workers, students, seniors and people living with disabilities deserve timely, accessible transit now.

Why are the Liberals holding back this crucial funding from communities?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we share my colleague's concern about accessible, affordable public transit. It is good for the environment, and it helps families in terms of commuting, getting to important jobs they need to attend to. I am looking forward to meeting later this afternoon with mayors from the greater Vancouver area regarding TransLink. It is an ongoing conversation.

I will draw to my colleague's attention that a \$3-billion permanent public transit fund is exactly what the Canadian Federation of Municipalities asked for. We have put that in place, and we will continue to work with mayors from British Columbia and across the country to make sure this works well.

\* \* \*

## RAIL TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to building new passenger rail between Toronto and Quebec City, it would seem that the fix was in. Faced with the heady choice between privatization and, wait for it, privatization, one can guess what the transport minister chose. Documents show that the minister did not even consider a public model before he decided to hand Via Rail's busiest rail corridor over to private investors.

Why is the transport minister so fixated on privatizing this country's public passenger rail system?

**Ms. Annie Koutrakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the good work that he does on the transport committee with me.

Canadians deserve reliable railway service and public funds are—

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Publicly delivered.

**Ms. Annie Koutrakis:** Excuse me?

**The Speaker:** I want to remind hon. members that usually when a question is asked, it is answered and there are no conversations with someone else. It just does not work out.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Ms. Annie Koutrakis:** Mr. Speaker, we will always make sure that there is appropriate funding in our budgets and in our programs to make sure that Canadians have the public rail service they deserve.

## Government Orders

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### STRENGTHENING ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FOR A HEALTHIER CANADA ACT

The House resumed from May 15 consideration of Bill S-5, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, to make related amendments to the Food and Drugs Act and to repeal the Perfluorooctane Sulfonate Virtual Elimination Act, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

**The Speaker:** It being 3:19 p.m., pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions on the motions at report stage of Bill S-5.

Call in the members.

● (1520)

[Translation]

The question is on Motion No. 1.

● (1530)

[English]

(The House divided on Motion No. 1, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 324)

## YEAS

### Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bérubé
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Chahal	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeBellefeuille
Desbiens	Desilets
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Dong	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Dzerowicz	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher

*Government Orders*

Fonseca	Fortier	Allison	Arnold
Fortin	Fragiskatos	Baldinelli	Barlow
Fraser	Freeland	Barrett	Berthold
Gaheer	Garon	Bezan	Block
Garrison	Gaudreau	Bragdon	Brassard
Gazan	Gerretsen	Brock	Calkins
Gill	Gould	Caputo	Carrie
Green	Guilbeault	Chambers	Chong
Hajdu	Hanley	Cooper	Dalton
Hardie	Hepfner	Dancho	Davidson
Holland	Housefather	Deltell	d'Entremont
Hughes	Hussen	Doherty	Dowdall
Hutchings	Iacono	Dreesen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Idlout	Ien	Ellis	Epp
Jaczek	Johns	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Fast
Jowhari	Julian	Ferri	Findlay
Kayabaga	Kelloway	Gallant	Genuis
Khalid	Khera	Godin	Goodridge
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk	Gourde	Gray
Kwan	Lalonde	Hallan	Jeneroux
Lambropoulos	Lametti	Kelly	Kmieć
Lamoureux	Lapointe	Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Larouche	Lattanzio	Kurek	Kusie
Lauzon	LeBlanc	Lake	Lantsman
Lebouthillier	Lemire	Lawrence	Lehoux
Lightbound	Long	Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	Liepert	Lloyd
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)	Lobb	Maguire
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Martel	Mazier
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada	McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)	Melillo	Moore
May (Saaneich—Gulf Islands)	McDonald (Avalon)	Morantz	Morrison
McGuinty	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Motz	Muys
McLeod	McPherson	Nater	O'Toole
Mendès	Mendicino	Patzer	Paul-Hus
Miao	Michaud	Perkins	Poillievre
Miller	Morrice	Redekopp	Reid
Morrissey	Murray	Rempel Garner	Richards
Naqvi	Ng	Roberts	Rood
Noormohamed	Normandin	Ruff	Scheer
O'Connell	Oliphant	Schmale	Seeback
O'Regan	Pauzé	Shields	Shipley
Perron	Petitpas Taylor	Small	Soroka
Plamondon	Powlowski	Steinley	Stewart
Qualtrough	Rayes	Strahl	Stubbs
Robillard	Rodriguez	Thomas	Tochor
Rogers	Romanado	Tolmie	Uppal
Sahota	Sajjan	Van Popta	Vecchio
Saks	Samson	Vidal	Vien
Sarai	Scarpaleggia	Viersen	Vis
Schiefke	Serré	Wagantall	Warkentin
Sgro	Shanahan	Waugh	Webber
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Williams	Williamson
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard	Zimmer— 109	
Singh	Sorbara		
Sousa	Ste-Marie		
St-Onge	Sudds		
Tassi	Taylor Roy		
Thériault	Therrien		
Thompson	Trudel		
Turnbull	Valdez		
Van Bynen	van Koeverden		
Vandal	Vandenbeld		
Vignola	Villemure		
Virani	Vuong		
Wilkinson	Yip		
Zahid	Zarrillo		
Zuberi— 201			

**NAYS**

## Members

Aitchison

Albas

**PAIRED**

## Members

Aboultaif

Blois

Drouin

Ehsassi

Falk (Provencher)

Généreux

Gladu

Hoback

Joly

Jones

McKay

Savard-Tremblay— 12

**The Speaker:** I declare Motion No. 1 carried.*[Translation]*

The question is on Motion No. 2. A vote on this motion also applies to Motion No. 3.

*Government Orders**[English]*

The hon. government whip.

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon:** Mr. Speaker, I believe if you seek it, you will find agreement to apply the results of the previous vote to this vote, adding the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, with Liberal members voting against.

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

It is agreed.

The House has heard the terms of the motion.

*[Translation]*

All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

**An hon. member:** Nay.

**The Speaker:** We will have to have a vote.

*[English]*

We are not applying.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands is rising on a point of order.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I do not object to applying the vote, but it appeared that we were not going to have a chance to say how we would vote when applying. This is the question I would like to pose to the House: Can we agree to apply, and then go around as usual and not assume the votes are exactly the same?

**The Speaker:** We will try this again.

The hon. opposition whip.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that we were agreeing to apply the vote and that we would each stand and say how our respective parties would be voting on an applied vote.

• (1535)

**The Speaker:** That is correct. I think that is what we understood.

Let us start from the top so we all understand exactly what we are agreeing or disagreeing on.

The hon. government whip.

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon:** Mr. Speaker, I believe if you seek it, you will find agreement to apply the results from the previous vote to this vote, adding the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, with Liberal members voting against.

**The Speaker:** The hon. opposition whip.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** Mr. Speaker, Conservatives agree to apply the vote, with Conservative members voting nay.

*[Translation]*

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille:** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the results of the previous vote and will vote in favour.

*[English]*

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Mr. Speaker, the NDP agrees to apply, and NDP members will be voting in favour.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Green Party, we agree to apply, and as these are the Green Party's amendments, we vote yes.

**Mr. Kevin Vuong:** Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply the results of the previous vote, voting against.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Alain Rayes:** Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply the results of the previous vote, and I will vote in favour.

*[English]*

**Mr. Han Dong:** Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply, voting nay.

(The House divided on Motion No. 2, which was negated on the following division:)

*(Division No. 325)*

## YEAS

## Members

Angus	Ashton
Bachrach	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bérubé	Blaikie
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Boulerice
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Chabot	Champoux
Collins (Victoria)	DeBellefeuille
Desbiens	Desilets
Desjarlais	Fortin
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gill	Green
Hughes	Idlout
Johns	Julian
Kwan	Larouche
Lemire	MacGregor
Mathysen	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McPherson	Michaud
Morrice	Normandin
Paupé	Perron
Plamondon	Rayes
Simard	Singh
Ste-Marie	Thériault
Therrien	Trudel
Vignola	Villemure
Zarrillo — 55	

## NAYS

## Members

Aitchison	Albas
Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Allison
Anand	Anandasangaree
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Atwin
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Battiste	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Berthold	Bezan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Block

*Government Orders*

Boissonnault	Bradford	Oliphant	O'Regan
Bragdon	Brassard	O'Toole	Patzer
Brière	Brock	Paul-Hus	Perkins
Calkins	Caputo	Petitpas Taylor	Poilievre
Carrie	Casey	Powlowski	Qualtrough
Chagger	Chahal	Redekopp	Reid
Chambers	Chatel	Rempel Garner	Richards
Chen	Chiang	Roberts	Robillard
Chong	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Rodriguez	Rogers
Cooper	Cormier	Romanado	Rood
Coteau	Dabrusin	Ruff	Sahota
Dalton	Damoff	Sajjan	Saks
Dancho	Davidson	Samson	Sarai
Deltell	d'Entremont	Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Dhaliwal	Dhillon	Schiefke	Schmale
Diab	Doherty	Seeback	Serré
Dong	Dowdall	Sgro	Shanahan
Dreeshen	Dubourg	Sheehan	Shields
Duclos	Duguid	Shibley	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Dzerowicz	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Small
El-Khoury	Ellis	Sorbara	Soroka
Epp	Erskine-Smith	Sousa	Steinley
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Fast	Stewart	St-Onge
Fergus	Ferreri	Strahl	Stubbs
Fillmore	Findlay	Sudds	Tassi
Fisher	Fonseca	Taylor Roy	Thomas
Fortier	Fragiskatos	Thompson	Tochor
Fraser	Freeland	Tolmie	Turnbull
Gaheer	Gallant	Uppal	Valdez
Genuis	Gerretsen	Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Godin	Goodridge	Van Popta	Vandal
Gould	Gourde	Vandenbeld	Vecchio
Gray	Guilbeault	Vidal	Vien
Hajdu	Hallan	Viersen	Virani
Hanley	Hardie	Vis	Vuong
Hepfner	Holland	Wagantall	Warkentin
Housefather	Hussen	Waugh	Webber
Hutchings	Iacono	Weiler	Wilkinson
Ien	Jaczek	Williams	Williamson
Jeneroux	Jowhari	Yip	Zahid
Kayabaga	Kelloway	Zimmer	Zuberi— 256
Kelly	Khalid		
Khera	Kmiec		
Koutrakis	Kram		
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek		
Kusie	Kusmierczyk		
Lake	Lalonde	Aboultaif	Blois
Lambropoulos	Lametti	Drouin	Ehsassi
Lamoureux	Lantsman	Falk (Provencher)	Généreux
Lapointe	Lattanzio	Gladu	Hoback
Lauzon	Lawrence	Joly	Jones
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier	McKay	Savard-Tremblay— 12
Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)		
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert		
Lightbound	Lloyd		
Lobb	Long		
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)		
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)		
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire		
Maloney	Martel		
Martinez Ferrada	May (Cambridge)		
Mazier	McCaughey (Edmonton West)		
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty		
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLean		
McLeod	Melillo		
Mendès	Medicino		
Miao	Miller		
Moore	Morantz		
Morrison	Morrissey		
Motz	Murray		
Muys	Naqvi		
Nater	Ng		
Noormohamed	O'Connell		

**PAIRED**

## Members

Aboultaif	Blois
Drouin	Ehsassi
Falk (Provencher)	Généreux
Gladu	Hoback
Joly	Jones
McKay	Savard-Tremblay— 12

**The Speaker:** I declare Motion No. 2 defeated. I therefore declare Motion No. 3 defeated as well.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.)** moved that Bill S-5, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, to make related amendments to the Food and Drugs Act and to repeal the Perfluorooctane Sulfonate Virtual Elimination Act, as amended, be concurred in at report stage with a further amendment.

**The Speaker:** The question is on the motion.

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 invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

The hon. government whip.

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon:** Mr. Speaker, I believe if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to apply the results of the previous vote to this vote, with Liberal members voting in favour.

[English]

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** Mr. Speaker, Conservatives agree to apply the vote with Conservatives voting yea.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille:** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the vote and will vote in favour.

[English]

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Mr. Speaker, the NDP agrees to apply the vote and will be voting in favour.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, the Green Party agrees to apply the votes and votes no.

**Mr. Kevin Vuong:** Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply the results of the previous vote, voting in favour.

• (1540)

**Mr. Han Dong:** Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply, voting yes.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alain Rayes:** Mr. Speaker, I also agree to apply the vote and will be voting in favour.

[English]

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

(Division No. 326)

YEAS

Members

Aitchison	Albas
Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Allison
Anand	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arnold
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Berthold	Bérubé
Bezan	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Block	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Bragdon	Brassard
Brière	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Cannings	Caputo
Carrie	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Chahal	Chambers
Champoux	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Chong	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cooper

Cormier
Dabrusin
Damoff
Davidson
Deltell
Desbiens
Desjarlais
Dhillon
Doherty
Dowdall
Dubourg
Duguid
Dzerowicz
Ellis
Erskine-Smith
Fast
Ferreri
Findlay
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Gaheer
Garon
Gaudreau
Genuis
Gill
Goodridge
Gourde
Green
Hajdu
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Ien
Jeneroux
Jowhari
Kayabaga
Kelly
Khera
Koutrakis
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Kwan
Lalonde
Lametti
Lantsman
Larouche
Lauzon
LeBlanc
Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lloyd
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
Martinez Ferrada
May (Cambridge)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McGuinty
McLean
McPherson
Mendès
Miao
Miller
Morantz
Morrissey
Murray
Naqvi

Government Orders

Coteau
Dalton
Dancho
DeBellefeuille
d'Entremont
Desilets
Dhaliwal
Diab
Dong
Dreeshen
Duclos
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
El-Khoury
Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fergus
Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gallant
Garrison
Gazan
Gerretsen
Godin
Gould
Gray
Guilbeault
Hallan
Hardie
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Idlout
Jaczek
Johns
Julian
Kelloway
Khalid
Kmiec
Kram
Kurek
Kusmierczyk
Lake
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lapointe
Lattanzio
Lawrence
Lebouthillier
Lemire
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lightbound
Lobb
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maguire
Martel
Mathysen
Mazier
McDonald (Avalon)
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod
Melillo
Mendicino
Michaud
Moore
Morrison
Motz
Muys
Nater

*Government Orders*

Ng	Noormohamed
Normandin	O'Connell
Oliphant	O'Regan
O'Toole	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Perkins	Perron
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Poilievre	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Rood
Ruff	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Schiefke	Schmale
Seeback	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Shields
Shipley	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Singh	Small
Sorbara	Soroka
Sousa	Steinley
Ste-Marie	Stewart
St-Onge	Strahl
Stubbs	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Thériault	Therrien
Thomas	Thompson
Tochor	Tolmie
Trudel	Turnbull
Uppal	Valdez
Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Van Popta	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vecchio
Vidal	Vien
Viersen	Vignola
Villemure	Virani
Vis	Vuong
Wagantall	Warkentin
Wagh	Webber
Weiler	Wilkinson
Williams	Williamson
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zimmer
Zuberi— 309	

**CRIMINAL CODE**

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-21, An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms), as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise again to continue speaking to Bill C-21.

I mentioned before that I do not think there could be any more stark a contrast between Conservatives and all the other parties in the House, as Conservatives are the only ones who will defend the rights of law-abiding firearm owners in this country. I said earlier, and I have said many times in this debate about Bill C-21, that Liberals and the members of all the other parties seem dedicated to eliminating firearm ownership in this country by one small cut after another, particularly hunting rifles.

We have been saying that the Liberals have been going after Canadians' hunting rifles, which the Liberals have adamantly denied. Then, just before Christmas, when nobody was working and nobody was watching, the Liberals introduced an amendment to Bill C-21 that would have, in fact, banned many hunting rifles in Canada.

The Liberals were caught with that, so they repealed, or pulled back, that amendment. It is no longer a part of this bill. The Liberals have been quick to point that out, but we know that their true intention is to ensure that firearm ownership is onerous, if not outright illegal over time, in Canada. I must say this more often: Only Conservatives will stand up for the rights of law-abiding firearms owners in Canada.

It was fascinating to watch the NDP members do somersaults on this particular bill. Initially, the New Democrats were supportive of the amendment, and then they were not supportive of the amendment. It took them some time to come to this position, so we are happy to see that they came to, saying that they did not support that amendment, but here we are.

Again, members might be wondering what the major difference between Conservatives and Liberals is when it comes to this particular bill. It goes back to the idea of right and wrong, good and evil, and the fact that Conservatives believe that good and evil live inside of everyone. The line between good and evil cuts through the heart of humankind. It is not instruments that are inherently evil, but it is the actions or thoughts of humanity that can be evil. That is what we need to deal with in this.

**NAYS**

## Members

May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)

Morrice— 2

**PAIRED**

## Members

Aboultaif	Blois
Drouin	Ehsassi
Falk (Provencher)	Généreux
Gladu	Hoback
Joly	Jones
McKay	Savard-Tremblay— 12

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Speaker:** I wish to inform the House that, because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 19 minutes.

*Government Orders*

We have seen that the Liberals, time and again, every time there is a tragedy that involves firearms in this country, right away want to ban firearms, yet when it comes to treating hardened or violent criminals in this country, they introduce bills, such as Bill C-75, that reverse the onus on bail, let violent criminals out of jail quicker and reduce minimum sentences. They talk about maximum sentences, but one of the things we need in this country are minimum sentences, where people who do the crime would go to jail for a minimum amount of time. Over and over again, we have seen the government remove those minimum sentences, and some of those minimum sentences were brought in by previous Liberal governments in the 1990s. The Chrétien Liberals brought in these minimum sentences. It is only now that the current Liberal government removed them with Bill C-75.

We see that there is a misunderstanding of where evil comes from. Evil does not come from instruments. It does not come from inanimate objects. It comes from human beings who enact evil. The Christian world view talks about sin and that there is a missing of the mark, a right way to live and a wrong way to live. That is what we are living with when it comes to violent criminals who are using firearms in terrible ways.

Firearms have been in long-standing use in Canada. I have to say that they are a big part of our history and a big part of our heritage. Firearm ownership ought to continue to be available to Canadians across the country. I am excited to pass that heritage on to my own children.

• (1545)

Bill C-21 would do nothing to enhance public safety here in Canada, as Canada has some of the most well-regulated firearms—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Avalon is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Ken McDonald:** Madam Speaker, this may be a point of clarification versus a point of order.

The member started his speech before question period, and he was told he could finish after question period and the votes were over. However, he started in one seat, and now he has moved somewhere else in the chamber. Is that permitted, or should he have stayed in the seat he was in?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** As the hon. member is likely aware, because we are in a hybrid sitting, it does not matter where members sit.

The hon. member for Peace River—Westlock.

**Mr. Arnold Viersen:** Madam Speaker, Bill C-21 is a terrible bill that would do nothing to enhance public safety in this country. It is a confiscation of legal firearms that have been owned for generations in this country.

Firearm ownership is a heritage and a tradition that I am hoping to pass on to my children. I am excited to pass it on to my children. I know that they will be law-abiding and responsible firearms owners. I hope that tradition of firearms ownership would be something that is part of our Canadian heritage and part of the Canadian identity going forward.

**Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would just like to clarify for the hon. member that Bill C-21 respects sport shooters, gun owners, hunters and fishers right across the country.

The purpose of Bill C-21 is to address the problematic use of firearms and to reduce violence, which is not always about crime. Sometimes it is domestic violence, suicide, and so forth. Bill C-21 takes a great stab at doing that. It is not perfect, but it is going in a good direction.

• (1550)

**Mr. Arnold Viersen:** Madam Speaker, Bill C-21 does not say anything about the use of firearms. In fact, it is about writing lists of firearms, defining which firearms are able to be owned in Canada or are not able to be owned in Canada.

In the closing days of Parliament just before Christmas, when no one was paying attention, the Liberals brought in an amendment with a list of 1,500 firearms. Many of those are used for hunting. When the Liberals were caught with their hand in the cookie jar, they denied that they have been going after law-abiding hunting rifles, when that is indeed what they were doing.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Madam Speaker, my colleague closed his speech by saying that Bill C-21 does absolutely nothing to keep our communities safe.

I am not sure whether he read or received the memo indicating that, in parliamentary committee, his Conservative Party colleagues voted for all the government's amendments related to ghost guns. This is a fairly new phenomenon in Canada. The police have asked us to do something about it, and they support what we came up with. It will certainly improve gun control in Canada.

The Conservatives also voted in favour of the Bloc Québécois amendments on cartridge magazines. A valid licence will now be required to purchase a magazine. This was done for Danforth Families for Safe Communities. I am not sure whether the member is aware, but when a gunman went on a shooting spree on the Danforth in 2018, he was using a gun he had stolen, but he bought a magazine legally, because no licence was needed.

His party voted in favour of these amendments, which will help improve public safety in Canada. That is just a comment.

[*English*]

**Mr. Arnold Viersen:** Madam Speaker, the reality is that most of the tragedies that have happened in Canada with firearms have either been with illegally obtained firearms or the person using the firearm was not licensed to even be in possession of a firearm.

Continuing to focus on law-abiding firearms and firearms themselves, rather than those who use the firearms, is the major problem here. We need bail reform in this country. We need to ensure that violent criminals are not released back onto our streets, and that we ensure that law-abiding firearms owners are not harassed by the government.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I was listening to my colleague talk about hunters, farmers and indigenous communities. For the House's benefit, could he name a specific rifle or shotgun that would now be prohibited because of Bill C-21? The way I read the bill, it references any rifle or shotgun that is manufactured on or after the day on which the bill comes into force. If he is going to go on about the Canadian firearms advisory committee, I would remind him that the power to reclassify firearms already exists under the Criminal Code, and it is completely separate from Bill C-21.

Can the member enlighten the House on a specific rifle or shotgun that would be affected by Bill C-21? I await his answer.

**Mr. Arnold Viersen:** Madam Speaker, we saw what the Liberals did just before Christmas. They introduced an amendment that had hundreds of hunting rifles on it. Now, that amendment was pulled back and has been removed from the bill, but the Liberals were caught with their hand in the cookie jar. We know what their intention is. It is to take away hunting rifles from law-abiding firearms owners in this country. Bill C-21 would be just one step in that direction.

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government on a point of order.

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and I believe if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding the order made on Tuesday, May 9, 2023, the chair be allowed to accept a request for unanimous consent after receiving a notice from the House leaders or whips of all recognized parties stating that they are in agreement with such a request.

• (1555)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have unanimous consent for his motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Agreed and so ordered.

(Motion agreed to)

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Resuming debate. The hon. member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord.

**Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC):** Madam Speaker, many hunters in my riding are very nervous about Bill C-21. Their concerns are not unfounded. Bill C-21 is the biggest attack on hunting rifles in the history of Canada.

Hunting is part of Quebec's ancestral traditions. In our province, hunting is an important cultural and economic activity. During the 2021-22 hunting season, 563,228 hunting licences were sold in Quebec. That is over half a million licences. Nevertheless, under

the guise of public safety, the government is going to use Bill C-21 to ban a wide variety of hunting rifles and shotguns, even though they are essential hunting tools.

Violent crime involving rifles or shotguns represents 0.47% of all violent crime. Of course, some people will say that that is too much. However, the fact remains that it is a tiny percentage. The hunting rifles that the government wants to ban are used not only for an important economic activity for Quebec and Canada, but also as tools for farmers to protect their herds from wild animals, for example. Hunting rifles are not responsible for the mass killings in urban centres. We know all that. Do the Liberals really think that a hunter from Saguenay is responsible for the shootings in downtown Montreal?

When we were seized with the first version of Bill C-21, the Liberals, the NDP and the Bloc Québécois were forced to back down under pressure from the Conservatives. This proves that those political parties do not know how things work in the regions. We have long known that the Bloc Québécois is no longer a party of the regions.

Everyone knows that illegal gun trafficking at the border is a problem. Our borders are basically a sieve for illegal guns. We need more monitoring and more resources at the borders to deal with the trafficking. No one believes that going after legitimate gun owners is going to reduce violent crime across the country. It is just another Liberal plan to once again divide Canadians. The solution to fighting violent crime is regulation, not a blanket ban on hunting rifles.

Speaking of violent crime, it has increased by 32% since the Liberals took office, and gang-related murders have increased by 92%. Who is paying the price for the Liberals' incompetence and their abysmal failure on public safety? It is our hunters, our farmers and our indigenous people. There is no reason to attack Quebec and Canadian hunters. The government is giving in to lobby groups that condemn all guns as assault weapons, when in fact many are guns used for hunting.

It is clear to me that the Liberal government is once again way off base. It is out of touch with the Canadian reality outside the major urban centres. Perhaps it would be good for Liberal ministers to go and visit the regions. I even invite them to come to my riding. We will go out and meet some hunters. I hope they will gain a better understanding of the Canadian reality.

My leader and the Conservative Party's Quebec lieutenant came to Saguenay last month. We held a round table with hunting groups, and many people were in attendance. Do members know what they all had in common? They were all very concerned about Bill C-21. However, we reassured them by confirming that the three other political parties in the House that were 100% in favour of Bill C-21 at the start had taken a step back and reconsidered because of us, the Conservatives. We will always be there to defend their interests, and that is what we are doing today.

*Government Orders*

• (1600)

One of the people we met at a round table was Stéphane Brasseur, a retired police officer and now a member of the Saguenay hunting federation. He spent his entire life chasing criminals, but now he is being made to feel like one. His only crime is that he is a hunter and sport shooter.

We also met Marie Line Tremblay, leader of Poule des Bois, a group of women who like to hunt. She told us it is primarily a social group that gives women a chance to get together and talk about their lives and their interests as hunters. While this activity might not seem criminal to most, the Liberals see things differently.

Many controlled harvesting zones in my region, known as ZECs, depend on these weapons for hunting. They include the Association des sauvaginaires du Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean and the Club de tir le faucon, not to mention sport shooters and biathletes in training. Major businesses also depend on the hunting industry, like Chasse et pêche Chicoutimi.

Did anyone give a second thought to these organizations and businesses? What kind of compensation is the government prepared to pay? The whole thing amounts to a lot of trouble for very little return.

I will finish my speech with a message of hope to reassure all hunters and farmers in the country that the Conservatives are here to defend them. A Conservative government will invest in law enforcement and make our border safer and more secure. We will use common-sense policies to deal with criminals, instead of spending billions of dollars taking guns away from law-abiding citizens. The Liberals must end their crusade against hunters and leave them alone.

Bill C-21 does not address crime in Montreal. It attacks ordinary people who hunt in Quebec. I know very well that the Liberals voter base is in major cities. Ultimately, they know perfectly well that Bill C-21 will not reduce gun crime. This is a purely ideological bill. That is why I strongly oppose it.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Madam Speaker, my colleague says that Bill C-21 is the biggest attack on Canadian hunters ever. Unfortunately, I do not know if he has read the bill as amended in committee last week, but no hunting weapons will be prohibited if this bill is passed. The new definition of prohibited weapons is prospective. It will apply to future weapons, ones that do not yet exist. I do not know why some people are still trying to scare hunters.

My colleague also said that mass murderers in Canada do not use hunting rifles, that they do not use them in shooting sprees. I would remind him that the SKS, which I am sure he is familiar with, is widely used in Canada for hunting. It is especially popular in indigenous communities because it is affordable. I would respectfully remind him that an SKS was recently used to kill two Ontario police officers.

Perhaps we should stop scaring hunters. Thanks to the Bloc Québécois, hunting rifles are not in Bill C-21.

**Mr. Richard Martel:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleague that, at first, she fully supported Bill C-21. She even felt that Bill C-21 did not go far enough.

Then, at some point, she saw people everywhere on social media saying that the bill had missed the mark and that it would be dangerous for hunters. That struck fear in the hearts of the Bloc Québécois, and because of pressure from the Conservatives, the Bloc was forced to sit down with the NDP and the Liberals to get back to work.

That is why we, Conservatives, will always be there to stand up for hunters and sport shooters when the other parties want nothing to do with them.

• (1605)

[English]

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, since we are at the report stage of the bill, I wanted to ask my Conservative colleague about a Conservative amendment to the bill at report stage.

Under Motion No. 12, the Conservatives are seeking to completely delete clause 43. Does my colleague realize that this is the only clause in this bill that provides exemptions to the handgun freeze? Why are Conservatives getting rid of exemptions for anyone who has an authorization to carry and to anyone who is training for the Olympic or Paralympic committee? Why do they believe in getting rid of this clause of the bill?

[Translation]

**Mr. Richard Martel:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for a very good question.

I can tell him one thing. We heard an Olympian testify at committee. She is involved in sport shooting. She said that she would no longer be able to play the sport she loves so much because the exemptions are very limited.

I would like to tell my colleague that, right now, Olympic athletes are allowed to play their sport. However, before they can go to the Olympics, they have to be able to practise that sport. With this bill, they will no longer be able to practise. Consequently, we will no longer be able to send our athletes to the Olympic Games.

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, my colleague from Chicoutimi—Le Fjord said something interesting in answer to the question from the member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia. He said that the Bloc Québécois did its job because of pressure from social media and the Conservatives. I am pleased to hear that today.

What the member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord is telling us is that the Bloc Québécois did its job and improved the bill so that hunters would not have problems because of the Liberals' bill, which was basically bad.

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I simply want to thank the member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord for saying that the Bloc Québécois did its job on the bill and solved a problem for hunters. I thank him for that. That is what a party for the regions does.

**Mr. Richard Martel:** Madam Speaker, the member for Lac-Saint-Jean is clearly a team player. He is defending his colleague on this.

However, I want to make one thing clear. The Bloc Québécois went and did its job because it knew it was going to lose votes in the regions and it would not get re-elected. That is why the Bloc members ended up doing their work. In reality, they thought that Bill C-21 did not go far enough, and they do not want anything to do with firearms.

[English]

**Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in the House and speak to legislation, which, in this circumstance, is flawed, and to defend the people in my riding and across the country who believe the same thing.

The Liberals and the NDP missed the mark on Bill C-21 right from the very beginning. They should have spent their time focused on criminals and ending the revolving door of justice. Instead, the Liberals, the NDP and the Bloc turned their backs on hunters, sport shooters and law-abiding firearm owners, and insisted on steamrolling the democratic process. Democracy thrives on debate and discussion, on the exchanges of ideas and the ability of all parliamentarians to have their say, even if other parliamentarians do not want to hear it. If government members do not want to hear me in committee, they are going to hear me now.

This legislation would result in the freeze of lawfully owned handguns and a ban on many firearms used for hunting and sport shooting. It would target law-abiding firearm owners across the country, not criminals. That is the issue. I have been actively and loudly opposed to Bill C-21, which started, as I said, as the Liberal government's proposed legislation to ban handguns. Based on my experience in policing, I can confidently say it is a deeply flawed and misguided piece of legislation. One of the main reasons I oppose the bill is that it is based on a false Liberal premise that a ban on handguns is necessary to reduce gun violence in Canada, but the evidence clearly shows that law-abiding firearm owners are not and have never been the cause of gun violence in this country. In fact, almost all gun crimes are committed by criminals who use illegal firearms that have been smuggled in from the United States.

When it was debated in the House, Bill C-21 did not include any restrictions, potential restrictions or even the mention of long guns, only handguns. However, at committee, the government decided to introduce amendments known as G-4 and G-46, completely out of scope for the bill's original intent. The amendments were terrible and were focused squarely on hunters and legal, law-abiding firearm owners. Their implementation would have been useless to prevent gun crime, and did not include any prior consultations of any kind. We all know what happened next. The push-back from Canadians and the Conservatives overwhelmed the Liberals, who were then forced to withdraw these amendments. How did that occur? It was because the democratic process was allowed to occur.

The committee was able to do its work on behalf of all Canadians. Committees are supposed to debate, hear from witnesses, weed out bad ideas and come to common-sense decisions. We would have had the chance to do just that, and do it again with the rest of Bill C-21, if the government truly valued democracy.

Furthermore, during the questioning of government witnesses on these amendments, it was identified that the decision to make these changes was made at a political level. That means that it was not recommended by bureaucrats or policy specialists. This is a clear indication that the Liberal Party is more interested in scoring political points than in implementing effective policies to reduce gun violence. This is not how a democracy is supposed to work. We need to get back to the principles of parliamentary democracy, where every voice is heard, every opinion is considered and every decision is made with the best interests of Canadians at heart.

However, this is not just about principles or the Liberals' lack of them when it comes to democracy. It is also about the impact that this legislation would have on law-abiding firearm owners across the country. These are individuals who have followed the rules, who have gone through the necessary background checks and training and who have been responsible stewards of their firearms, but instead of focusing on criminals and illegal firearms, the Liberal government is targeting law-abiding firearm owners, threatening their ability to hunt, sport shoot and lawfully own firearms.

● (1610)

What may be lost in some of the speeches today is that Bill C-21 is a legislative mess. It is filled with large legislative changes, and introduces items like red-flag laws that would have negative impacts on those seeking assistance to escape from an abusive partner, for example. As PolySeSouvient put it on Twitter, "Despite opposition from coalition of women's groups, @ndp...supports @liberal\_party ex-parte/red flag measure inviting victims to go to court instead of police doing their job. @BlocQuebecois & @CPC\_HQ rightly vote against." These red-flag measures completely miss the mark on improving public safety and actually put victims at greater risk. Over 20 women's groups have reached out to the government and told it to stop. It refused and did not listen.

Bill C-21 makes up words like “military-style assault weapon” without definition, which the chief firearms officer of Alberta agrees is absolutely ludicrous. The Minister of Public Safety testified that he was relying on the committee to come up with a definition to the senseless, uneducated use of that term. The bill speaks of the creation of a Canadian firearms advisory committee that is supposed to provide pragmatic advice on Canadian firearm classifications and regulations. This is just another nifty clause in Bill C-21 that we had five minutes to debate. Just who would sit on this new committee? Would it be gunsmiths, firearm experts and chief firearm officers from across the country, or would it be the well-connected friends of the Liberals and their social justice lawyers who know nothing about firearms, who do not understand the traditions of hunting and sport shooting, have never received PAL or RPAL training, and simply do the bidding of the Liberals?

These are legitimate concerns, but instead of proper debate, we had only minutes. It is simply unacceptable. It is an assault on the values and traditions that have made Canada the great country it is today, and it is a betrayal of the trust Canadians have placed in their elected representatives to uphold the democratic process. The government should work with stakeholders and experts in the firearms community to develop effective policies that actually protect Canadians while respecting their differences of opinion and traditional lifestyles. Instead of working with stakeholders and experts, the Liberal government used a programming motion to fast-track legislation that would have serious consequences for law-abiding firearm owners. This is not how democracy is supposed to work. Democracy, including parliamentary committees and the legislative process, is supposed to be messy. It is non-linear. Sometimes governments do not get the results they want, but MPs should always have the opportunity to advocate and fight on behalf of their constituents.

Conservatives stand with law-abiding firearm owners, demanding they be treated with the dignity and respect they deserve. We demand that the government focus on real solutions to the issue of illegal firearms rather than targeting law-abiding Canadians who have done nothing wrong and we demand that our democracy be respected, that our voices be heard and that our elected representatives be held accountable for their actions. As Conservatives, we believe the government should be accountable to the people. That includes taking the time to fully debate and scrutinize legislation. We are not against progress, but we are against rushing through legislation without the proper scrutiny. This is why we will continue to fight for law-abiding firearm owners, and we will continue to oppose any government that uses programming motions to rush through legislation without proper scrutiny. The use of programming motions is a threat to our democracy. Conservatives support common-sense firearms policies that keep guns out of the hands of violent criminals. When we form government, creating effective policies to reduce gun violence will be a priority. Our focus will be bringing back serious sentences for repeat offenders, which were repealed by the Liberals, and reversing the government's revolving door of justice. We will invest in policing and our secure border, rather than spending billions of dollars confiscating firearms from law-abiding Canadians.

Bill C-21 has missed the mark and is simply political rhetoric. The NDP and the Liberals have steamrolled democracy, and if Bill

### *Government Orders*

C-21 passes at report stage or third reading, we too will have failed Canadians. My hope is that the other place will do its job well, scrutinize this bill fully and return it to the House with the many amendments it requires, or gut it completely.

• (1615)

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):**

Madam Speaker, I know my colleague spoke about bail reform and the issues we have seen come up lately. We have introduced a comprehensive bill to address bail reform, especially when dealing with violent offenders. I am wondering if the member opposite can confirm whether the Conservative Party will fast-track this bill and give us unanimous consent to move it forward to the other place?

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Madam Speaker, I read the bill this morning and was shocked at its lack of understanding of the total issue. If we look at what is actually being proposed in the legislation, it barely begins to scratch the surface of the issues affecting Canadians with the violence in our communities.

If we look at the restrictions placed on the types of offences that are going to be covered, it is a start. With Bill C-75, the Liberals were warned to begin with about what exactly it was going to cause and were told to stop it. They did not, and now they have to back-track and try to fix it.

It does not go far enough. It is a beginning, and it certainly is not something that I can support in its entirety. It needs a lot more work.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I really appreciate my colleague. He knows how the study of Bill C-21 went in committee. He was there. He understands the concept of a consequential amendment. There were several of them for the government's ghost guns amendments. There were some on my amendment for the magazines. A valid possession and acquisition licence is now required for buying a magazine and ammunition. I was very pleased to see that there was unanimity on this. The Conservative Party was in favour of this measure. It is a good measure.

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That is how it was, except for a consequential amendment. At some point, my colleague from Red Deer—Lacombe got carried away and said that it made no sense to stop a hunter who is getting ready to hunt a rare bird, if his licence is not valid because he is missing a magazine. The official who was there gently reminded him that if the licence is not valid, he could not go hunting, he could not use his gun. Despite that, the Conservatives voted against this amendment.

I would like my colleague to explain why.

• (1620)

[*English*]

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Madam Speaker, I too have enjoyed working with my colleague from the Bloc on the public safety committee off and on for a couple years. I have always generally appreciated her approach to and understanding of some of the legislation we deal with.

The Conservatives did support legislation that attempted to curtail what we call ghost guns. It is something that law enforcement has called for across the country. We knew the government was going to fast-track this bill, and the NDP were going to support it no matter what. However, at least we could try to work with other opposition parties to provide some amendments that were going to be helpful for public safety. Addressing some of the issues of ghost guns would do exactly that.

My understanding of that is that Canadians are able to acquire magazines or gun parts for use in ghost guns. We needed to start somewhere, so the Conservatives did support some of these amendments simply because we wanted to ensure that the bill before us was better than what the Liberals were presenting.

**Mr. Rob Morrison (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I was listening to the member's speech and he was talking about a confiscation program. I do not know how much that is going to cost. Maybe it is \$1 billion or \$2 billion. I do not know if there is a figure out there.

Does the member think that money could be spent somewhere where it would have an actual effect on rising crime, especially gang and organized crime?

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Madam Speaker, the order in council from May 2020 listed 1,500 firearms, now nearly 2,000, that the government was saying would be prohibited. Handguns and other firearms ended up being of no value, and the Liberals said they will basically confiscate them. They call it a buyback but I call it confiscation, because we cannot buy back something that we do not own to begin with.

The billions of dollars that this will cost, which will do nothing for public safety, could be used in such a greater capacity to deal with our borders, to deal with law enforcement initiatives and to take illegal guns smuggled from the United States off our streets. Then the court systems can deal with criminals the way they need to be dealt with.

**Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise today on an issue that is, quite frankly, very near and dear to my heart. It is near and dear because before Grandpa Jack passed away, I got to hunt with him for many years for deer on, ironically, Manitoulin Is-

land. I am very blessed to still have the opportunity to meet my father at 4:30 in the morning at his house to go chase wild turkeys with my uncle Tom. I guess it is really near and dear to my heart because I am hoping that my grandson Levi, who just turned two years old a couple days ago, will have the same opportunity to enjoy the outdoors with his "Pip", which is me.

Today, I stand in solidarity with law-abiding gun owners across Canada. For generations, my family has been hunters. My dad got his first gun at the age of five. He, as I did, grew up on a farm. Most farmers owned guns and most family members of the household learned how to use them. Besides supplementing their food supply, farmers used guns to keep predators from their livestock. From one generation to another, each was taught how to handle a gun safely and responsibly.

My dad passed his knowledge and love of hunting to me and my two brothers. Traditions are important. We need look no further than to first nations that support these very same traditions. Hunters today still eat what they hunt and share with their wild-game-loving neighbours, just as I did Saturday night at the Gosfield North Sportsmen club's wild game dinner back in my riding.

Hunters respect nature. We are the original conservationists. We hunt according to seasons, designed to cull the herds, to curtail the behaviours of predators such as coyotes and to preserve wildlife.

Prior to my election as the member of Parliament for Essex, I was an outfitter operating in the Far North. I had the honour and pleasure of working with many first nations guides. Camps like mine, scattered across Canada's vast terrain, help preserve a traditional way of life. We bring resources and jobs to the local communities.

Interestingly enough, my riding of Essex is home to the Jack Miner Migratory Bird Foundation. Jack Miner was an avid outdoorsman and hunter who founded a sanctuary for the conservation of migrating geese and wild ducks. I suppose I could dedicate this entire speech to his list of achievements, but suffice to say, he became world-renowned. As the Right Hon. Pierre Trudeau said of him, "Jack Miner, with his vision and determination is largely responsible for those conservation measures in existence today."

As I said previously, hunters are the original conservationists. They are also law-abiding citizens. Every gun owner in Canada has to go through rigorous certification and training. Our guns are stored under lock and key. We hone our skills at licensed shooting ranges, and we transport our guns in the prescribed way.

Our government knows that the smuggling of illegal guns across the U.S. border is the true source of gun violence in Canada, yet no matter the facts, law-abiding gun owners are the ones negatively impacted by this new proposed legislation. Why is that? Is it ignorance? Is it government overreach? Is it virtue signalling to their voter base? Is it all of the above?

Sadly, the proposed new gun law restrictions are based on emotion, not on facts. Bill C-21 is divisive. It pits rural Canadians against urban Canadians. It serves no practical purpose because it ignores the real source of gun violence. It trifles over types of guns, which only serves to show how profoundly uninformed the government truly is.

● (1625)

Bill C-21 inexplicably also captured, or had the potential to capture, the airsoft and paintball industries in its net, thus jeopardizing these recreational activities and the businesses that go along with them. It is often hard to relate to something that one is indifferent to. However, beyond curtailing our own passions and pursuits is something more fundamental: the erosion of our charter rights and freedoms under the guise of public safety.

Law-abiding gun owners are the low-hanging fruit for the government's obsession with exercising more and more control over the lives of Canadians. Bill C-21 exploits the fears and emotions of Canadians without any bearing on the facts. It is yet another in a long line of such laws that represent a slow and steady erosion of a gun owner's charter rights and freedoms enshrined in our Constitution. My hope is to cast Bill C-21 in a light that even Canadians who are not recreational gun owners could find a point of agreement on regarding what the government should do and, equally importantly, should not do to address gun crime.

Canada is a democracy. The people elect their government, and the government serves the people. The Constitution of Canada is based on the rule of law. As long as citizens are obeying the laws of the land, they are to be free to go about their daily lives. For the government's part, those we elect to govern us are to only pass laws that are necessary and beneficial.

Furthermore, the onus is on the government to prove that any restrictions on a citizen's liberty are necessary and beneficial. Every law that is restrictive in its nature must be thoroughly scrutinized, and we must make a compelling case for its justification. There should be no benefit of the doubt, no ignorance masquerading as facts, no cynical appeal to emotion.

Our Constitution contains the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. What happens when our laws become unjust, as Bill C-21 is? Even more alarming, what happens next? Will this open the floodgates? Is the real goal to end gun ownership entirely? The fact is that those who commit violent crimes using a gun do not obey the law, any law, no matter how restrictive. They always find an illegal way to acquire firearms, chiefly by smuggling. The government knows that.

To my point about the need for balance to ensure that laws are just, when regulations become too restrictive for the law-abiding and enforcement too lax for the criminals, the law becomes unjust. That is exactly what has happened with firearms owners in Canada.

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However, this will not end with firearms owners. A government's appetite for control is only whetted by each new measure of control it seizes from its citizens. The only ones who can curb this appetite are the citizens themselves. Maybe hunting is not someone's thing, but they should be concerned nevertheless.

We have seen what the government does with emergency powers under the Quarantine Act. Three weeks into the pandemic, while Parliament's sole focus was providing families and businesses the income support they needed, the Liberal government sought powers that would have given it unfettered control of the public purse until the end of December 2021. The Conservatives fought back then, forced their hand and have remained vigilant since.

Since then, the Liberals have resisted accountability, rushed programs through Parliament and issued an order in council on gun control, which is the basis for Bill C-21. When Parliament finally returned to its full function after months of being shuttered, the Liberals gave us the WE scandal, ethics committee filibusters and then prorogation to avoid scrutiny. The government has proven itself incompetent, unaccountable, unethical and power hungry time and time again to advance an ideological agenda propped up by its informal coalition partners, the NDP.

Recreational gun owners are being scapegoated. I can assure members that it will not end with law-abiding gun owners. The government's sole focus should be an economic recovery plan and another to reopen our society, all rights restored.

To summarize my key points in closing, first, law-abiding gun owners are not the source of gun violence and should not be the government's scapegoats. Second, the government needs to focus on stopping the trafficking of illegal guns across the border. Last, let us uphold the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and cast this bill and every bill in this House in its bright light.

● (1630)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, that was another great speech written by Adam. I thank him very much for that.

*Government Orders*

I find it very interesting that the member talks about this side of the House virtue signalling, when we are continually seeing virtue signalling in regard to a ban on assault rifles coming from the other side of the House. The reality is that this House is united, with the exception of the Conservatives, in regard to doing something meaningful about banning handguns and making meaningful legislation as it relates to gun reform.

I wonder if the member could comment perhaps—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup is rising on a point of order.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Madam Speaker, I would just like to say to my colleague that we are not in government, and, unlike them, we do not use speech writers.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I believe that is a point of debate.

[*English*]

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, I think I made my point; it is more of a comment than a question. I think Canadians can take great comfort in knowing that every party in this House supports reform. Despite the differences Liberals might have with the Bloc and the NDP, there is only one party that is so adamantly opposed to having gun reform legislation, and that is the Conservative Party.

• (1635)

**Mr. Chris Lewis:** Madam Speaker, if there is no question, I will make a comment with no answer. My comment is that I worked hard on this speech. I have been working on this speech for over a year and a half, so I find it incredibly shameful for that member to suggest that this speech was written for me. There are very few folks in this House who will know more about firearms than me, especially about hunting. I would ask him to retract the statement. Unfortunately, I do not think he is going to.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I will ask my Conservative colleague a simple question.

If the Conservatives were to form government, would they scrap Bill C-21 on firearms?

[*English*]

**Mr. Chris Lewis:** Madam Speaker, what we would never have done is introduce Bill C-21 to begin with, because we know it is going to do absolutely nothing to curb violence. What Conservatives would have done is invest in protecting our borders and invest in our police forces to ensure that we never got to this point to begin with.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Essex for bringing his point of view to this speech.

I do hear Conservatives talk a lot about hunters, farmers and indigenous communities. What I would like the member for Essex to do, for the benefit of members in this House, is name a specific ri-

fle or shotgun that would be prohibited as a result of Bill C-21, because when I read the bill that has been reported back to the House, it specifically makes mention of something that has been “designed and manufactured on or after the day on which this [bill] comes into force”.

Does the member have a specific make or model that would actually be banned by the bill? I would like him to stay away from anything the government currently has in its power under the Criminal Code, because it is a completely separate issue, the order in council. What under Bill C-21 would be banned by it?

**Mr. Chris Lewis:** Madam Speaker, I think that was the second or third time the member has asked that question in the House. Here is the problem: The answer is that we do not know. I will tell why we do not know. It is because of the Canadian firearms advisory committee. Here we go again, one more time. “It is not as bad as people think it is. It is going to be okay. People should not worry about their firearms that take clips in the bottom, which are the same as top-loading. It is okay. We have a firearms advisory committee.” How could we possibly trust anything else that comes from the government that will not take away legal firearms?

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Order. It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona, Canada Revenue Agency; the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, Housing.

[*English*]

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be able to take part in this report stage debate on Bill C-21 to give my voice, and to speak to my residents in Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

I have had an intimate amount of experience with this bill, having been the former public safety critic, and I have seen just how much time it has taken up at the public safety committee. A lot of people forget that the public safety committee is also called the public safety and national security committee, and there have been important pieces of legislation held up at it because of the inordinate amount of time Bill C-21 has occupied.

Of course, things were going quite well for Bill C-21 until those very ill-advised 11th hour amendments landed on the committee's desk with no warning. That is when the whole process got completely derailed. I am thankful that, due to a lot of pressure from the opposition parties, the government finally saw sense in February and withdrew the problematic amendments that would have really impacted so many hunters, farmers and indigenous communities, because it was quite obvious they had landed with no consultation, had completely taken committee members by surprise, and were not, frankly speaking, backed up by any kind of witness testimony we had heard at committee.

*Government Orders*

Up until that point, Bill C-21 had primarily been about a handgun freeze. There were some provisions in the bill dealing with red flag laws and yellow flag laws, there was a section covering airsoft guns, and so on, but those amendments just completely expanded the scope of the bill so they were withdrawn. That is an important point to underline here, because I have been listening to the speeches on Bill C-21 for most of the day today, particularly the ones from my Conservative colleagues. A lot of their speeches had to do with standing up for hunters, farmers and indigenous communities, which are all very admirable things to stand in this House to say and do, but the problem is that their speeches are muddying the waters, because they are alluding to amendments that are no longer part of the bill.

In several questions today during debate, I have challenged my Conservative colleagues to name one rifle or one kind of shotgun that is going to be prohibited by Bill C-21. They have all deflected and changed the channel to go on to safer ground that is buoyed by their own talking points because they cannot name a rifle or shotgun that is going to be banned by Bill C-21 as they are not in there.

Instead of reading Conservative talking points, I am going to actually read the bill. The important thing here for everyone who is listening to this debate is the new definition of a “prohibited firearm”. The key clause is as follows. I will read it into the record. It states, “is designed and manufactured on or after the day on which this paragraph comes into force”.

In other words, current makes and models that are legally owned by licensed firearms owners are not touched by this bill. I underline that with an exclamation mark. They would not be touched and would still be legal. It is only for makes and models that are designed, manufactured and come on to the market after Bill C-21 comes into force.

I have heard Conservatives talk about the firearms advisory committee and how it will be stocked with Liberal appointees who will give advice and suggest that certain makes and models be banned. That is a complete red herring. I will tell members why. The government already has the power under the Criminal Code to reclassify firearms by cabinet decree. That is something that has been abused by both Conservative and Liberal governments. How do members think we got the May 2020 order in council that listed those 1,500 firearms? That certainly was not done with the aid of a firearms advisory committee, but by the Liberal government, by cabinet decree through the Canada Gazette, suddenly making a list of firearms, which was done under the existing authority of the Criminal Code.

I am actually glad there will be a firearms advisory committee, because finally we will have someone at the cabinet table advising the minister. They may come from an indigenous background, a hunting background or a sport shooting background. Why is it a bad thing to have these people provide a sober second thought on any kind of decision the government already has the power to do?

• (1640)

These are complete red herrings with respect to everything the Conservatives have said so far about popular hunting rifles or shotguns, which are in fact going to stay legal. In fact, I look forward to going to my local Canadian Tire and outfitting store on the day af-

ter Bill C-21 receives royal assent to show all the different makes and models that are still on sale.

There was a disappointment that I had with this bill. I put forward an amendment at committee that was going to amend the section of the bill that would provide to people an exemption from the handgun freeze. I felt that the current definition that would allow only people who were at Olympic level and Paralympic level to have an exemption from the handgun freeze was too narrow. I put forward amendments to that effect, so that it would have been expanded to the International Practical Shooting Confederation or the Single Action Shooting Society. That amendment almost passed because the Liberal member for Kings—Hants actually made a great intervention at committee where he supported my amendment, but when it came to crunch time he abstained. Therefore, on this critical amendment when he had a chance to show his constituents that he was going to sway this important part of the bill, he abstained. As a result it ended up in a five-five tie at committee and of course it was broken by the chair, so we came very close to amending that specific section of the bill.

The reason I backed this up is that during witness testimony we heard from the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. Their public statement on this was:

We believe that a handgun freeze is one method of reducing access to these types of firearms, while allowing existing law-abiding handgun owners to practice their sport.

I took great heart from that statement from the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. We had Chief Evan Bray as a witness and he backed that up. The association does believe in a handgun freeze, but it thought there should be exemptions to allow people to continue their sport shooting.

We are at the report stage and I want to address a very confusing Conservative report stage amendment to Bill C-21. I was reviewing that and I looked at Motion No. 12, which has been put forward by the Conservative member for Kildonan—St. Paul. It is shocking because the Conservatives are actually seeking to entirely delete clause 43 from the bill. Why is that important? Clause 43 is the only part of Bill C-21 that would provide an exception to the handgun freeze. It would provide an exception to anyone who has an authorization to carry and to people who are training, competing or coaching in a handgun-shooting discipline under the International Olympic Committee. For some reason the Conservatives want to delete the exemptions to the handgun freeze from the bill. Many of their other report stage amendments that they are seeking to delete are ones that in fact they played a very constructive role at committee in helping amend. The Conservatives are all over the map here on report stage. It is quite clear that Conservatives are flailing around and it is quite evident from their speeches today.

*Government Orders*

I want to briefly address ghost guns. This was a big ask from the law enforcement departments. We had Inspector Michael Rowe, staff sergeant, from the Vancouver Police Department, who did mention that the barrels, slides and trigger assemblies are a big issue for law enforcement. The advent of 3-D printing has allowed a lot of firearms to come onto the market that are completely untraceable. As the member for New Westminster—Burnaby has stated in this House, their growth has gone exponential. Therefore, law enforcement people have very clearly asked for this amendment to Bill C-21 and I am glad to see that the committee responded in kind.

I also want to salute our NDP efforts to save airsoft. It was my amendment that passed that deleted the offending section of Bill C-21 so that the airsoft community could continue to play its sport and would not be impacted by Bill C-21. I want to thank committee members for allowing that part of the bill to pass.

I will end by also saying that there was a really important amendment to the bill, which would recognize section 35 of the Constitution Act, which of course upholds the rights of indigenous peoples. Bill C-21 would not impact that and it was important to have that clarification to the bill.

• (1645)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member questioned why Conservatives are talking to deleted parts of the bill. That is because these speeches were written for them months ago, and when they write those speeches, they write them with the intention of maximizing their fundraising capabilities at the time. I hope that clarifies it for the member.

Time after time, we see Conservatives getting up and spreading misinformation about this bill. It is with the objective of nothing other than to raise money from it. I am really glad to see that there are adults in the room, including the NDP, the Bloc, the Liberals and the Greens, who are actually standing up for the best interests of Canadians.

Would the member like to comment on that?

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Madam Speaker, I spoke to this last week when we were debating Motion No. 25. I made reference to the fact that, for the Conservatives, Bill C-21 is the goose that lays the golden eggs. That is why they have wanted to see it stuck in the House; that hoovering sound we can hear is the sound of the Conservative Party's fundraising machine raking in millions of dollars off this bill. I for one am glad to see that the committee has sent it back to the House, because there are two other important bills waiting to be heard. These are Bill C-20, which deals with important RCMP oversight, and Bill C-26, which looks at cybersecurity; these are both very pressing issues. It is high time the public safety committee got to work in addressing those other key issues.

• (1650)

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC):** Madam Speaker, this gives me a chance to start by correcting my colleague from Kingston's observations about speeches written weeks ago. The heartfelt commentary from my colleague about

hunting on Manitoulin Island were not written for him by a speech writer who has never been to Manitoulin Island.

With regard to the fundraising issue, I am not sure that it is actually true that it raises all this money. However, if it does, and given the fact that in Canada there are very strict limits on how much money can be raised per individual, does that not make the point that thousands of Canadians care very deeply about this issue? Does it not show that they are alarmed at seeing their way of life destroyed and their property taken away from them by a government that is unconcerned about their well-being? Does that not explain why the money is being raised? Does it not also explain why the NDP has such difficulty raising money on any issue that it represents?

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Madam Speaker, as we have heard in the public—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Seeing that there are other individuals who seem to want to ask questions or make comments, I would ask them to please hold off because it is not their turn. I did not recognize them.

The hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Madam Speaker, the Conservatives have learned their lessons from Facebook. Facebook knows how to raise a lot of money because it keeps on pressing people's emotional buttons. This is a party that has become expert in rage farming. That is what they do. They churn it out. They take videos out of context. It is all to get people hopping up and down, mad about blatant mistruths. Yes, they have taken great lessons from Twitter, from Facebook, from everyone who has become an expert on this. They have become masters at keeping people angry so that they can rake in the cash. I will take no lessons from them on that.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the NDP usually agrees with nearly everything the government does here in the House. The NDP is almost like the Liberal farm team. The New Democrats agree with the Liberals on everything except one thing, which the member explained quite well in his speech. His colleague brought forward an amendment in committee to expand the exemption for sport shooters. He was trying to include groups in that exemption, including the International Practical Shooting Confederation, or IPSC.

Exempting these groups would have created a huge loophole. In fact, it would have made the handgun freeze completely obsolete and useless. The NDP, which claims to be in favour of better gun control and a handgun freeze, introduced this type of amendment in committee. I find it hard to understand why they would want to exempt as many sports shooters as possible. That attempt was nearly successful.

I would like to understand the NDP's position. Are they for or against better gun control?

*Government Orders*

[English]

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Madam Speaker, I have spoken to sport shooters, and they just simply want to be able to continue their sport. I would redirect my hon. colleague to the testimony that we had from none other than the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. They said that a handgun freeze is absolutely one method of reducing access to these types of firearms, but they also qualified that by saying they support allowing law-abiding handgun owners to practise their sport.

The NDP is on the same side as the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC):** Madam Speaker, to nobody's surprise, the Liberals are missing the mark once again. As my Conservative colleagues have reinforced time and time again, legal firearms owners are not criminals. However, Bill C-21 treats them this way. This leads me to believe that the bill is not about firearms or assault-style weapons; rather, it is about philosophy and how the government sees the Canadian people.

It seems that the Liberals may be forgetting or perhaps ignoring what it means to have a firearms licence in Canada. Any hunter or sport shooter will proudly tell us about how they underwent a series of background, mental health, common-sense and legislative regulation tests to receive and maintain their licences. They are proud because they have received the trust of society and want to show themselves worthy of that trust.

If the members opposite actually listened to their rural constituents about these issues, they could also explain that, to legally own and register firearms in Canada, they must subject themselves to random check-ins by law enforcement. Moreover, they must report data, such as residency, more often than do most citizens to ensure the safekeeping of their weapons. Before travelling with a firearm, every firearm has specific safety protocols that must be followed.

With this in mind, how would banning the firearms belonging to law-abiding citizens limit the occurrences of violent gun-related crime? How would a crazy repeat offender get a locked-up pistol or hunting rifle from a law-abiding owner? It does not make sense. We cannot deny that violent crime with firearms does happen in Canada. However, they are not mass produced for the Canadian market. People with the technological know-how in the underground market are the real criminals contributing to crime here. People 3-D printing parts of a rifle and mailing them across the international border into Canada are contributing to the illegal underground market; law-abiding firearms owners are not.

The Liberals do not trust Canadians. They see every gun owner as a potential criminal. As far as they are concerned, one gun in private hands is one gun too many. That there is no scientific evidence showing that Canadian farmers, hunters and sport shooters are turning to a life of gun crime is something they choose to ignore. They say that Canada has a gun crime problem and that this will solve it. However, the Liberals are missing the mark and ignoring the evidence. Gun crimes are not being committed by people who purchase their guns legally and then suddenly become lawless. Canada's gun crime problem has been created by a government that is unwilling to clamp down on the illegal smuggling of weapons in-

to Canada. Shutting down the gun pipeline is hard, but targeting hunters and sports shooters is easy.

This is not to mention the negative impacts that vastly outweigh the positive; I can only imagine how much this ban will negatively impact many Canadians, ranging from those who inherit rifles to citizens whose everyday lives revolve around a culture of hunting and gathering. I cannot help but wonder what rural Canadians will do if this rifle ban passes. Canada is known to be a well-forested country, meaning that we have a fair amount of rural area. The main source of food for many of these Canadians is hunting, and this has been the case for as long as we can remember. With that in mind, how will these hunters eat if the ban goes through?

As seen through the newly proposed passport design, the Liberals' disregard for the rich Canadian history that preceded us is nothing new. I am not surprised that the Liberal government is living up to its expectation of continued disappointment that Canadians feel toward the government. The more I look at this bill, the more I agree with the member for Kildonan—St. Paul, who said, "This is the largest assault on hunters in Canadian history."

• (1655)

Rifle owners by inheritance will have to face the sad reality that a part of their family history will be stripped from them at the hands of the government, and hunters will have to face an ever-higher rate of food insecurity in this G7 country. Hunters will have their entire way of life uprooted and have to defer to alternative lifestyles, which they may not have the means to adapt to. This is especially the case considering the cost of inflation and the impact that the carbon tax has had on the cost of living. We cannot tell them to go to a grocery store instead. These rural areas have limited access to the essential services they need, and there is no need to take away a major component of how they can be self-sufficient. It is unjustified.

What happened to the Canadian dream, where hard work gets rewarded and where we are the land of freedom with responsibility? The Liberals have led not just me but many other Canadians to feel that everything is off. Life in Canada is not as free as it used to be eight years ago, and this unjust firearms ban is a symbol of this broken feeling.

Rifles do not harm people; the people behind them do. Instead of attacking the real criminals, the members opposite chose to slap some half-baked idea together and call it a day. This is why I say that the Liberals have missed the mark once again, and it raises the following question: How does this help society?

*Government Orders*

Does it reduce crime in Canada to take rifles away from hunters with no criminal records? It does not. Does it stop gun crime in our nation to make it impossible for an aspiring biathlete or a target shooter to acquire a rifle? It does not. What it really does is make the Liberals feel good. It allows them to pretend that they are doing something without actually having to take real action.

When will they finally admit that the legal firearms owners are not the criminals? When will they humble themselves and admit that their catch-and-release policies are not just ineffective but outright dangerous to society at large? Violent repeat offenders, not our licensed gun owners, are the real criminals. When will the Prime Minister stand up, scrap this nonsense once and for all and propose solutions that actually protect Canadian citizens?

• (1700)

**Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as I have said several times in this House, I came from municipal politics before coming here. After being elected as mayor in 2013 in my home town, at our first public meeting, the fire chief entered and said, “Everybody stay in the building. There is a shooting next door.” A jilted boyfriend showed up at a medical clinic and shot the boyfriend of his former girlfriend in his vehicle. He then went into the medical clinic and shot his ex-girlfriend. He was found dead the next morning in his vehicle in a cemetery not too far away.

This bill will help to keep those situations from happening. Why is the member against stopping those types of situations?

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Madam Speaker, we are not against stopping crime. We are for stopping criminals from making those crimes happen.

As I clearly said in my speech, we are for finding all the ways to defend Canadians. However, we are against going after law-abiding Canadians who own guns while leaving the criminals on the streets to trade and bring in guns from everywhere in the world and then sell them to kill Canadians. That is what the bill has not addressed.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I want to say how much I value my colleague. I work with him on various committees. I want to congratulate him on his speech.

What I particularly like about my colleague is that when he and I debate, our positions are always based on facts. I am open minded, but now, the Conservatives are telling us that hunters will be penalized if we pass this bill.

My question for my colleague is quite simple, and I am sure he will not dodge it because his statement that hunters would be penalized is surely based on facts.

My question is this, and I look forward to his answer: Can he name a single model of hunting rifle that will be banned if we pass Bill C-21?

[English]

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Madam Speaker, this is the million-dollar question coming from my friend from the Bloc Québécois, and it came from the NDP before. The million-dollar question is what this

bill would do to protect Canadians. This bill does not do the job. That is the million-dollar question.

We can look at how many times the NDP, the Bloc Québécois and the government have confused Canadians over this bill. The bill has been going back and forth for a few years here. Now the question to me is about how many times and what rifles are mentioned in this bill. I think that is a bit rich.

• (1705)

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I like the member, but we have now had a dozen Conservatives stand up in the House who have not read the bill. They have no idea of its contents and are just reading packaged statements. I think that is showing some disrespect to Canadians for Conservatives to have not even read the legislation.

If they had read it, they would see that this legislation is cracking down on criminals, which is what the Conservatives are asking for. There are the ghost gun provisions on these untraceable weapons, which are increasing exponentially across the country. Conservatives have tried to block the bill that would contribute to law enforcement being able to crack down on criminals. The hypocrisy is astounding.

The other point I need to make is that we had two amendments tabled by the Liberals that were withdrawn, thanks to the NDP fighting to get them withdrawn. Will he admit the two amendments he referred to in his speech have been withdrawn? They do not exist, and they are not pertinent to this debate.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Madam Speaker, I think the hon. member meant to discredit Conservatives by saying we have not read the bill. We have been fighting for a good bill for as long as he and everybody else remembers.

I would ask the NDP a question: How many times have they changed their minds on this bill? How many times have they danced back and forth on this bill?

Before the NDP members ask us those questions, they should ask themselves how many times they have changed their minds and why, at the end of the day, there was a revelation from somewhere that made the NDP agree to this bill.

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to rise to speak to Bill C-21, an act to amend certain acts and to make certain consequential amendments, firearms, at report stage. The bill has gone through quite the journey in this place, filled with huge backtracks, misleading statements from the government, and the repackaging and introduction of previously repealed amendments.

*Government Orders*

As a reminder, let us look at that journey. The introduction of Bill C-21 was first announced at the end of May last year, with all the fanfare that the government could muster when trotting out yet another misguided and ineffective policy. The Liberals claimed the bill would, among other things, ban the future legal sale of handguns in Canada, increase the allowable penalties for gun smuggling and trafficking, and introduce new red-flag provisions that may allow law enforcement to remove firearms from a dangerous domestic situation more quickly.

Shortly after seeing the bill, Conservatives attempted to introduce the following motion:

...that given that the debate on combatting gun violence needs to be depoliticized and centred on the rights of victims and the safety of communities, the House should call on the government to divide Bill C-21 into two parts to allow for those measures where there is broad support across all parties to proceed separately, namely curbing domestic violence and tackling the flow of guns over the Canada-U.S. border, from those aspects of the bill that divide the House.

Conservatives were clear. We supported the elements of Bill C-21 that were focused on protecting potential victims of gun crime and tightening up laws that address gun smuggling. Unfortunately, the Liberals were not willing to back down on their political agenda and separate the ineffective and divisive parts of their bill that would do nothing to stop gun violence and provide no benefit to vulnerable Canadians. They blocked this common-sense motion, proving they were more interested in playing division politics than addressing gun violence in Canada.

I will fast-forward to November, 2022, when the Liberal government introduced amendments to Bill C-21 that would have banned millions of hunting rifles with a new prohibition of any “rifle or shotgun, that is capable of discharging centre-fire ammunition in a semi-automatic manner and that is designed to accept a detachable cartridge magazine with a capacity greater than five cartridges”.

For weeks, the Liberals denied that their amendments would outlaw any hunting rifles, then the Prime Minister finally came clean, this past December, and admitted that the government’s amendments would outlaw hunting rifles. While speaking to CTV News he said, “there are some guns, yes, that we’re going to have to take away from people who were using them to hunt.”

The Prime Minister finally admitted what the Liberals had been denying the whole time, which was that the Liberal government, with the support of their NDP allies, were going after law-abiding Canadians. Thanks to the leadership and hard work of the member for Kildonan—St. Paul and my Conservative colleagues on the committee, Canadians were made aware of these attempts by the government to attack the rights of law-abiding citizens. The backlash to the attempts of the government was rightly fierce, and the Liberals retracted their amendments, supposedly learning a lesson.

However, we soon learned that they were just biding their time, waiting to try to catch Canadians off guard. Earlier this month, the public safety minister announced new amendments to Bill C-21 to create a definition by which new firearms would be banned. The minister also announced that he would appoint a firearms advisory committee that would determine future bans of firearms that are presently owned by law-abiding Canadian gun owners.

To be clear, the new Liberal definition is the same as the old one, and the new amendments that were brought to the committee were simply original amendments in a new package. It is expected that, between these measures, most of the firearms previously targeted by Liberal amendments late last year, including hunting rifles, would once again be targeted for future bans. It would seem the only lesson the Liberals learned was to give Canadians less time to object to their amendments, so they could force them through and try to cover it up.

● (1710)

That is why the government used some of the most heavy-handed tactics the House has seen, by moving to limit debate on Bill C-21 at committee in an attempt to pass the bill before the break week at the end of May. The Liberals forced multiple midnight sittings of the public safety committee, two of which I did sit in on. They passed Bill C-21 through committee in the wee hours of Friday morning last week by heavily limiting debate on over 140 clauses and amendments.

Even more surprising, both the NDP and the Bloc supported this heavy-handed attempt to pass the bill. They supported the government in enforcing strict time limits at the public safety committee and shutting down debate in the House. It would appear the governing party has suddenly grown by 57 members, which brings us to today and midnight sittings again being scheduled for this week to ram this bill through report stage.

I represent a rural riding. I represent thousands of hunters, farmers, sport shooters and indigenous Canadians. I know they are not supportive of this bill. They have told me. The sentiment from my constituents has been clear. They do not support Bill C-21, and they think it will do more harm than good.

Betty from Delisle raised concerns with the bill that many of my constituents have raised with me. She noted that this bill would target and severely handicap hunters who are trying to feed their families, noting it would cause another skill, which was a staple of our ancestors, to disappear. She also noted this bill would go after target shooting, stating that this bill would have negative consequences for gun clubs that offer training to young people as an activity that keeps them off the streets and away from bad influences. These sentiments are the same as those of rural Canadians across the country.

In fact, the backlash from rural Canadians forced the NDP to backtrack on its support for the government’s initial amendments last time. There are several NDP MPs who represent rural ridings, and my hope, although it is waning, is that they will stand up to the Liberals, stand up for their constituents on this issue, and fight for them here in Ottawa.

*Government Orders*

The truth of the matter is that this bill is an attack on law-abiding citizens who are legal gun owners. Hunters, farmers and indigenous Canadians will not be fooled. They know this is part of the Liberal plan to distract and divide Canadians. No one believes going after hunters and legitimate hunting rifles will reduce violent crime across this country.

This bill is also a distraction, another attempt for the government to distract and divide. It is targeting law-abiding gun owners to distract from its failures on public safety. The Liberal government has given easier access to bail for violent, repeat offenders through Bill C-75. In doing so, it ensured that violent offenders are able to get back onto the streets more quickly. It has removed mandatory minimum sentences for gun crimes with Bill C-5, and it has failed to stop the flow of illegal firearms coming across the U.S. border.

Instead of going after the illegal guns used by criminals and street gangs, the Prime Minister is focused on taking hunting rifles and shotguns away from law-abiding farmers, hunters and indigenous peoples. We know going after hunters and hunting rifles will not reduce crime across the country. The government needs to come clean with Canadians. The only thing worse than doing nothing is pretending to be doing something when one is not.

Conservatives believe we must ensure at-risk and vulnerable Canadians are protected. We must target the criminals and gangs responsible for rising gun violence in Canada. That is why, under the leadership of the member for Carleton, we will continue to support common-sense firearms policies that keep guns out of the hands of dangerous criminals and ensure there are strong consequences for those who commit gun crimes to make our communities safer.

• (1715)

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the member, for whom I have a lot of respect, talked about targeting criminals. That is what the bill would actually do. I wish Conservatives would actually read the bill, with the amendments that were put into it, so they could actually comment on all of the measures that would be taken to target and fight criminals who use ghost guns. We have seen these untraceable ghost guns proliferating on the streets right across this country. In the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, they have increased 10 times over the course of the past year. That is a 100% increase every month.

It is critical that those provisions that target criminals actually be passed by the House and moved through. Instead, the Conservatives wanted to fundraise, and have been blocking those provisions week after week. My question is very simple: Why did Conservatives try to block provisions that would actually target criminals and eliminate ghost guns and untraceable weapons from our streets?

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** Madam Speaker, I want to start by thanking all my colleagues who serve on the committee that dealt with this bill, for the many hours they put in, providing great questions to the departmental officials. I was greatly impressed by their questions, and was grateful for the opportunity to participate, even if I was not asking the questions, by hearing what the answers were.

I find it really rich for that member, who has actually bargained away his responsibility, as a member of an opposition party, to hold

the government to account on deeply flawed legislation, which is what Bill C-21 is. It is not about enhancing public safety. This bill would basically create a confiscation program.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Madam Speaker, if Bill C-21 is as terrible as my colleague claims, I would like her to tell me why the Conservative party voted in favour of every one of the government's amendments on ghost guns.

Why did the Conservative party vote for the Bloc Québécois's amendments on magazines? Why did the Conservative party amend Bill C-21 to enhance it by adding a definition of family violence, for example?

The Conservatives also moved a very helpful amendment on firearm advertising. Could it be that Bill C-21 is not so bad after all?

• (1720)

[*English*]

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** Madam Speaker, I believe that, in the comments I made during my speech, I noted that we recognized there were issues that did need to be addressed, and that we asked for those parts of the bill to be separated so we could have a meaningful conversation.

What the member points out, and what another one of my colleagues made very clear, is that there could not be more of a stark contrast between Conservatives and all the other parties on this issue. We are the only ones defending the rights of law-abiding firearm owners, and that is why we do not agree on whether or not this is a good bill.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Madam Speaker, I have a rebuttal. The member has made a bunch of allegations. Can she name one firearm that would be taken away from somebody as a result of this bill? We have asked this question before. No Conservative has been able to answer it, because it would not happen. It simply would not happen. The Conservatives really should read the bill.

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** Madam Speaker, it is my understanding that Bill C-21 aims to ban various reproductions of antique firearms, such as the flintlock pistol. These firearms are single-shot, muzzleloading, black powder firearms that require time and effort to reload for each shot. These firearms are curated by collectors, used in re-enactments, and do not pose any significant threat to public safety.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill C-21. It is an act to make certain consequential amendments in relation to firearms, which is really the government's way of saying that this is a bill to confiscate hunting rifles from law-abiding farmers, hunters and indigenous people, and distract from the real issue of the crime wave that is going on in Canada right now. That is really what this bill is. It is purely a distraction to distract from what is going on in our streets, on our subways and in some of our schoolyards right now. It is another virtue-signalling bill from the current government, to pretend it is going to do something about smuggled handguns, illegally attained guns and gang violence, but not actually do anything.

It is a distraction bill to take the focus away from the disastrous result of the Liberals' soft-on-crime bills, Bill C-5 and Bill C-75. It is a distraction from the multiple police officers who have fallen on the job very recently and the random stabbings in Toronto, the Lower Mainland and my hometown of Edmonton. All these random attacks hurt, but the one in Edmonton strikes very close to home. A mother and her 11-year-old child were stabbed to death in a schoolyard park. EPS police chief, Dale McFee, commented on the attack. He said it was "completely random. In no way could the victims have anticipated what would happen to them. There is no making sense of this." This was a mother and her daughter who were in the playground of a schoolyard. A person drove up, got out of his car, stabbed them to death and just left. It was completely random. The police chief said, "There is no making sense of this." I agree with Chief McFee that it makes zero sense that this would happen. He also said that the victims could not have anticipated the attack, and I agree with that as well.

However, here is the kicker: The court system could have anticipated this attack, and should have, and we should have had laws to protect this family. The killer had been released just 18 days earlier, on bail from a previous assault. He had a record. The killer was only 33 years old, and he had a record going back 14 years, having been in and out of jail, released on bail, and having had constant charges of assault with a weapon. He was in and out of prison repeatedly. There were robberies. He had stabbed someone who was just sitting on a bus bench. His parole documents stated to him, "You were armed with a knife and stabbed your victim once in the upper back. You then fled on foot. Your victim's injuries include a punctured aorta and a laceration to his spinal cord." These are not simple injuries. This is attempted murder, yet he was back out on the streets. Between committing that crime and committing the murders in Edmonton, the attacker assaulted a corrections officer and two inmates, and was released, despite the warnings from parole officers. We have to ask where we have heard this before. He was sent back to prison after testing positive for meth, but was released again and assaulted four more people; three of them were assaulted with weapons. He attacked a 12-year-old on the bus just last year, and on the same day was charged with assaulting someone else. Then, he assaulted someone else with a weapon. He was sent to prison on April 14 for another assault and then released on bail. He then went on to murder someone and her young child.

That is what the Liberals are trying to distract from with this bill. It is to distract from their disastrous catch-and-release laws that they have inflicted upon Canadians. The Liberal government will sit and say that it fixed catch-and-release today. However, for five

or six years now, the Liberals have denied it was a problem. I want to quote the present public safety minister, in debate. He said that this would simplify the release process "so that police and judges are required to consider the least restrictive and alternative means of responding to a breach, rather than automatically detaining an accused" and that "police would...be required to impose the least onerous conditions necessary if an accused is released."

● (1725)

A mother and her child are dead in Edmonton because of this law. The Liberals can claim that they are fixing it, but they had half a decade to do something, with warnings from the police chief, warnings from the opposition bench and warnings from the premiers. It is not good enough that they are saying, "Well, we're going to play around with it today. Everything is fine." It is not fine.

I want to go back to Edmonton police chief Dale McFee. We are talking about the catch-and-release program. For a three-year period, Edmonton saw a 30% increase in shooting victims. Chief McFee stated that the biggest problem is building to attack gang violence, and that most of the problem is gangs and organized crime. It is not a law-abiding hunter going out for a catch. It is not a farmer with his shotgun plinking away at varmints or pests. The police chief says it is organized crime and gangs. Subsequent to Bill C-75 being introduced, 3,600 individuals were arrested for violent crimes in Edmonton in a one-year period. Two years after that, 2,400 of those 3,600 reoffended, a total of 19,000 times, including 26 homicides. That is the result of Bill C-75, the catch-and-release program of the government. That is what this government is trying to distract from. Instead of going after criminals, repeat offenders, they want to confiscate shotguns and hunting rifles from hunters, farmers and indigenous people. The government should be going after the criminals and trying to make life miserable for them, not trying to make life miserable for law-abiding hunters and farmers.

Canadians should not be fooled by this new bill, Bill C-21. The Liberals brought in some amendments and said, "Oh, we fixed all your concerns." Canadians should not be fooled by this. The Liberals' so-called new definitions are basically the same as the old ones that are targeting hunting rifles. The same ones that they went after before, they will go after again. I do not think anyone should believe that this new Liberal firearms advisory panel would be any different than what they had proposed previously.

*Private Members' Business*

This is the same government, members will remember, that politicized the Nova Scotia shooting tragedy. It is the same government that said that it was the police forces that recommended the Emergency Act, but we asked the Ottawa Police Service and the RCMP, and they both said no.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1730)

[*Translation*]

### FINANCIAL PROTECTION FOR FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE FARMERS ACT

The House resumed from April 19 consideration of the motion that Bill C-280, An Act to amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act (deemed trust – perishable fruits and vegetables), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Madam Speaker, today I am going to talk about an extremely important bill. I am going to make a big announcement: This bill is free. How many times do we have the opportunity in the House of Commons to pass a bill that costs the government nothing? It does not happen often. It is worth pointing that out.

We are talking about financial protection for fresh fruit and vegetable farmers. The bill simply seeks to give these farmers a priority claim in the event of client bankruptcy or non-payment. It would seem that the government is not amenable to this bill, because this sector has been asking for this for years and the government has consistently refused. Is it because the Liberals do not want to put their banking friends at a disadvantage? I do not know. However, honestly, this measure would cost nothing and would provide protection for our agricultural producers. I do not understand why the government has refused to take this step for so long.

The bill is quite simple. Ultimately, its objective is to place the amounts due for payment of the fruits and vegetables in trust, that is to create a deemed trust. That way, when the time comes to recover outstanding debts, the fresh fruit and vegetable farmers would be paid first. The remaining amount could be put towards their production.

This is such an important and exciting bill that I offered to co-sponsor it with my colleague who introduced it. I filled out the form. I can therefore say that the Bloc Québécois is not only in favour of the bill, but fully supports it. In fact, I thank my colleague for having proposed it.

I would also like to say a quick word to our member for Salaberry—Suroît. Many of the vegetable farmers in her riding often talk to me about this issue, and they care deeply about this kind of bill. I have no doubt that, like me, she wishes she had been the one to introduce it.

This protection that would be provided to our agricultural producers is exceptional and very appealing to them, but it also has potential outside Canada. It is also interesting from an international trade perspective because, up until 2014, our agricultural producers

had this protection when they sold produce to the United States. In 2014, the United States decided to take that protection away from agricultural producers in Quebec and Canada, telling them that farmers did not even have that protection in their country, so the U.S. saw no reason to include it in their insurance plan.

That is a second excellent reason to vote in favour of this bill. The United States made a formal commitment to start discussions and reactivate this protection for our farmers. It is doubly important because currently, when our farmers export vast quantities and they want to have some guarantee, the United States Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act requires them to post a bond worth double the value of the shipment. To register and have the right to protection, they need to deposit twice as much as it is worth. Let us be serious. Our farmers, in 97% of cases, or maybe 98%, do not have enough cash on hand to do that. That means they do not post these bonds. As a result, if the client defaults or declares bankruptcy, our farmers have little or no recourse.

What will they do? If they see that there is a chance of bankruptcy or non-payment, they will rush to negotiate a cut-rate out-of-court settlement with these clients. They end up receiving only a fraction of the money that is owed to them. We have no right to do that to our vegetable farmers. We have no right, because vegetable farming is a tough job.

We often talk about climate change and variability here in the House. Vegetable growers know what it is like to have a longer warm spell, which leads to more aphids, for example. It happened last year. They know what happens when there is a drought, making it hard to grow crops. They also know what happens when there is too much water in the field. They know all the variations, and they are at the mercy of the weather. They have to deal with whatever conditions nature throws at them.

● (1735)

Could we at least tell them that, when they sell their produce, they will be first in line among the creditors to receive payment in the event of non-payment or bankruptcy? That seems reasonable to me.

Sometimes we are told that farmers are covered under the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act. For that to happen, however, their produce must have been delivered in the 30 days prior to the possession date. The produce can then be repossessed, provided there is evidence showing that the produce being repossessed is the same produce that was delivered and is in the same state as it was at the time of delivery.

Imagine going back to repossess tomatoes a month later. It is not an option. That is why these farmers need this protection, and why we need to hurry and pass this bill here, so that they will very likely qualify for protection in the United States. In my opinion, it is just common sense.

*Private Members' Business*

Sometimes we are told that these are very small amounts, that very few claims are made in a year and that the losses are therefore negligible. There are no claims being made because there is no protection. As I mentioned earlier, farmers rush to negotiate a lower out-of-court settlement before the client goes bankrupt or defaults on their payment obligations, in order to try to salvage something from the wreckage. The current claim rate does not reflect the actual rate that we will see after this law comes into force, and I hope it will be implemented quickly.

Some people will also say that we are going to put our friends, the banks, at a disadvantage and that the banks will calculate that there is more risk and will charge more interest. I doubt it, because our farmers use assets as collateral when they apply for financing. This argument seems more like blackmail or fearmongering than anything else.

Others will say that this is a shared jurisdiction and that, if we really want to have a law that is equivalent to the U.S. law, then part of this falls to Quebec and the provinces. It is true that this partly falls under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces, but the United States has made formal commitments. Let us start with the basics. Let us start with what the federal government can do.

Earlier, I spoke about agricultural producers and the fact that they have to contend with the weather. The Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food recently studied food prices. Produce growers explained to us that they supplied lettuce for 87¢ a head, and the week after, they saw it in grocery stores for \$2.49. That means that it can be sold for even more. Suppose that the price is \$2.79. Someone is making a profit, but it is not our producer. That is why we want to implement a code of conduct. They are already dealing with less than favourable conditions.

Let us talk about labour. When asparagus spears emerge, the farmer cannot let them rot. They have to be harvested, but that requires the good old federal government to finish its labour market impact assessment and issue work permits. That is a long, complex and expensive process, not to mention the number of times that someone from another sector steals their workers by offering them \$2 or \$5 more an hour, when it was the produce grower who paid the fees to bring the workers here in the first place.

I am not even talking about the long and perhaps somewhat unnecessary investigations where produce growers, who already have no time to sleep, are asked to fill out a bunch of forms on a series of workers, one after the other. Inspections are necessary, but they are often too intense. I hear about this a lot.

It is important to consider deliveries, shipping and how hard it is to manage fresh produce.

Other considerations include the reciprocity of standards, pesticide and fungicide residues that are allowed in from outside. The levels differ from what our farmers do here.

• (1740)

I cannot believe that a fruit or vegetable from Mexico costs less than a fruit or vegetable from Quebec. This is because the standards are not the same. Something has happened in the interim. The least

we can do is to offer our farmers financial protection. We should do this joyfully and happily.

[English]

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to give a few of my thoughts on Bill C-280, which was introduced by the member for York—Simcoe. I would like to thank him for introducing this important bill.

Of course, Bill C-280 is an important bill that is going to amend both the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, which we will hereafter call the BIA, and the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act, the CCAA. Ultimately, the bill is seeking to create a deemed trust for perishable fruits and vegetables.

Let me go into a bit of background on why this particular issue is so important. For the people who are growing, harvesting, packing and marketing fruits and vegetables, we have to understand that this industry comes with a number of risks. First, there are very high costs. Second, the capital in that industry is often tied up in the farmland, the buildings, the machinery and the overhead, so we can look at the value of the company and can see that it is what is commonly termed as "land-rich, cash-poor".

Furthermore, the challenges are exacerbated because any returns made from the selling of their produce are often delayed until that product has been sold and payment is collected all the way up the supply chain, which can be long after the farmer or another seller has passed on the product. In that whole system, there is no financial protection from losses because of buyers who have become insolvent, which adds a tremendous amount of risk to this business model. The perishability of fresh produce and the common industry payment terms make it impossible for sellers to recoup money that has been lost when a buyer goes bankrupt, and we have seen a recent example in Ontario with Lakeside Produce in Leamington.

Prior to 2014, Canada was the only country in the world that enjoyed preferential access with our largest trading partner, the United States, under its Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act, also known as PACA. That was a dispute resolution mechanism in the United States, which basically meant that Canadian produce sellers were treated on par with their American counterparts when selling to a U.S. buyer. Unfortunately, and this continues to this day, the United States removed our country's preferential access to that system because we did not have reciprocal protection here in Canada.

It has to be clearly underlined that the fresh fruit and vegetable industry has been calling for a statutory deemed trust for payment protection from losses due to buyers defaulting on payment obligations. They have been calling for this for a long time, to make sure that we are on par with what our American counterparts enjoy, and they want us to do this so that our amazing producers can be on a level and competitive playing field with our closest trading partner.

*Private Members' Business*

I want to say from the outset that the NDP absolutely fully supports this initiative in Bill C-280. In fact, we have been campaigning on this particular change to the law since 2015, and we have continued to support it ever since then. The very first mention of it was in our 2015 election platform. When we boldly stepped out and made that commitment, we got praise from both the Canadian Produce Marketing Association and what was then called the Canadian Horticultural Council, which really praised us for taking a strong position on the issue.

Again, in the 2019 election, Rebecca Lee, the executive director of what is now the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada, stated:

Canada's fruit and vegetable farmers are facing financial risks that threaten their competitiveness at a crucial time when consumers want to make healthy food choices and are being encouraged by their government to consume more fruits and vegetables. It is important that all parties recognize this, and we applaud the NDP for their commitment to making a payment protection program for produce growers finally a reality.

• (1745)

It is not just from our election commitments. This has been the subject of parliamentary committees, two in particular, the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, of which I have been a proud member since 2018, and the Standing Committee on Finance, in the 42nd Parliament, the first Parliament in which I was a member in the House.

Both of those committees, which were, at the time, comprised of a majority of Liberal members, made the recommendation that our country move toward a PACA-like system to protect our produce growers. Unfortunately the Liberal government said they would not consider it at the time.

Again, in this current Parliament, as here we are in the 44th Parliament, with regard to the Standing Committee on Agriculture, in our recent report, entitled, "Feeding the World: Strengthening Canada's Capacity to Respond to Global Food Insecurity", recommendation 7 of that report makes a very clear recommendation to make a statutory deemed trust.

Again, the Standing Committee on Finance, in this Parliament, in its recent pre-budget consultations, also called for the creation of a limited statutory deemed trust.

We have had multiple committees look at this issue and make those recommendations. It is time for the government to take that ball and run with it and finally put this into action. I think we are actually going to see some movement on this, thanks to Bill C-280.

Let me read into the record the stakeholder feedback. We have positive responses from the Canadian Produce Marketing Association, the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada and the Fruit and Vegetable Dispute Resolution Corporation. They are all calling on members of Parliament to consider this bill and to send it off to committee for further study.

I believe that this is a critical opportunity for all members of Parliament to demonstrate our support for this sector and to safeguard Canadian food security. I want to also give an honourable mention to the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. It has also been an important voice in calling for this change.

Going forward, we are only at the second reading stage, in principle. The government has raised some concerns about this bill. It believes that no other commercial creditor has a deemed trust for unpaid claims. It thinks that this bill would favour sellers of fresh produce over sellers of other perishable products. It believes that fresh produce sellers could demand immediate payment, that this bill would benefit large retailers, that the existing dispute resolution corporation already has a mechanism or that the BIA already has provisions that adequately protect growers.

I think this will come through a committee: each one of those arguments has been thoroughly refuted and they will be coming up at committee, where we can finally put them to rest through important witness testimony and feedback.

I have seen both the CPMA and the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada respond to each of those points with evidence to the contrary and I look forward to that information coming forward in committee so that we can properly make a report back to the House.

I just want to say that Canadian farmers are essential workers and they need and deserve to stay in business. They work so hard on our behalf, putting in those long hours, working in a very uncertain market and with very thin margins. The least that we can do as parliamentarians is to set up policy and laws that help them compete on a level playing field.

I believe that if we go forward with this bill, we will have a number of positive impacts. We will help reduce the number of Canadian farm bankruptcies by extending key financial protection toward them. It will encourage timely transport of produce to market, because it is going to make it more worth the transporter's money and time to ship it.

I believe, ultimately, that a deemed trust is going to provide important stability in a very volatile food price inflation market.

For that reason, and as the NDP's proud critic of agriculture and agri-food, I am looking forward to voting on this bill tomorrow, to sending it to my committee and giving it the proper examination that it deserves.

I would like to thank the member for York—Simcoe for bringing forward this important bill.

• (1750)

**Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this place today and speak to Bill C-280, an act to amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act, deemed trust, perishable fruits and vegetables. I am pleased to second this bill introduced by my colleague from York—Simcoe, in June of this past year, to support the financial protection for fresh fruit and vegetable farmers.

Last week, I had the opportunity to speak to Bill S-227, establishing a national food day. During that speech, I took the opportunity to outline four factors that influence how much structure a particular food commodity gets and its efficient marketing between producers and buyers.

The factors were the perishability of the product, the complexity of its biology or technology, the ratio of buyers and sellers, and the international setting into which that product is marketed or traded. Today, I want to focus on one particular sector and one particular factor.

It is well known that fresh fruits and vegetables are highly perishable with a limited shelf life. I believe it is important for us to protect our farmers during the bankruptcy of a buyer. Unfortunately, current existing laws do not take this into account. The perishability of the product for sale is at the heart of the justification for this legislation.

This legislation aims to resolve this concern by establishing a deemed trust for fresh produce sellers, ensuring they have priority access to an insolvent buyer's assets related to the sale of fresh product. It is important for us to note that the legislation also comes at no cost to the federal government.

The big banks will likely be opposed to this legislation, and I will come back to this point later.

The need for a financial protection mechanism has been a major focus of the sector for several years and has been included among many recommendations by stakeholders. A deemed trust mechanism is needed to address gaps in market stability, trade and food security. It is crucial that we help ensure Canadians continue to have access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

Growing, harvesting, packing and marketing fruits and vegetables comes with risks and costs that are unique to the production of perishable goods and returns on these investments are delayed until payment is collected, which is usually long after the product has been consumed by Canadians or has spoiled due to delayed payment.

Bill C-280 establishes an important tool to ensure that growers receive payment for their products, even in the event of a buyer bankruptcy. That means when produce has arrived at its destination, even if the buyer is unwilling to pay, the farmer will still get paid at least partially. Unlike in other buyer-seller relationships with perishable food, a farmer is not able to find and ship to another seller to make up for the lost sale.

It should be noted that in addition to providing healthy food to Canadians, the fresh produce supply chain supports 249,000 jobs in Canada. It is important that we continue to support these jobs and workforce in our country.

The introduction of a financial protection mechanism in Canada would also open the door to the reinstatement of preferential treatment under the U.S.'s Perishable Agriculture Commodities Act, or PACA for short, for Canadians selling produce into the United States. This preferential treatment had been in place prior to 2014 when it was rescinded by the U.S. due to a lack of reciprocal protection in Canada for U.S. sellers.

PACA was established in the U.S. at the request of the fruit and vegetable industry to promote fair trade within the industry. Since it was rescinded in 2014, several organizations representing parts of the Canadian agricultural sector have been lobbying consistently

### *Private Members' Business*

for an amendment to Canada's laws so that the U.S. would revisit Canada's preferential status.

The key issue that led to Canada's preferential treatment being rescinded was protection in the case of insolvency for U.S. sellers, which has been difficult for Canada to implement since agricultural concerns are a shared responsibility between provincial legislatures and the federal government.

Before 2014, if bankruptcy or insolvency in the supply chain resulted in Canadian producers not getting paid, to start the dispute resolution process with preferential treatment under PACA would only cost the Canadian company \$100. This dispute process was helpful and affordable to Canadian farmers because the traditional method of repossessing shipments would not work, as I said earlier, due to the high perishability of the product in question.

● (1755)

Without preferential access, Canadian companies trying to recover unpaid bills must post double the value of what they are trying to recover as a bond to make the claim. For an example, a small producer who is owed \$50,000 would have to post \$100,000 in cash to make a claim, effectively removing \$150,000 from their cash flow or operating line for up to a year. Many cannot afford this and would simply walk away, losing what is rightfully owed to them, putting Canadian businesses at a steep disadvantage.

Canada did not choose to leave this agreement. Instead, we had our preferential status revoked in 2014 because U.S. legislators felt that their American suppliers to Canada were not adequately protected. Canadian companies are now treated under PACA the same as any other foreign licence.

In 2011, a bilateral regulatory co-operation council established by both the U.S. and Canada and created in Canada was created to address regulatory incompatibility between the U.S. and Canada that could be hampering trade. The issue of this inadequate trust protection was one of 29 issues identified.

It has been eight years since our Canadian fruits and vegetable farmers had preferential treatment under PACA, and it is time we change that. This bill offers the financial protection needed for fresh fruit and vegetable farmers to protect and support Canadian produce growers. Bill C-280 would pave the way for a reciprocal arrangement that would support Canadian businesses selling to our largest trading partner. Obviously, that is the U.S. Our farmers need a larger market to sell perishable produce. In my area, the greenhouse industry exports more than 75% of their production across the border to the U.S. and they need to have peace of mind, when they ship their products, that they will be getting paid.

*Private Members' Business*

It is important to understand that Bill C-280 would not require the government to offset or backstop losses incurred by farmers in the event a buyer could not meet its financial obligations. The legislation being proposed would create a deemed trust, which would cover accounts receivable, cash and inventory of the buyer stemming from the sale of produce on short-term transactions with payment terms not exceeding 30 days. Essentially, if a Canadian company sold produce to a U.S. buyer, who then resold it but did not pay the Canadian company, the trust would provide the mechanism to recover cash or accounts receivable for what was sold.

I am very proud to support local farmers in my riding and farmers across Canada by supporting this bill to give them the peace of mind they need. In particular, in southwestern Ontario there is a large greenhouse sector and a vibrant fresh fruit and vegetable sector. A recent bankruptcy of a vegetable marketing enterprise in southwestern Ontario only further supports the need for this legislation. The Minister of Agriculture has stated to the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food that this legislation is not necessary because there have been negligible losses due to bankruptcy. I am sure that the farm that suffered a \$1-million loss very recently because of the marketing company bankruptcy would very much disagree with that statement, and I would hope that my colleagues across the aisle would not bow to pressure from the big banks and support this bill.

The recommendation for a financial protection mechanism is not a new idea. It has been proposed repeatedly by stakeholders for several years. It has been long enough. It is time for us to take these recommendations and turn them into action. We need to show farmers that we support their efforts, their time and their resources and acknowledge the financial uncertainty it takes to produce perishable goods for our country. Let us stand with our farmers and protect them so they may continue to produce these very essential needs.

I am proud to second this bill, speak to this initiative brought forward by my colleague and champion the cause for fresh fruit and vegetable producers. I hope that my colleagues around this room will also support this initiative for our farmers.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill C-280, which amends the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act to provide that perishable fruits and vegetables sold by a supplier to a purchaser, as well as the proceeds of sale of those fruits and vegetables, are to be held in trust by the purchaser for the supplier in the event that the purchaser has not fully paid for the produce and becomes bankrupt or subject to a receivership or applies to the court to sanction a compromise or an arrangement. My neighbour and esteemed colleague from Berthier—Maskinong , who is our agriculture, agri-food and supply management critic, co-sponsored this bill.

Given the demand in Quebec for this measure, which could be helpful for our agricultural community, we could have introduced it. One of our wineries in Shefford reached out to let me know that, as a producer and processor in the wine industry, La Belle alliance agrees with the amendment proposed in Bill C-280. They said they see the amendment as additional protection for producers of perishable fruits and vegetables that could help protect small- and medi-

um-sized agricultural businesses from suffering undue losses in the event of the insolvency of commercial buyers.

Le Potager Mont-Rouge said that this is a bill that they are really passionate about because it ensures that producer sellers are financially protected. Their profit margins are already razor thin, and they are impacted by many external factors such as price fluctuations, imports and climate change, to name but a few. They have been in a situation like this themselves and have lost thousands of dollars.

This testimony from these two businesses shows how important this bill is. The Bloc Qu b cois is attentive to their concerns, so we are in favour of this bill and support it. I will therefore begin by explaining its benefits and then talk about the division of powers and the litigation system.

First, passing the bill could demonstrate to the U.S. government that Canada has a trust mechanism in place for cases of buyer bankruptcy. Indeed, the lack of such a mechanism in Canada was one of the main reasons why, in 2014, the U.S. decided to withdraw U.S. buyer bankruptcy and insolvency protection from Canadian suppliers. The Canadian government had actually committed to developing a legal framework similar to the U.S. Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act, or PACA, and thus restoring coverage under their bankruptcy protection law for perishable foods to protect our industry from losses in the event U.S. buyers went bankrupt.

Groups have been calling for this since their PACA coverage ended back in 2014. This protection is necessary because food products like fresh fruit and vegetables are perishable, and a supplier cannot simply take them back and resell them if a buyer goes bankrupt. The protection is intended to allow licensed suppliers that have a contract with a U.S. buyer to take legal action against the buyer in the event of non-payment due to bankruptcy.

The new process will require the value of the shipment to be held in trust in the bankrupt buyer's name so that the producer can recover this amount as a creditor. Before 2014, Canadian fruit and vegetable farmers were protected by a U.S. law if they were doing business in the United States and a company failed to make payment or went bankrupt. This is no longer the case, and the alternate procedure developed between the two countries is very complicated, especially for our smaller businesses.

Quebec's agricultural model is at the family farm scale and on a human scale. Currently, without this protection, Canadian suppliers of fruits and vegetables have to go through a special process to file suit under this legislation in the United States.

According to the Canadian Produce Marketing Association, suppliers have to deposit a bond equivalent to twice the amount required in the suit. Most suppliers do not have that much in liquid assets and the major buyers know that all too well. They are then forced to negotiate downward with the buyer to get at least some compensation instead of losing everything, especially since this type of debt is not a priority in a business' bankruptcy. Suppliers who are not protected do not have much chance of receiving decent compensation through the ordinary process. Under this bill, the trust mechanism ensures that the purchaser is the guarantor of the value of the shipment, without owning it, in the event of a default due to the application of one of the two pieces of legislation. The legislation stipulates that the buyer has 30 days to make the payment under the contract.

Under the Canada-United States Regulatory Cooperation Council initiative, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the U.S. Department of Agriculture are committed to establishing comparable approaches in order to achieve the common goal of protecting fresh fruit and vegetable vendors from Canada and the United States from buyers who are not concerned with their payment obligations.

• (1800)

I will start with a bit of background. The legislation was first created in the 1930s to try to protect vegetable producers from the multiple bankruptcies of their buyers. It then became an important tool in rebalancing the commercial relationship between producers and buyers. It is essentially designed to allow a licensed supplier who has a contract with a U.S. buyer to sue that buyer under the act in the event of a default in payment because of bankruptcy. The process will allow the value of the shipment to be placed in a trust in the name of the bankrupt so that the supplier can recover the amount owed as a creditor. Given the speed with which produce is resold by a merchant or spoils, it is quite rare that a fresh produce repossession situation will meet these criteria. This means that perishable food producers would be given super-priority status so they do not have to wait for the bankruptcy settlement to recover their property. However, in the context of the above conditions, producer associations explained that 15 days is not long enough, given that typical payment terms are about 30 days. However, 30 days is too long to expect to recover a product that can be resold. This provision is not well suited to the structure of the supply chain, which often operates with intermediaries such as wholesalers.

Second, with regard to jurisdictions, the most sensitive issue is the fact that Canada cannot really quickly pass a law like the one in the United States. The Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act, or PACA, is a program to protect farmers in case of bankruptcy, but it also encompasses all of the dispute settlement mechanisms for perishable goods. In Canada, the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act falls under federal jurisdiction, but the regulations surrounding contracts fall under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. A legal framework like the PACA therefore cannot be developed unless there are negotiations or a collaboration between the federal government and the provinces, which is what we are hoping will happen. One of the arguments put forward by the federal government is that most trade disputes are resolved before bankruptcy occurs and so most of the American framework deals with issues that fall under provincial jurisdiction. Since it is complicated to operate using

### *Private Members' Business*

multiple dispute settlement regimes, the federal government just gives up rather than trying to find even a partial solution to the problem. We need to work on that.

Third, the official figures are much lower and limit the timeframe for claims to about 15 days. The major difference between the government and the industry figures can be explained by the fact that in order for it to become an official statistic, the producer must file a complaint. Most of the time, producers do not necessarily use official channels because they are too complex, and even more so after the end of privilege. Producers often have special business relationships with their client and try to accommodate them. The argument that there are few claims or that they represent a small percentage of farm receipts is very subjective. Producers used to have protection, but no longer do. We are simply being asked to restore protection given that, because of its proximity and the nature of goods, the United States is by far the most important trade partner for perishable goods. Restoring this protection for our producers who do business with the United States is not far-fetched at all.

Although the government is putting forward some arguments to demonstrate that an insurance similar to PACA is not the best option, especially because of the cost of credit and shared jurisdictions, we will continue to defend this bill. We are under the impression that the Liberal Party seems to want to defend its friends in the banking sector.

In conclusion, this bill is simply a response to the agricultural sector. Two years after Canadian producers' preferential access to PACA was removed, the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food studied the issue. A number of key witnesses appeared before the committee. The NDP, the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party have all, at various times, pledged to fix the problem. From our perspective, it is clear that we need to move forward with this bill.

I thank my Conservative colleague for introducing this bill. It can make things better for businesses in Shefford, as I said in my introduction. Obviously, the pandemic was a unique situation, and it also exacerbated various issues in the agricultural sector.

I want to say one last thing. As the member for Shefford, I proudly represent a riding where agriculture is at the heart of its economy. This bill is a common-sense measure that gives farmers a little extra help to get through this difficult period, for their mental health, for their survival. As we know, farm succession is already facing several threats. Perhaps this bill will address some of the concerns of the next generation of farmers and give them the desire to continue, to produce what we eat every day and what sustains us. We need farmers.

• (1805)

Once again, I thank my colleague for this bill. The Bloc Québécois will be voting in favour, to support our agricultural model.

*Private Members' Business**[English]*

**The Deputy Speaker:** I recognize the hon. member for York—Simcoe for his right of reply.

● (1810)

**Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, York—Simcoe is the soup and salad bowl of Canada and Lake Simcoe. At this very moment, the planting season has begun for fresh fruits and vegetables, and I want to wish all farmers right across Canada the best of luck.

I know we are not allowed to use props, and I will set him down, but Gwilly flew in all the way from Bradford West Gwillimbury for this debate tonight.

Canadian farmers have been doing their part, working hard this spring to plant delicious produce to feed our nation. These farmers deserve our support, no matter if they are growing carrots in the Holland Marsh, potatoes in Brookfield, celery in Winnipeg, bell peppers in Abbotsford, tomatoes in Leamington or peaches in Vineland.

Through the establishment of a limited deemed trust for produce farmers, we can safeguard Canada's food security, promote Canadian produce exports and increase the affordability of domestic produce for Canadian consumers. Simply put, the trust is a tool that would be used by sellers of produce to recover the money made from the sale of their produce when a buyer goes bankrupt.

Unfortunately, the Liberal members have made it clear that they are completely out of touch with the boots-in-the-mud, real-world realities faced by our country's produce farmers. The Liberals claim that their one size-fits-all approach to Canadian agriculture works and that the bill is not needed, but they could not be more wrong. The government fails to acknowledge that fresh fruits and vegetables are highly perishable or that produce growers have unique challenges that differ from other products and industries.

There are already many supports available to other agricultural sectors, like dairy and grain, that are not available to the produce sector. It is common sense to provide support that is crafted specifically for the produce sector. More than anyone else, Bill C-280 would benefit the small and medium-sized family farms and farming operations, which are the backbone of the country's produce sector.

Seventy-five per cent of fruit and vegetable producers are small businesses. Their average sales are \$85,000 or less a year. This is a sector with small margins, and it is these sorts of farms that will benefit most from limited financial protection. One missed payment from a bankrupt buyer could lead to many of these farms closing their doors for good.

Fortunately, this bill will promote financial stability across the entire supply chain and support payment for suppliers all the way back to the producers. A stalk of celery is not the same as a carton of eggs, and a tomato is not the same as a piece of beef. The government must recognize the unique challenges facing the produce sector and recognize there are currently glaring deficiencies in our bankruptcy laws for these growers.

Bill C-280 has been a long time coming. I would like to thank the Canadian Produce Marketing Association, the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada, the Holland Marsh Growers' Association and the many other agriculture organizations that have supported this important bill.

I am also grateful for the real-life expertise of Fred Webber, former president of the Fruit and Vegetable Dispute Resolution Corporation. Fred was also an official in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, where his responsibilities included the PACA deemed trust. His insights were invaluable as this bill was drafted.

Hard-working farmers do not want a handout. After all, this bill costs taxpayers nothing. They just want to be able to sleep at night without worrying about unpaid invoices and spoiled product as they work to grow the fresh fruits and vegetables we all enjoy.

Canadian fresh produce farmers deserve to be paid for the food they grow. They are the ones knee-deep in the mud working the field every day to grow our country's fruits and vegetables. It is time for members of this House to roll up their sleeves, put on their rubber boots and support this common-sense Conservative bill, Bill C-280.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The question is on the motion.

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.

● (1815)

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded division.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to order made Thursday, June 23, 2022, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, May 17, at the expiry of time provided for Oral Questions.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I suspect if you were to canvass the House, you might find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6:30 p.m. so we could continue the debate on Bill C-21.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***CRIMINAL CODE**

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-21, An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms), as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

**Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to continue on Bill C-21 after being so rudely interrupted by private members' hour, as much as I enjoy staying around an extra hour.

Continuing on with Bill C-21, earlier I was quoting the Edmonton Police Service Chief McFee about the problems with the government and gun control. Now I want to quote Dr. Teri Bryant, chief firearms officer for Alberta. She commented:

Even after the withdrawal of G-4 and G-46, Bill C-21 continues to undermine confidence in our firearms control system while contributing nothing to reducing the violent misuse of firearms. Bill C-21 is built on a fundamentally flawed premise. Prohibiting specific types of firearms is not an effective way of improving public safety. It will waste billions of taxpayer dollars that could have been used on more effective approaches, such as the enforcement of firearms prohibition orders, reinforcing the border or combatting the drug trade and gang activity.

I could not agree with Dr. Bryant more. It is clear that we need a focus on the criminals, on ending the gun trade on the border and on keeping violent offenders in prison, instead of a catch-and-release program.

Dr. Bryant refers to the confiscation cost. The Liberal government is the same government responsible for the past long-gun registry, which ballooned from \$2 million to several billion. It is the government that has bungled the Trans Mountain pipeline, which was supposed to be \$7 billion and is now over \$30 billion. The Liberal government is the only entity in the world that has found a way to lose money on oil. The same government left us waiting many hours in passport lines. Then there is the Phoenix pay system, military procurement and immigration backlogs.

No one believes the Liberal government could confiscate weapons from Canadians and do it in a fashion that does not punish Canadian taxpayers and law-abiding firearms owners who want the government to punish criminals, go after the crime gangs and stop going after law-abiding firearms owners.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge the member is voting against this legislation, Bill C-21.

In Bill C-21, we see the issue of ghost guns being addressed. Police agencies, virtually across Canada, have expressed a growing issue with ghost guns. They look at the legislation from that perspective as an important tool. I said this earlier, but it is interesting that the Conservatives tend to want to use Bill C-21 as a fundraising issue as opposed to an issue to provide a higher sense of security for Canadians.

Why do the Conservatives not support the ghost gun aspect of the legislation? Why do they not support making our communities safer?

**Mr. Kelly McCauley:** Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to imagine I waited an extra hour for that question.

The problem with the Liberal government is that it hides one or two small, good parts in a massively flawed bill. If it was so concerned with the so-called ghost guns, the government should introduce legislation to address that, not hide it in this overall package so it could fundraise in municipalities and urban areas, pretending Liberals are against gun crime, when in fact they are promoting it with Bill C-75 and other actions on their part.

● (1820)

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is passing strange that the ghost gun component is actually the biggest part of Bill C-21, and Conservatives, who have been saying all along that they want to crack down on criminals, have been filibustering and opposing the bill at every stage.

However, what is not in the bill are the G-4 and G-46 amendments, and I am prohibited from showing a prop, but on the amendments it says very clearly “withdrawn”. This means that those amendments do not exist, but Conservatives keep speaking to them, which shows a very strange hypocrisy when it comes to this particular bill. The other thing I find passing strange is that the Conservatives have tabled a report stage amendment to eliminate all exemptions for handguns, including for the Olympics and Paralympics.

The Conservatives have been all over the map on this. My simple question is this: Will the member agree that G-4 and G-46 were withdrawn at the beginning of February, and they should stop speaking to amendments that do not exist?

**Mr. Kelly McCauley:** Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that Canadians remember that the NDP supported the ban on hunting rifles and wanted to confiscate shotguns and other things.

I want to go back to Dr. Teri Bryant, the Alberta chief firearms officer, who knows far more about the issue than anyone in the House. She said that, even after the withdrawal of G-4 and G-46, the offending amendments, “Bill C-21 continues to undermine confidence in our firearms control system”, contributing nothing to reducing violent crime.

I will take the word of Dr. Bryant any time over the member opposite, who continually chooses to support the Liberal government in trying to confiscate innocent farmers', hunters' and other people's firearms.

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**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is already illegal to manufacture or possess a 3-D printed gun without the proper registration and certification. What would Bill C-21 change with respect to 3-D printed firearms?

**Mr. Kelly McCauley:** Mr. Speaker, it would change absolutely nothing.

The bill, this change, was done by the Liberal government to deflect from its horrible job at stopping the rampant crime wave we have seen across this country. It is for its members to go into their strongholds to fundraise and say, “Oh, we’re taking away guns. Gun crime will stop.” However, it does nothing to stop the gangs and the smuggling of the guns across the border, and it is doing nothing to prevent the crime.

The government is soft on crime. The bill is going to do nothing to stop the criminals or the crime wave that is going on in this country right now.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise on behalf of the democracy-respecting constituents of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke and lawful firearms owners nationwide.

The decision by these radical socialists who rammed this property confiscation legislation through Parliament is just the latest example of their utter contempt for democracy. When the Prime Minister said he admired the communists who controlled China because of their ability to ignore democracy, Canadians should have been alarmed. When the Prime Minister assaulted two members of Parliament on the floor of the House of Commons, he revealed his inner dictator, and they are laughing about that. However, now we have Bill C-21, which is the cherry on top of the illiberal, anti-democratic cake.

The bill was first decreed as an order in council after the Prime Minister had shut down Parliament and locked down citizens. He sought to capitalize on the Portapique crime spree while masking the complete, flagrant incompetence of the RCMP. They failed to activate the Amber Alert, even though every step had been laid out in the manual. The RCMP could not communicate by radio because a tower had been taken down to make way for a highway, and the decision-makers were too cheap to replace it. They had not bothered to collect the shooter’s firearms, despite knowing he was not licensed to possess them.

Instead of targeting crime, this government is targeting the most law-abiding citizens in our country. Each day their names are run through CPIC, the Canadian Police Information Centre, and anyone who has committed a crime is flagged. Introducing useless, virtue-signalling legislation based on clichés and empty slogans is par for the course for these Liberals. This time, they played—

• (1825)

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Mr. Speaker, we just heard from House staff that the kitchen is completely out of tinfoil.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. That is not a point of order, and quite honestly, not that funny.

I will remind everyone that the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke has the floor.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Mr. Speaker, this time, the Liberals played bait and switch on their own MPs. Con artists bait a victim with something of lesser value, then switch it out for something more costly. These radical socialist parties voted for a handgun freeze. That was the bait. Once the bill reached committee, the Liberals switched it for a hunting rifle ban. Banning hunting rifles was never debated in Parliament.

The Liberals knew they had to trick Canadians to get it passed. They even pulled one over on their own MPs. Fortunately, Canadian democracy worked as intended, at least for a while. The public was alerted to this hunting rifle ban, and concerned constituents contacted their members of Parliament. First, the government tried to gaslight Canadians by claiming its amendment to ban hunting rifles was not a ban on hunting rifles. The Liberals accused everyone who did not support them of spreading misinformation. They continued to claim they were not banning hunting rifles, despite providing a list of which hunting rifles they were planning to ban.

Eventually, the radical socialists withdrew their amendments. They tried to pull a fast one and got caught, but the government wants Canadians to be dependent on it, so the Liberals tried again. Their last attempt to ban hunting rifles ran aground because of too much public debate. Their new plan is to avoid debate, so now the law is being made behind closed doors. They do not want Canadians to know what they are up to. Instead of banning firearms through Parliament, they plan to appoint a secret committee of anti-firearm activists to ban hunting rifles for them. Of course, the committee has to be secret. Transparency and democracy are like sunlight to vampires.

The Prime Minister no longer even bothers to hide his contempt for democracy. It is the misinformation he spreads that demonstrates his contempt for the intelligence of Canadians. The Prime Minister is the prime palterer. First, he states that no one uses AR-15s to hunt. That is a classic example of using truthful facts to deceive. It is true that scary AR-15s are not used to hunt deer. What the prime palterer neglects to mention is that the reason is that it is unethical to hunt large animals with underpowered rifles. These types of firearms are more often used on farms and ranches as pest control and for target shooting. Many bolt-action rifles are more powerful at longer ranges than these so-called assault-style firearms.

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However, this has never been about power or lethality. This has always been about looks. For these radical socialists, it is the appearance of these black guns that scares them. This is the reason they have struggled to come up with a definition of “assault-style” that does not capture hunting rifles. The barrels of most guns are black, a colour radical socialists recoil at. There is no technical definition they can create that would exclude popular hunting rifles and include firearms that look scary to them.

Making judgments on the basis of appearance never ends well. That type of discrimination is rooted in fear and ignorance. These radical socialists prey on people's fears and exploit their ignorance of Canada's current firearms laws, and it is clear from their deliberate misinformation campaign that they think most Canadians are stupid.

The Prime Minister harbours contempt for Canadians. From admiring communists to assaulting MPs, it is clear the Prime Minister holds Parliament in contempt as well. None of this is a surprise. What is a surprise is that the Prime Minister would hold Pierre Trudeau's legacy in contempt. As fond as the Prime Minister is of clichés, he clearly does not embrace the fact that guns do not kill, but people do.

While he might reject it, his father did not. It was Pierre Trudeau who first introduced Canada's system of gun owner control. That model was later embraced by the Mulroney government. Canada's system of gun owner control has been a tremendous success. Sadly, the Liberals and their media allies have been captured by the radical anti-firearms lobby. They have one goal, and one goal only: They want to abolish private, legal gun ownership.

Make no mistake, criminals will still own firearms, and the government will guarantee it. The increasingly authoritarian state will own firearms. Only law-abiding citizens will be prevented from owning firearms. Now, these radical socialists will claim they have no plans to ban all firearms, but they have already shown their hand. As much as they like to prostrate to diversity, they are tone deaf to actual differences.

Most of these radical socialists have the same urban, condescending demeanor. How many of them understand the training and scrutiny people go through to obtain a possession and acquisition licence? How many of them ever had to hunt to put food on the table?

● (1830)

The carbon tax is already fuelling food inflation, and once the clean fuel regulations take effect in July, we can expect to see another surge in food prices. Not a single one of these radical socialist MPs will have to rely on the food bank. Not a single one of them will wonder where their next meal is coming from. For many Canadians in rural Canada, driving to a food bank is not an option, but the radical socialists do not care. They will impose their urban norms on everyone. They do not care if the closest police station is an hour's drive away. They do not believe Canadians have the right to protect their livestock from wolves and coyotes.

The minister for misinformation and emergencies likes to claim Canadians do not even have a right to own wood and metal if it is in the shape of a rifle. The minister for misinformation and public

unsafety actually claims their legislation is reducing crime. They can only gaslight so long before people realize that the government is trying to convince them that what they know to be true is not.

These radical socialists need to ram this bill through before people realize what is happening to this country. Canadians sense the authoritarian assault on their property rights. They are seeing the Prime Minister's repeated assaults on democracy for what they really are. They know we are less safe today than before the totalitarian party took power. Firearm-related crime had been in decline for 40 years until the government declared war on mandatory sentences for the illegal possession of a firearm. These radical socialists eliminated all mandatory minimums, waived bail for gun criminals and lightened sentences for pedophiles. Canadians are seeing criminals getting away with murder as long as these radical socialists are in charge.

While the Prime Minister “took the knee” for Marxism to defund the police, violent crime has gone up and police officers have been targeted for murder. Instead of giving police resources, the Prime Minister marches against them. The radical socialists harass lawful citizens and strip away property rights. At first they came for the firearms they did not like the colour of, but people who did not own a gun said nothing. Then they came for the hunting rifles and handguns, but people who did not own a gun said nothing. When they decide, in the name of their climate crisis emergency, that owning a cottage or a second car is a climate crime, then these people may say something but it will be too late. Once the state decides it can strip away one's property on the pretense of public safety, there is no recourse. Just ask those who supported the freedom truckers and had their bank accounts frozen.

More and more Canadians understand the threat posed by planning regulations to strip people of their private property. A growing number are becoming aware of the threat the Prime Minister and his incompetent ministers pose to democracy. These radical socialists want to impose their post-national absence of values on Canadians. They are stripping us of our heritage, our property and our freedom of expression. Only by tearing down history can they build back their reimagined Canada into some socialist utopia.

It is time for Canadians to join the Conservatives to make Canada work for Canadians who work, and bring home our values for those who value our homes, their homes. Let us bring it home.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, talk about conspiracy theories. Over the weekend, the leader of the Conservative Party was talking about passports. Colleagues would not believe how weird that discussion got. The more I listened to him, the more I wondered if this guy is real. Can the leader of the official opposition really be that much of a conspiracist?

Then I hear one of his inner circle members of Parliament deliver a speech that kind of blew me away. If one wants to motivate people to ensure that the Conservatives never get into government, one can have them listen to the tweet from the leader of the Conservative Party and this member's speech.

Can the member indicate how she can justify this when the Conservative Party of Canada is espousing all sorts of misinformation, almost on a daily basis, not only on this legislation? How does she justify saying that we are spreading misinformation when the degree to which the Conservatives are using this legislation to raise money is fairly well documented? It is not about concern over Canadians' safety.

• (1835)

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite talked about raising conspiracy theories. They called it a conspiracy theory when we said they were including hunting rifles on the list of firearms that would be banned. They said it was misinformation and disinformation, but when it came down to it and the definitions crystallized, they did include hunting rifles.

They call it a conspiracy theory until it is proven to be fact.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the amount of disinformation in this speech was mind-boggling. I can accept that the government is not perfect, but calling it totalitarian is a bit too far.

The Conservative Party keeps telling hunters that Bill C-21 will cover their hunting rifles. This is not so. I think the Conservative Party is the one guilty of disinformation.

The Conservatives also claim to be standing up for sport shooters and say that they should not be subject to a handgun freeze. Today, however, in the Notice Paper, the Conservative Party is moving a motion to delete the only clause of the bill that exempts certain persons from the handgun freeze.

I wonder where the truth really lies.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Mr. Speaker, farmers who are defending their livestock and hunters who are trying to obtain food for the season do not think of or refer to their firearms as weapons. Police do. The military does. However, for sport shooters, hunters and farmers, their firearms are simply sports equipment or tools they need to do their job.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I did not hear it in her speech specifically, but I know Conservatives have expressed concern about clause 43 and moved to take it

out of the bill. Can she affirm her support for removing clause 43 and explain to the House why she thinks that is so important?

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Mr. Speaker, I do not have clause 43 in front of me, so I am not going to disagree or agree with something I cannot specifically refer to at the moment.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Mr. Speaker, I will remind the member that removing clause 43 is one of the Conservative amendments at report stage, so I would encourage her to do her homework on her party's own amendments. If she does want to take a little time to let us know whether she is in favour of or opposed to a Conservative Party amendment, I think we would all appreciate knowing whether she supports her party's amendments or not.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Mr. Speaker, again, I have not memorized the numbers and the amendments, so I would have to look it up to make sure I am agreeing or disagreeing with whatever the amendment says.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member in my caucus if she could perhaps expand on how we got to the point where Bill C-21 is now being debated today. It started with the OIC, the initial version of Bill C-21, which provided complete misinformation by the minister and made wild accusations against firearms owners.

I would like to hear her talk about the journey it took to get to this point, in May 2023, where we are still debating this bill and it still has very deep flaws in it.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Mr. Speaker, the beginning of this bill really started with Polytechnique, and that was when the Liberals, the socialists and a whole bunch of them decided to wage war. It was Bill C-68 at the time. They wanted to start a gun registry, which failed miserably because the fact that someone is registering a firearm did not do anything to prevent crime.

Then we fast-forward to the tragedy in Nova Scotia. On the heels of that, and in trying to interfere in the investigation into the tragedy, the Liberals were trying to get the RCMP commissioner to find out what the list of guns was so they could justify their order in council gun ban.

• (1840)

**Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-21. It has never been more clear how disconnected the current Liberal government is from rural Canadians. Firearms are tools for millions of Canadians, especially those who call rural Canada their home.

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I am a law-abiding firearms owner myself, just like millions of other Canadians across this country. I represent a region in this House of Commons that comprises rural communities and rural Canadians. The largest community I represent is smaller than 10,000 people. I am also a farmer who, just like thousands of other farmers, uses a firearm, not as a weapon but as a tool to protect my farm. When I speak to Bill C-21, I speak from an understanding of what a firearm means to the rural way of life.

Rural Canadians share the understanding that the firearm is a tool. It is an understanding shared by first nations, hunters and law-abiding firearms owners all across this nation. Unfortunately, the current Liberal government has few members in rural regions and, therefore, little representation from rural Canada. When I see the government display such a blatant disregard for the rural way of life, I fear it has made a calculated political decision to write off the views of rural Canada for its own political gain. After all, rural Canadians did send the Liberals a strong message at the ballot box in the last election. The government has no regard for the concerns, the priorities or the way of life of rural Canadians.

The cost of the neglect displayed by the government toward rural Canadians is a direct reflection of an increasing urban-rural divide, and it is a divide that I fear will only grow larger the longer the Prime Minister remains in power.

This is a very important matter, and I draw to the Speaker's attention that quorum is not present in this chamber.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I appreciate the quorum call, but the order that was passed earlier does not allow for quorum calls after 6:30 p.m.

The hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the special order. I just want the record to show that we are considering Bill C-21 at report stage without the constitutional requirement of quorum. I point out that the special order under which we are operating also provides for third reading to be—

**The Deputy Speaker:** There is a point of order from the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, the rule is that quorum cannot be called. It does not say how many members are in the chamber or in the MPs' lounges. It could be a large number, or it could be a smaller number. It is just that we cannot call quorum.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It also devolves into the issue of underlining who is in the chamber and who is not in the chamber. It does get into that.

There is a point of order by the hon. member for York—Simcoe.

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order on that point of order. Those numbers are part of the member's speech.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Let me deal with the point of order issue.

Before members go any further with their points of order, I would remind them that on May 9, the House duly adopted an order prescribing that the Chair not receive any quorum calls after 6:30 p.m. It is after 6:30 p.m. Let us not talk about it because it is part of the order that we are working under.

The hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Mr. Speaker, debate at second reading also took place without quorum on June 9, June 21 and June 22, 2022. That means that Bill C-21 will have been considered without the constitutional requirement of quorum for every stage of the legislative process in this House.

The Supreme Court of Canada ruled in 1985—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I need to interrupt the hon. member. Bringing up quorum is sort of calling for quorum. Members need to be careful in what they are calling for.

The hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in 1985 that the requirement of section 133 of the Constitution Act, 1867, and section 23 of the Manitoba—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona is rising on a point of order.

• (1845)

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Mr. Speaker, there is an established rule that members are not to reflect on a decision made by the House. The House did decide to have extended evening sittings for the purpose of hearing members who rightly want to speak to the bill, but they are not to reflect on a decision of the House that was made to not require quorum in order to create more time for members to offer their thoughts about the bill on the record.

The line of argument that my colleague is adopting makes it harder for the House to adopt such motions in the future, which I think would be very unfortunate because they are critical to providing the space and time for members to put their thoughts on the record about legislation before the House.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for trying to enforce established rules of the House and I support you in continuing to do that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am going to remind the hon. member that we cannot call for quorum during this time. We cannot necessarily talk about quorum. I understand that this is probably a part of what his speech actually is. We are running on a little bit of thin ice here.

The hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Mr. Speaker, in 1985, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the requirements of section 133 of the Constitution Act, 1867, and section 23 of the Manitoba Act, 1870—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Elmwood—Transcona is rising on a point of order.

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**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Mr. Speaker, I am at a loss as to how to proceed. I think the Speaker has made it clear that the line of argument infringes upon certain rules of the House. I appreciate that the member already wrote his speech. As somebody who does not use notes, and I know that the member knows the content of the bill very well, I just encourage him to get out of his notes and speak to the content of the bill. In this way, he will not be infringing upon the rules of the House or upon your recent ruling.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Calgary Shepard is rising on the same point of order.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Mr. Speaker, you have made a ruling, and members have been given wide latitude by Chair occupants in the past to go back into their speech that they have prewritten, where they have made annotations for themselves. The member is referring, obviously, to a court case. He has a point that he is trying to make. If that other member would just let him finish his point, I am sure he will carry on to the rest of the business that he wants to do.

I hear members laughing across the way, but they are given the same latitude to speak to bills. We all bring notes into the House to make a speech.

You have made a ruling, Mr. Speaker, so we should just carry on with the debate on Bill C-21.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I believe the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona is rising on the same point of order.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Mr. Speaker, I am not laughing. What I would say is that if I wrote a speech before entering the House that infringed upon a ruling of the Speaker or rules of the House, I would expect that, it would not be okay for me to if I breach those rules simply because I wrote it down before coming into the House. I would be expected to adapt to rulings of the Speaker on the fly.

The member has a prewritten speech, but if it is infringing upon the ruling of the Speaker, simply having written it down beforehand does not mean that he is allowed to continue.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Calgary Shepard is rising on the same point of order.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Mr. Speaker, with apologies for prolonging this debate, again, members have been given wide latitude in the House to refer to past votes that have been taken in the House. Member after member has been in the House and has done so year after year. It has never been an issue until right now, when that particular member has a disagreement with the contents of a speech that another member is trying to give in the House.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Let me just say it this way: There can be no quorum calls. We can talk about quorum on other days, in other court cases, if it has been, of course, quoted somewhere else.

I am going to provide a little bit of latitude on this one to listen to the hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa. However, we are staying away from the quorum call for this evening.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Mr. Speaker, in 1985, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the requirements of section 133 of the Constitution Act, 1867, and of section 23 of the Manitoba Act, 1870, respecting the use of both the English and French languages in the records and Journals of the House of Parliament of Canada, are mandatory and must be obeyed. Accordingly, the House can no

longer depart from its own code of procedure when considering procedure entrenched in the Constitution.

On page 295 of the second edition of Joseph Maingot's *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, in reference to the 1985 case, Maingot lists those constitutional requirements regarding parliamentary procedure that must be obeyed. In that list, he includes section 48, which deals with the quorum of the House of Commons.

Since the special order restricts the calling of quorum, and since calling of quorum is the only means by which quorum can be established during a sitting, in essence, the special order waives the Constitutional requirement of quorum. As the Speaker and their predecessors have reminded this House countless times, and I am sure the Supreme Court justices will agree, one cannot do indirectly what one cannot do directly.

In the event that Bill C-21—

• (1850)

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Mr. Speaker, perhaps the member intended to rise on a point of order himself, intending to say that these sittings of Parliament to debate Bill C-21 are not constitutional. However, I wonder why this is coming up in the context of his speech, instead of as a challenge to these extraordinary sittings of the House, in order to consider the bill.

If he wants to make a point of order, he can do that. The appropriate time to do that is at the first possible moment, once the breach of our rules of order has come to light. However, Conservatives have been participating in these extraordinary sittings for some time, without having raised a point of order of this nature.

I think we are past the point where that point of order could be raised. I wonder why we continue to reflect on a decision of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am also going to remind folks that the Speaker tends to be mindful of the need for some leniency. At times, the Speaker may allow references to other matters in debates if they are made in passing. I just need to hear the relevancy to the bill that we are debating this evening. Therefore, the member could maybe bring it together on the relevance of what tonight's debate actually is.

The hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Mr. Speaker, in the event that Bill C-21 receives royal assent, I trust that these facts will serve opponents of Bill C-21 in their legal battles in court.

Bill C-21 was a disaster from the day it was introduced, but the defining moment for Bill C-21 was when the Liberals introduced amendments at the committee stage that would have effectively banned thousands of firearms used by hunters across Canada. I mention this because it proved once again that there is a stark difference between what the government is telling Canadians and what it is actually doing.

The Liberals claim they are taking guns away from criminals when, in reality, they are taking firearms away from law-abiding hunters. They claim they are tackling violent crime, but violent crime has increased by 32% since the Liberals took office. They claim that they carefully consulted with stakeholders on this legislation, but they failed to heed the advice of the Canadians who were most impacted.

Conservatives called their bluff and continued to fight for millions of law-abiding firearms owners across Canada. The Prime Minister spent weeks telling Canadians that firearms used for hunting would not be banned. The truth was finally exposed when he admitted, “there are some guns, yes, that we’re going to have to take away from people who were using them to hunt”. After weeks of outrage from Canadians, provinces, territories, indigenous communities and even from members of the government’s own party, the government paused its hunting rifle ban.

However, the government turned to Bill C-21 to push it through Parliament. The Liberals moved a closure motion that shut down debate in the House of Commons. They limited the number of committee meetings on this bill. They moved time allocation to shut down debate at committee, and they forced MPs to vote on amendments without studying their full impact.

Therefore, here we are. Hunters do not know which firearms will be banned. The future of Olympic sport shooting in Canada is in jeopardy. Canadians are wondering who will be appointed to the new firearms advisory committee. So much for the sunny ways that the Prime Minister once promised.

Conservatives support common-sense solutions that tackle the root cause of crime. This means going after criminals, getting tough on crime and fixing the broken bail system. That is why Conservatives support cracking down on border smuggling to stop the flow of illegal guns. It is why Conservatives support measures that bring back serious sentences for violent offenders. It is why Conservatives support implementing bail reform to ensure that repeat violent offenders remain behind bars as they await a trial. Instead of focusing on this, the Liberals are targeting law-abiding Canadians in the name of public safety. We have seen no evidence to suggest that taking firearms away from law-abiding firearms owners would reduce crime. As a matter of fact, licensed firearms owners are some of the most tested, vetted and lawfully responsible Canadians in this country.

When it comes to the impacts that Bill C-21 will have on public safety, the chief firearms officer in Alberta stated the following:

Bill C-21 is built on a fundamentally flawed premise. Prohibiting specific types of firearms is not an effective way of improving public safety. It will waste billions of taxpayer dollars that could have been used on more effective approaches, such as the enforcement of firearms prohibition orders, reinforcing the border or combatting the drug trade and gang activity.

One of the most pressing issues for the Canadians I represent is the rate of rural crime. We know that criminals specifically target rural Canadians because of the lack of law enforcement in rural areas. I hear the stories of seniors watching their sheds being robbed in broad daylight because criminals know that the police do not have time to respond. Rural Canadians are waking up to discover their vehicles stolen, only to find them burned in a field down the road. I was in Swan River last month, a rural town of 4,000 in Man-

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itoba, where nearly every business has bars on the windows and buzzers on the doors to prevent robbery. I can assure members of this House that law-abiding firearms owners across Canada are not committing these crimes; unfortunately, the current government is more focused on targeting rural Canadians who legally own firearms than on targeting rural crime.

● (1855)

In conclusion, I am troubled to see another attack on law-abiding firearms owners being pushed through Parliament. I am even more surprised to see the NDP members who represent rural ridings failing to represent their constituents. The NDP pretends it is standing up for rural Canadians, when in reality, it only stands up for its Liberal coalition partners.

As I mentioned earlier, I represent a completely rural region where most people own a firearm or know someone who does. It is a region where firearms are seen as a tool and not as a weapon. I understand how rural Canadians feel because I am one of them. For those reasons, I will again be voting against Bill C-21 as yet another attack on law-abiding firearms owners.

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I note the member spoke about bail reform. This morning, the Minister of Justice introduced Bill C-48.

As Tom Stamatakis, president of the Canadian Police Association, said, “Front-line law enforcement personnel have been asking the government to take concrete steps to address the small number of repeat violent offenders who commit a disproportionate number of offences that put the safety of our communities at risk”. He went on to say that he is pleased the government has introduced “common-sense legislation that responds to the concerns that our members have raised.”

As the member has indicated, this issue is very important for him. Will he and his party support Bill C-48, so that it receives unanimous consent to go to committee and then off to the other place?

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Madam Speaker, we are debating Bill C-21, and I do not think the member really understands the impact this bill has on rural Canada and the way of life in Canada.

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This afternoon, they just thought of a new bill, and he asks what I think of the idea. Judging by past representation of the government, I have absolute apprehension when it comes to commenting on anything that I have not even had a chance to read yet.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Madam Speaker, today's Conservative Party line is that there is nothing good in Bill C-21. They say it will not make our fellow citizens safer. If the Conservatives are to be believed, the bill has no redeeming qualities whatsoever.

However, I do not know if my colleagues are aware of this, but certain things happened in committee during the clause-by-clause study. The Conservative Party voted in favour of all the government's amendments on ghost guns. It voted in favour of the Bloc Québécois's amendments on cartridge magazines. The Conservative Party itself amended the bill to include the definition of domestic violence. It helped make the bill better.

That is why I have such a hard time understanding why the Conservatives are now saying that there is nothing good in the bill. I would like to better understand my colleagues' position.

[*English*]

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Madam Speaker, the problem with the bill is that it is fundamentally flawed. With all due respect to my colleague, I do not think anybody really appreciates the impact this is having on rural Canada and the way of life or the way we live in rural Canada. I cannot imagine trying to defend my livestock. When I farmed, I had cattle, and there are coyotes that come around. When the mother cow is having her calf, there are packs of wolves and coyotes that will come and kill everything. A farmer needs a gun to fix that. The problem is that this bill is attacking that very farmer.

**An hon. member:** That is false.

• (1900)

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Madam Speaker, that is the problem. It is not false. I wish the member would understand the impact this has.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, earlier in his speech, the member talked about sport shooting. I know there are provisions about sport shooting in the bill with respect to the handgun freeze. I know conservatives have proposed to delete clause 43, which talks a bit about that sport shooting issue. I wonder if he can confirm his support for that Conservative amendment and speak a little to the issue of sport shooting.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Madam Speaker, I just noticed that there is a list of rural NDP ridings here, and this member is not on that list. He obviously has an urban riding. I just wonder how much he consulted with his colleagues and all the rural ridings the NDP members actually represent and how much they listened to them. By the sounds of it and by the support of the bill, I would think he did not listen to them at all.

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-21. As members may have noticed, I have not spoken to this bill or any bill related to guns, and there is a specific reason. I find it exceptionally diffi-

cult to speak about this issue given the work I have done in the past. However, I feel a need to weigh in today given the enormous amount of misinformation that is coming forth.

At the outset, I want to acknowledge that the bill, as amended, at this stage does not impact hunters or indigenous people. Their section 35 charter rights are protected under the non-derogation clause. I want to centre this conversation on why this piece of legislation is deeply important to me, my riding and my community.

About 20 years ago in 1997, on December 27, a young man, a 19-year-old University of Waterloo student, was shot at a coffee shop in Scarborough. His name was Kabilan Balachandran. I have spoken about him before. At that time, he sparked a movement to counter the violence and gun violence we had seen in our community. He would have been 44 years old this year. His was a life of boundless opportunities and potential achievements that was cut short because of gun violence.

My involvement in community work really started off just after that. An organization called the Canadian Tamil Youth Development Centre was started because of Kabilan in 1999, and for the next four years or so, I was able to run the organization as its coordinator on a voluntary basis. I can tell members that we put hundreds of hours a month into supporting young people who were impacted by violence in a community that was struggling with violence.

A couple of years later, in 1999 I believe, two young men were shot point-blank at 720 Kennedy Road. They were students at SATEC. I was able to meet with the families, and in fact I am still in touch with them. The pain I saw among their friends, classmates and those who were impacted, particularly their mothers, is something I can never forget. One of the mothers essentially stood in front of a window waiting for her son to come back. Of course, we know that he never came home.

We have seen other attacks and gun-related incidents that have impacted many young people, and I have been profoundly impacted by this. In fact, in many ways, my view on guns is shaped by this history.

There is a neighbourhood in my riding called Danzig, and it is impoverished in many ways but is surrounded by an incredible community. Just before I ran for office, when I ran for the nomination, it was hosting a barbecue on July 16, 2012. Again there was an incident that involved the deaths of two young men, with 24 people injured. In many ways, I do not have to look at mass casualties or mass gun violence outside of my riding because it happened right there in the middle of the summer, impacting so many young people and families. It shook the community to the core. In fact, we marked the 10th anniversary of their passing just last year, and I can tell members that the pain really has not gone away.

• (1905)

Then, after I was elected in 2017, on July 23, Demal Graham, a resident in my riding, was shot in front of his daughter. We had a chance to visit the family and meet with his mother Shauna, his daughter, his other children and his siblings, and again the hurt continued.

The pain may be different, and it may be 10 years later. It may be people of different backgrounds, faiths and upbringing, and they may be from rural communities. However, ultimately, the pain inflicted on the families that are impacted is just unbelievable.

Louis March is from the Zero Gun Violence Movement, and we have spent quite a bit of time together. In fact, when the Minister of Justice came to my riding in 2019, we had a round table and he was able to give us his first-hand experience with many of the mothers of the young men who were killed by gun violence.

I think we have been arguing a fair bit here, and I do not for a second pretend to know what my friend opposite just spoke about regarding living in rural Canada. I am not going to pretend to know that. I also want him to know that he may not know about living in an inner city in a place like the city of Toronto or any other major centre, and I do not want to presuppose that. However, our conversation needs to be elevated. It cannot just be about saying, no, we are not going to touch or restrict guns of any form. I think that conversation really fails Canadians.

What the Minister of Public Safety has brought forward is, I believe, very balanced legislation that would protect hunters. I have never hunted, and I do not think I ever will, but that is not the point. The point is that there are many Canadians who do and they do it lawfully, and this is not about taking away their ability to hunt. This is not, as I said earlier, about the ability of indigenous people to exercise their section 35 rights.

Ultimately, this is about bringing forward legislation. It may not be perfect and may not fully address all the issues of gun violence. That alone is not enough. Bill C-21 alone is not enough. We know more needs to be done, and that is why the Minister of Public Safety has brought forward funding to support communities and why we brought forward Bill C-48 today to address serious violent offenders.

Ultimately, I think we would do Canadians an injustice if we do not move this bill along. I think there has been sufficient debate. Oftentimes the debate is elevated, and while I do not want to go into the process, obviously this could have been done better. However, I can assure members that this is something that my community needs. Scarborough needs this, the city of Toronto needs this, major cities need this and I know that Canada needs this.

I look forward to questions and comments from my colleagues, and I am thankful for the opportunity to share some of my experiences with gun violence.

• (1910)

**Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member sharing some tragic stories that he personally experienced or of people he knew. I have a question,

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though. Could he point out anything in Bill C-21 that would have actually helped to prevent the specific tragedies he experienced?

Second, I would like his feedback on the red flag portions of Bill C-21, because we heard at committee, during the debate, review and study of Bill C-21, from women's groups, and pretty unanimously from all the stakeholders, that the proposed red flag laws that are now in Bill C-21 are costly, ineffective and redundant. In particular, Heidi Rathjen from PolySeSouvient said that:

First, there is not one women's group that asked for this measure.

Second, it's not relevant in the Canadian context, because...victims of abuse can call the police. It's up to the police to come and investigate, and they have all the legislative tools necessary to remove the weapons....

...[the red flag law] is dangerous in the sense that it could...allow police to offload their responsibility onto victims.

I would just like the member's comments—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I have to give the hon. parliamentary secretary the opportunity to answer.

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree:** Madam Speaker, all I can say is that red flag rules are something we heard about extensively from many stakeholders we spoke to. They are important for addressing the issues of gender-based violence as well as intimate partner violence. I disagree with the member that they will not have any impact. They will have an impact. We have seen it in other jurisdictions, and I believe they are an important part of this bill that we need to maintain.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Madam Speaker, my colleague mentioned that, despite Bill C-21, more needs to be done about gun control in Canada. I agree with him.

When the government withdrew its amendments and came up with a new definition, I think everyone was relieved, except for a few groups that are calling for better gun control. The government took the list of 482 firearms that it wanted to include in the Criminal Code, removed them and proposed a prospective definition, meaning that it applies only to weapons that will be on the market in the future.

In so doing, hunting rifles will be left untouched, which is a good thing. However, hundreds of military-style assault weapons are also being left in circulation. I find it hard to understand how the government can hope to exercise better gun control by leaving a rather incredible number of military-style firearms in circulation.

What does the member think the minister should do? Should he enact an order in council to ban these weapons?

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• (1915)

[*English*]

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree:** Madam Speaker, I indicated that Bill C-21 is an important bill, and what I can offer is that there are other things the government is doing. For example, it is supporting communities. When we look at any of these incidents or scenarios, one of the major issues that existed is that the communities needed support. Young people needed support. Young people needed off-ramps, sometimes, from violence and from getting involved in the criminal justice system. Those are the types of supports our government is undertaking.

I know the Minister of Public Safety did make an announcement of \$390 million just last week, and we will continue to invest in our communities.

**Mr. Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member talked about some of the lives that have been lost in his riding. We have seen gun violence happening in many countries. What does the hon. parliamentary secretary think it means to the families to see legislation moving forward that actually takes action to address gun violence, as opposed to just offering prayers and nice words? We see a government actually taking action for families that have lost people in their lives due to gun-related violence.

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree:** Madam Speaker, it is very simple. Bill C-21 is not going to bring back any of these children or young people who passed away. It is not going to heal the families. However, it will give solace to those families, those survivors and those who have been impacted by gun violence.

Our government takes it seriously. Collectively we as parliamentarians take gun violence seriously, and we are taking steps to address it—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Shefford.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Madam Speaker, it is with great sensitivity that I will be speaking this evening about Bill C-21.

I will reiterate that we will be voting in favour of the bill. Thanks to the efforts of the Bloc Québécois, and especially thanks to the member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, who did exceptional work on this file, the bill, which was criticized by hunters, gun control groups and airsoft players, was improved and is now satisfactory for most of these groups.

Obviously, we recognize that the bill is not perfect. I will talk about that in my speech. The government refused some very reasonable proposals put forward by the Bloc Québécois, but it did accept many others.

In particular, Bill C-21 freezes the sale of legal handguns, but we will have to wait several years for these guns to disappear. However, there are also some illegal firearms that will continue to circulate. I will talk about that as I present some figures. I will first address the issue from the perspective of victims' groups. I will also mention the contradictions of the different parties and the Bloc Québécois's exceptional efforts.

First, the federal government estimates that there are more than one million legal handguns in Canada and that more than 55,000 are acquired legally every year. As I said, the Bloc Québécois is proposing to add handguns to the buyback program in order to allow owners to sell them to the government if they so wish. In short, it would be an optional buyback program to reduce the number of guns people own more quickly.

Bill C-21 should also help in the fight against the proliferation of ghost weapons in Montreal, but the government still needs to do a lot more to control the borders.

It is interesting to note that, according to Montreal's police force, the SPVM, 95% of the handguns used to commit violent crimes are purchased on the black market. However, this should not relieve us of our responsibility when it comes to Bill C-21. There are other Bloc Québécois bills that aim to address this problem, including Bill C-279, but we will come back to that later. Legal weapons are still used, as was the case in the Quebec City mosque shooting. They continue to be used, and it is precisely to avoid such mass shootings that the Bloc Québécois supports survivor groups in their demands to ban these guns altogether.

Second, I would like to digress for a moment to say that the government, which claims to be feminist, is adding maximum sentences for certain weapons offences but has removed minimum sentences with Bill C-5. That sends mixed signals to victims. The Bloc Québécois wanted to make an amendment to a Conservative amendment to reinstate minimum sentences in order to add judicial discretion to override them. However, because of the super closure motion, that was no longer possible.

The Liberal Party and NDP also voted to keep clauses that allow victims of domestic violence to file a complaint with a judge to have guns taken away from the spouse. This is known as the red flag provision. However, women's rights groups testified that this measure could allow police to offload their responsibility and place the burden of proof on women. Women's rights groups wanted this red flag provision withdrawn because they were concerned that it would allow police to offload their responsibility and put the burden of proof on the victims. The Bloc Québécois listened to these groups and voted against the clause, while the NDP and the Liberal Party voted in favour.

Third, I would like to remind the House that, during the last election campaign, the Bloc Québécois was already proposing that a definition of what constitutes a prohibited assault weapon be added to the legislation before banning all of those weapons. In the end, the government tabled, without any explanation, 400 pages of amendments listing thousands of models of firearms, which caused a lot of anger and confusion among hunters. It is important to note that the Bloc Québécois is the one that convinced the government to scrap that useless list.

The government also added a relatively complicated definition that included words like "hunting rifle". Pro-gun groups jumped on that and used it to convince people that the amendment would ban hunting rifles.

The result is that the pro-gun groups were easily able to strike fear into the hearts of hunters, who looked at the list and saw their own firearms there. However, the list included both legal and prohibited firearms, depending on calibre. That created all sorts of confusion.

Worse yet, the main hunting associations were never consulted by the government. Again, the Bloc Québécois proposed reopening the study to be able to hear from expert witnesses on assault weapons and experts on hunting rifles. The Bloc Québécois was against the list in the Criminal Code, believing it to be an unnecessary burden, since the Criminal Code does not reflect in real time the models of firearms and their classification, because it would need to be amended. There are 482 more models of firearms that need to be prohibited thanks to this list, but the government could very well proceed by order, as it did before. We hope to provoke that thought.

Many of these firearms have similar characteristics to the AR-15 and are not at all used for hunting. It would have been utterly ridiculous for the government to keep these firearms legal when it banned more than 2,000 by regulation on May 1, 2020. Again, they sat on this.

- (1920)

Members will recall that the Bloc Québécois asked the government to immediately ban the 470,000 models that are not used for hunting and to ask a committee about 12 models that are potentially used for hunting, such as the popular SKS.

Throughout the process, the government did a poor job and created a tempest of its own making. It was rather unfortunate. For its part, the NDP also pushed to relax the ban on assault weapons and the freeze on handguns. The Bloc Québécois managed to block most of the NDP manoeuvres. Once again, I say hats off to my colleague.

The government's definition seeks to ban semi-automatic weapons that discharge centrefire ammunition and that were originally designed with a detachable magazine with a capacity of six cartridges or more. This definition is easy to circumvent by selling the gun with a five-round magazine. Then there is nothing preventing the manufacturer from marketing and selling the gun with a 30-round magazine in the United States, for example. These magazines are prohibited in Canada, but their proliferation in the United States makes it easy to import them. For the time being, this is still a flaw, but we hope that this will be resolved in the next few months. The government has said that it will look at that again. We will be monitoring that.

The definition presented in the fall of 2022 talked about firearms designed with a magazine with a capacity of six cartridges or more. In other words, it was the characteristics of the gun that were being considered and not the way it was being marketed. Nova Scotia's Mass Casualty Commission also proposed that the definition talk about firearms designed to accept this type of magazine. The Bloc Québécois proposed a subamendment to that effect, but senior officials implied that this wording was rejected by the government for political reasons. The NDP clearly wanted to narrow the scope of the definition. The three other parties voted against our subamend-

### *Government Orders*

ment in committee. However, PolyRemembers and gun control groups supported it.

The government imposed a gag order to quickly wrap up the study of Bill C-21, but the government itself is responsible for how slowly the bill is moving forward. It chose to quickly introduce a bill that was incomplete following the shootings in Uvalde, rather than take an extra few months and introduce a more complete bill.

Even in committee, the government complained that clause-by-clause was proceeding too slowly, but the fact is that members were never able to consider these amendments properly at committee. If the government had done its work properly prior to that, members could have heard from experts and asked questions on a bill that was much more complete. Things dragged on as a result.

The bill also restricted the acquisition of all replica firearms, including airsoft and paintball guns. The original wording of the bill was vague and implied that an airsoft or paintball gun that cannot be mistaken for a real gun could still be legally acquired. For example, if the gun were neon yellow, it could probably still be legally acquired. The problem is that the police did not want to ban these guns because they were concerned that they would be used to commit crimes such as robberies, but rather because many models allow criminals to assemble a complete weapon by purchasing only a barrel and slide, or the barrel and chamber, in the case of an assault weapon. In addition, police believe that many of these guns are designed to look exactly like the real thing, using the original blueprints, to the point where the parts could be interchanged. Criminals can buy a cheap airsoft gun legally. Then they simply have to get the gun's barrel and slide across the U.S. border, which substantially reduces the risk and cost for organized crime.

Here again, the Bloc Québécois scored a win. It succeeded in convincing the government not to ban toys simply for their appearance, but rather to proceed with a ban by regulation. The Bloc Québécois suggested that the government ban the import of replicas designed to be interchangeable with a real gun. That was another Bloc Québécois improvement to this bill.

In closing, what is happening south of the border is just plain crazy. Gun violence has become an epidemic. The tragedies of the last few weeks simply defy imagination. Society must force politicians to get to the root of the problem. There is still much to be done, but Bill C-21 is a step in the right direction this thanks to the improvements made by the Bloc Québécois, and thanks to the improvements made by my colleague from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia.

I would simply like to end by saying that this is all very sad. It is May 2023. I remember that the Bloc Québécois had already reacted after the 2019 election. That was the 30th anniversary of the events at Polytechnique. At the time, groups were already pointing out that our proposals were well-thought-out and sensible. This issue is important to us and we work hard on it. Even my colleague from Chicoutimi—Le Fjord pointed out today how hard the Bloc Québécois has worked on this. Indeed, and that is because we have been listening to the groups involved. We have always worked in a sensible way.

*Government Orders*

We need to avoid the disinformation I have been hearing since this morning from my Conservative colleagues in the House. It is time to take action. As I said, it is a file that has been dragging on for far too long.

• (1925)

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate a number of comments that the member expressed. I wanted to highlight that it is great to see that Bill C-21 is being supported by the Bloc and the New Democrats. We have seen amendments that have been brought forward. It is good, healthy and stronger legislation as a direct result. It is a little bit more than the legislation, which is good.

One of the interesting stats that I heard about had to do with border crossings as 1,200 illegal guns were acquired last year, in addition to 73,000 other weapons. Would the member not agree that it is good we bring forward legislation such as this through budgetary measures to support our law enforcement officers so that they are better equipped and supported in dealing with getting illegal guns off the street?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche:** Madam Speaker, as I mentioned, Bill C-21 deals with legal firearms in particular, but there is the whole issue of illegal firearms. That is why I was talking about Bill C-279, which would make it possible to make a list of criminal groups, look at what is happening at the border, invest in the work associated with public safety.

As I said, what is happening south of the border has consequences here. Weapons trafficking is happening on both sides and we definitely need to do a better job on this. The numbers show that there are far too many illegal firearms, specifically 95%. That is huge. Now that Bill C-21 has been worked on, we definitely need to address these illegal firearms.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matap dia, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. I would like her to talk more about the red flag provision. We know that an impressive number of women's groups in Canada have said that they are against such a measure. These women have said that this will take responsibility away from law enforcement and put victims of domestic violence in danger if they have to go to court to try to get a gun taken away from a potentially violent licence holder.

I named some of those groups earlier. They include the Canadian Women's Foundation, Women's Shelters Canada, the Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale, the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund, the National Association of Women and the Law, and PolyRemembers.

Dozens and dozens of women's groups have said that they are against the red flag provision. That is why the Bloc Qu b cois voted against this measure. However, the government decided to go ahead with it anyway with the support of the NDP.

As the critic for status of women, how does my colleague see the government's refusal to listen to women's groups?

• (1930)

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche:** Madam Speaker, that is what I was saying earlier when I was talking about the good work done by the Bloc Qu b cois. We need to listen to what is happening on the ground.

As I was saying earlier, on the one hand, the Conservatives are unfortunately spreading disinformation about hunting rifles and on the other hand, I get the impression that the Liberal government is practising fake feminism again.

They are trying to ease their conscience. A red flag provision looks good and is impressive. It gives the impression of concern for the issue of violence against women.

However, if they had listened to the groups who work with women every day, if they had done the in-depth work, they would have realized that the red flag provision does not actually meet the needs of women who are victims of violence. I am thinking about PolyRemembers and all the groups my colleague named.

This only contributes to giving the government the image of fake feminism, when it could have proposed real measures to protect women who are victims of violence.

**Mr. Bernard G n reux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivi re-du-Loup, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleagues for the debate that we are having this evening on Bill C-21 and that we will likely continue tomorrow.

I want to approach this issue from a completely different angle, from my perspective as a hunter. I have been a proud hunter since the age of 15 and I am 61 years old now. I started hunting with my brother Pierre. He is the one who introduced me to hunting, particularly waterfowl hunting. It is important to point out that my riding of Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivi re-du-Loup is mainly a rural riding. There are two slightly bigger communities, Montmagny and Rivi re-du-Loup, where a lot of hunters live.

My entire riding is located either along the St. Lawrence River or in the Appalachian Mountains. It is a very beautiful area, where nature is only a two-minute car ride or a five-minute walk away. It is an area where one really can commune with nature every day. I am sure that my colleague from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matap dia would say the same thing in that these are rural areas that are exceptional in every way, particularly in the quality and beauty of the surroundings. They are extremely large ridings. Mine is 7,500 square kilometres.

All we find along the river are flats and birds of all kinds, mainly shorebirds such as ducks, geese, teals, snow geese and Canada geese. I remember when my brother showed me how to hunt, when I was a teenager. I went with him to the edge of the flats where we would hunt snow geese and ducks in the fields. To him that was the most important thing he could teach me about hunting. We had to watch the birds and be mindful of our position and the wind direction. All these elements of nature were very important, but there was also how to handle firearms as a hunter, which was especially important.

Obviously, a firearm is an object that comes with risks, like many other objects. The risk is significant if the firearms are not handled appropriately given their inherent risks. My brother made sure to explain to me how firearms are to be handled and that we had to walk around with unloaded firearms.

I was 15 years old when I started hunting with my brother. When I turned 16, I took a firearms safety course. I passed handily because my brother had already taught me about how to handle and shoot firearms. Not only did he teach me how to handle them, but he also taught me how to protect myself and others when carrying a firearm. The relationship that was established between my brother and me continues today, which means that we always hunt together quite regularly, especially in places that have changed over time. For example, ducks and geese have changed their migration routes somewhat. Montmagny is Canada's snow goose capital. For the past 60 years, a rather interesting festival has been held there. As part of this festival, there are firearm handling demonstrations and, above all, presentations on nature conservation.

• (1935)

For me, this last point is fundamental. I have a vivid memory of the times my brother took me hunting. We would wake up at three or four in the morning to get to the fields before sunrise. To be in a field, surrounded by the autumn dew at five in the morning as the sun is rising, is an incredible experience. People often sleep in too late to see the sunrise. They see sunsets often, but a sunrise is even more spectacular, especially in our region.

The experience nurtured my love of my region and my love of hunting, as well as my respect for the animals we hunt. In my mind, respect for nature and the desire to conserve it are closely linked to firearms. A firearm lets us benefit from nature, within the limits of the law and proper handling.

When I returned to my region in 1988, I started a family. I moved to Rivière-Ouelle, a little hamlet of about 1,500 inhabitants near the St. Lawrence. I lived on a concession road. People could set off on their bicycles to go hunting. Geese landed on the river in front of our place. I get a little emotional talking about this because I started taking my own son hunting when he was four years old. We went hunting, but without guns. We went hunting so we could observe nature and the behaviour of the migratory birds that flew past our house and in the surrounding area.

There were thousands of them, of course. There were one million snow geese back then. The population declined at one point, but I think it is now back to that level because there is less hunting. Like it or not, there are fewer hunters than there used to be. The migratory bird population has increased. Even so, nature has not changed.

### *Government Orders*

When I say I used to take my son hunting without a gun, it was to help him to grasp the same thing my brother taught me way back when. For me, respect for nature is intimately linked to hunting. I wanted to back up and talk about the name of the river, but I only have two minutes left. Of course, in the mountains, there is more talk about wildlife, partridges, hares, deer and moose. I enjoy that kind of hunting, too.

The government's intention, what it wanted to do from the outset with the bill before us today, was to reduce the number of guns that there are in Canada, including those used by hunters, unfortunately. However, we must not forget the respect that hunters have for nature, not only for the landscape, but also for the animals that they track when hunting. I know thousands of such people. By the way, I am a bit biased, as I co-own a business that sells hunting and fishing supplies, including guns. If I owned that business without having been a hunter first, I think it would have been different. People will say I am not impartial, and that is true.

The government's intention from the beginning was to do away with hunters. The problem in Canada is not hunters or hunters' guns. The problem in Canada is guns illegally imported from the United States. Since this government came to power, the crime rate has increased by 32%, and violence by armed groups or street gangs has increased by 90%. We are not making this up. These are real figures that are publicly available. I repeat, the problem in Canada is not hunters or hunting guns. The problem is street gangs and illegal guns coming into Canada.

• (1940)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is disappointing in terms of the Conservative Party's overall approach to Bill C-21. As I indicated earlier this afternoon, the Conservative Party seems to be more concerned about raising money with Bill C-21 than it is about delivering safety to our communities. A good example of that is how this legislation would have the red flags and would deal with ghost guns. These are the types of things that would have a very positive impact, but the Conservatives say they are not going to support this legislation, because they want to raise money. That is more important. Can the member indicate to the House when the Conservative Party is going to recognize that the safety of Canadians is more important than raising money for the Conservative Party?

*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Madam Speaker, the member's condescension is totally unacceptable. Political parties raising funds in connection with various issues is routine. The Liberals do the same thing, as a matter of fact. There is absolutely nothing wrong with that.

Of course Conservatives want to protect the public, but this is about taking aim at the right targets, so to speak. The truth is, hunters, sport shooters and Olympic athletes are not the problem. The problem is street gangs and criminals who take guns, usually handguns, and use them to commit crimes in big cities.

Fortunately, the crime rate where I am in Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup is very low. That is due in large part to the fact that people obey the law, which is very clear about what people can do with weapons. Now, the scope of the regulations is so broad that hunters have to handle their weapons a certain way in order to comply. For instance, they have to lock up their guns. People in my community follow those rules.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, which was a lot more nuanced than those of most of his colleagues. I commend him for that.

He talked about how beautiful the Lower St. Lawrence area is and how close it is to nature. I agree with him. We are practically neighbours. Our ridings are both in the Lower St. Lawrence region and not far from each other.

He also sang the praises of hunting. He told us stories about his family and about how, when he was young, he went hunting without a gun just to birdwatch. I have some good news for him. He is going to be able to continue hunting without a gun. I am just joking. He will be able to continue hunting with his rifle because Bill C-21 does not affect hunting rifles. Those are two pieces of good news for my colleague. That is all I wanted to say.

• (1945)

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Madam Speaker, the member made a joke, so I will make one too. Good jokes always carry a deeper truth. We see how the Bloc Québécois positions itself: It no longer wants people to go hunting. No, it is not true.

In fact, I will respond to my colleague anyway. I could almost quote what her colleague from Rivière-du-Nord said when the amendments were proposed last fall. He said that he could not have done better. That is a Bloc Québécois MP who comes from a region and who is the colleague of my neighbouring colleague from the Lower St. Lawrence who said such a thing. In these amendments, in this list of 300 pages, there were hunting rifles and there are still hunting rifles.

What the Conservatives mainly want to avoid is for hunters to be targeted, which has been the case from day one. Let us go back a few years. At the time, Mr. Chrétien said that the gun registry would cost \$200 million. That number went up to \$2 billion. Today, if we had kept it, it would cost a fortune.

The government wants to use this bill to attack law-abiding hunters. It has not set its sights on the right target. It should instead invest more money to ensure that our borders are safe.

**Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup for the speech he just gave. It was very heartfelt. It came from the depths of his being.

It is an honour for me to rise in the House to represent the people of the beautiful riding of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, which is home to many hunters, fishers, sport shooters and farmers. There are also some indigenous people. I am very proud today.

My first reaction when I learned of the amendments made to Bill C-21 by the Liberals was simple. They had missed the mark. They were taking the wrong approach.

We are used to the Liberal government's inconsistency, whether it concerns Bill C-11 or Bill C-13, the bill to which I have made an active contribution over the past few months. Yesterday, we passed this bill. The Conservative Party supported it, but we wish the government had done more. Nevertheless, we align ourselves with the intentions of the Government of Quebec and official language minority communities.

Now we are talking about Bill C-21, which also demonstrates the inconsistency of the Liberal government. The government is not walking the talk. I will use the same expression as the Bloc Québécois leader, who said earlier in the House today that he will explain to the Liberals what this expression means one day. I urge him to explain it to them as soon as possible, because it is quite obvious. We have noticed the same thing.

I believe that all parliamentarians in the House agree on the objective of this bill, which is to improve public safety in Canada. This is critical, because after eight years of this government, violent crime has increased by 32%, and gang-related homicides have doubled. I am not making this up. This is not me saying so. It is not partisan rhetoric. It is not the evil Conservative Party attacking the good Liberals. This is a fact. I do not understand how they can defend this.

The Liberal government's approach to achieving this goal is completely out of touch with reality. As I said, the riding of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier is an area with many hunters, fishers and farmers. It is largely rural. As in many other rural and semi-urban ridings in Canada, hunting season is a highly anticipated time of year. For many, it is a tradition, while for others, it is a family activity. It is a hobby. Young and old gather to practise this sport that has been passed down from generation to generation. Some hunt purely for pleasure. For others, it is an outright necessity in order to feed themselves, as a result of the Liberals' inflationary practices that are leaving Canadians hungry.

*Government Orders*

Two weeks ago, I was attending the annual convention of the Fédération québécoise des chasseurs et pêcheurs. I did not see any Liberals there. It took place in Saint-Jérôme. What I heard from the people I met at the annual convention was clear: They are worried about the consequences of this bill. This federation is not a run-of-the-mill organization. It is a solid institution that represents hunters and anglers throughout Quebec. Its mission is to represent and defend the interests of Quebec's hunters and anglers, help teach safe practices and actively participate in wildlife conservation and development to ensure that resources remain sustainable and that hunting and fishing continue to be practised as traditional, heritage and recreational activities.

I have a question. What is criminal about that? Absolutely nothing. These people simply want to enjoy nature and engage in an activity that has existed for millions of years. It is important to remember that, in the past, people bartered with what they hunted. They would trade pelts for mirrors. This is nothing new.

● (1950)

Perhaps I am a bit biased, but I want to point out that the federation's head office is located in the most beautiful riding in the Quebec City region—I will make the area a bit smaller—Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier. I want to commend the federation president, Marc Renaud.

I would like to read an excerpt from a news release issued by the federation after the government tabled its new amendments on May 1. It says, and I quote:

The federation understands the importance of public safety and supports the government's efforts to keep Canadians safe. However, we have raised concerns about how effective the methods proposed in Bill C-21 will be in meeting that objective. We believe that gun violence is a complex problem that requires a holistic approach, one that takes into account underlying factors such as poverty, mental health, organized crime, human trafficking and drug trafficking. We also recognize that firearms are not the only source of violence, as demonstrated by recent events in which other tools were used to commit crimes. We are therefore calling for a comprehensive review to come up with meaningful, intelligent and lasting solutions to these complex social problems.

To me, this is a call for a common-sense approach. Let us not reinvent the wheel. Again, as I was saying from the outset, this bill misses the mark.

Let us be clear here: Hunters are not the reason the crime rate in urban centres is higher than ever. We need to address organized crime and violent reoffenders to make the streets safer across Canada. Hunters, farmers, sport shooters and indigenous people are not criminals.

When I attended the convention two weeks ago in Saint-Jérôme, I felt very comfortable. These people are cordial, polite, civilized and intelligent, and I enjoyed meeting them. I did not feel like I was in danger. These are not criminals. Again, hunters, farmers, sport shooters and indigenous people are not criminals.

When we talk about criminals, we are talking about people who break the law. We could bring in a whole host of laws to have one model over another, to allow or not allow a certain model or to allow it with some exceptions. We can do that, but the criminals will never respect these rules. We need to address the problem differently.

A Conservative government will invest in maintaining law and order and securing the border rather than spending billions of dollars to take guns away from law-abiding Canadians.

Today, we have repeated over and over that amendments G-4 and G-46, the amendments that sought to ban firearms used by hunters and sport shooters, were withdrawn. Why were they withdrawn? It is because the Conservative Party of Canada, the official opposition in Ottawa, did its job. The minister boasted about those amendments and vigorously defended them, but he retreated when faced with common sense because the Conservatives made him see the light. I must say that they had other accomplices from other parties here in the House of Commons. It was not the Conservatives.

The government's new amendments are just a way of getting the work done through regulations. It is not meeting the target. We are not fools. We are used to these government tactics. I will repeat what we have said all day long: The Conservative Party is the only party to protect Canadians across the country, whether they live in large cities or rural communities.

This is a very technical bill. We worked very hard in committee to study the amendments, despite the time constraints imposed by the Liberals.

● (1955)

We want to do a good job on this bill, as we do on many others, but unfortunately, we are being muzzled. We are doing some work, but we could do so much more.

When we are in government, we will stand up for hunters and workers, because these individuals have rights, and we will work to protect them.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member mentioned common sense. Last year, and I mentioned this earlier, there were 1,200 guns taken away from borders. There were 73,000 weapons seized at the border. This is a government that has actually invested in our border controls. We can contrast that with Stephen Harper's time, when there were actually cutbacks. Was there ever a year, when Stephen Harper was the prime minister, when he received even half of the 1,200 guns and 73,000 weapons that we received last year? I suspect the answer is no, but I would be interested in what the member has to say on it.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Joël Godin:** Madam Speaker, I want to say hello to my colleague from Winnipeg North. I am not sure whether he heard my speech or whether he is paying much attention to the comments of the official opposition. We are accustomed to that. He just fills in the blanks. I will simply say this to my colleague: What does his question have to do with Bill C-21?

My colleague is out of touch, and it shows once again that the Liberal Party of Canada is also out of touch with the real people on the ground, the hunters and the sport shooters. I am disappointed by his question, but I will respect it and I hope he will respect my answer.

*Government Orders*

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, which set a tone that should be universal and consistent when it comes to defending humans against gun violence. His tone was both measured and calm.

I wanted to tell him that my father was a hunter and that we also hunted snow geese in Isle-aux-Coudres. We saw just as many as my colleague would have seen on his side of the river. As long as there was game in the house, I would eat it morning, noon and night. My dad would stuff the goose, and we would eat it. The frightening truth is that I would eat every bit of it, including the gizzard. We still eat them from time to time, because I have a few friends who still hunt.

It is funny. People who hunt told me that, finally, the Bloc Québécois understood the issue of protecting hunters and hunting rifles, while excluding other weapons that could be misleading. I would like my colleague to tell me how the Bloc Québécois has taken firearms away from hunters. On the contrary, we have worked together to clarify the situation.

• (2000)

**Mr. Joël Godin:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix for her question. It is always interesting to work with her.

I am pleased that the members of the Bloc Québécois now think that this is common sense, but it took some time before they understood that. We need to understand where this bill came from. In one video, we can see the member for Rivière-du-Nord saying, “Wow! If we had to write a firearms bill, this is how we would have written it”. That was for the first iteration of the bill. There were amendments after that.

I thank my colleague for having accepted the Conservative Party's recommendations and criticisms, which were in the best interests of hunters and sport shooters. We are very pleased about that, and we are taking the credit. I thank the Bloc Québécois for supporting the Conservative Party because we are standing up for rural communities.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my colleague talked about the head office of a federation in his riding that represents hunters from all over Quebec. There are obviously other associations across Canada that do the same thing, and all of these associations have a very specific goal. My colleague talked about their goals and objectives in his speech.

I do not know whether my colleague is a hunter, but since he is from Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, he is very familiar with the connection between hunting and nature in his riding.

What is that connection?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier for a very brief response.

**Mr. Joël Godin:** Madam Speaker, it will be difficult to be brief. I will thank my colleague, but I will not mention his riding to save time.

I am, in fact, not a hunter. However, the landscape is extraordinary in Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier. I am a conservationist, just like hunters, sport shooters, farmers and indigenous peoples, and we are all aligned.

[English]

**Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I thank everyone who is here this evening and all those folks out there in TV land watching this debate.

Certainly, there are many folks in Canada now who have lost that historical connection to hunting, and as my eloquent colleagues from la belle province said, it is still something many people love to do. Growing up in rural New Brunswick, as I did, it was something my family and I did as well. I have to echo the comments of my colleagues in the sense that, the joy we derived from being out in nature, being with one another, observing nature and using skills that have been passed down for generations, such as tracking animals and being able to understand how that process works, is really part of the heritage I experienced as a proud rural Canadian.

As I grew, I had the ability to join the military, and that created two things. The number one thing, as we know, is that some of the restrictions around firearms in this country made it very difficult to transport firearms, get them licenced and all that stuff. As that happened, both my brother and I were in the military, and we decided at that point to get rid of the firearms our family had, many of them for many years. As I reflect upon that, it creates a bit of sadness now because that is a tradition that I was not able to pass on to the rest of my family.

That being said, the military created a different relationship with firearms. It was different only in the sense of what their intended purpose was, what they looked like, how they shot bullets and how many, etc. That being said, respect for firearms is what continued to be pervasive in my approach to them. I think that one of the things people around here who have not had much experience with firearms either do not want to understand or refuse to understand is the respect we had for firearms.

I remember being a child at that time when there were not many restrictions. The firearms were on the wall. They did not have trigger locks, and they were never loaded. Also, let us be clear that it was not something people took off the wall, pointed at other people and did foolish things with. They were designed for a purpose. We knew that purpose, and we respected that purpose. Sadly, some of those things have changed.

As I said, I got into the military. I was a physician there, of course. The firearms training for doctors was somewhat different. Maybe it was just my skill level that was somewhat different, but nonetheless we did go ahead and have our days on the ranges. Again, they were all very enjoyable. It certainly is a skill that one can learn, and if practised well, one can become very adept. There are many stories around that.

*Government Orders*

Indeed, in my own riding of Cumberland—Colchester, in Springhill, there is an incredible history of sport shooting. One family in Springhill has won the Queen's Medal for Champion Shot 10 times. When we look at the incredible experience that family has shared from generation to generation, it is also with one of the most storied units in Canadian military history, the Nova Scotia Highlanders, of which I had the opportunity to be the honorary colonel at one point. Understanding this incredible and rich military history and the impact that the changes Bill C-21 would bring to the ability to undertake things such as sport shooting is incredibly sad.

I think from my own riding there are a couple of other things that are important to note. One is the incredible shooting group called the Oxford Marksmen Association. I had an opportunity last year to partake in a day at the range with those folks. Again, the word “respect” is what I really think I need to underline. There is the respect that group has for the firearms and for the sport shooting we undertook that day. Once again, sadly I was absolutely terrible, and they took no short time of making sure I knew that, but I am okay with that. If I could practise more, I would be much better, I am sure.

• (2005)

The other thing that is important is a group, also in my riding, called Women That Hunt. It is a great group of women who realize, again, that important family and nature connection they are able to have and create.

In particular, we often see women who have never had the opportunity to handle a firearm go through that entire process and understand the process of learning about the firearm, learning about munitions, understanding how to be in nature and then, also, understanding the very strict process that many of my colleagues have talked about here in the House with the licensing procedure that we have here in Canada.

In essence, when we look at all of those things, I would suggest that the rural riding of Cumberland—Colchester has a significant history of firearm usage and understanding the necessity of that from a hunting perspective.

Just next door is Kings—Hants, and one of my colleagues, the member for Kings—Hants, participated in the debate on Bill C-21 and spoke out with much shenanigans, I will say, in committee, on Bill C-21. He was perhaps almost supporting an amendment to protect sports shooting. However, sadly, when the vote came, that member abstained. Clearly, part of the demise of sports shooting in the country is related to that individual.

At some point, we have to stand up to be counted. When we are elected to come to this place, that is what we are asked to do, which is to represent those folks in our riding. Of course, with Kings—Hants being mainly a rural riding, I would suggest there would be many people who would be exceedingly disappointed, not only with the fact that the member did not take a position but also that it was an abstention. When we look at those things, that is something for which, I think, as I said previously, we need to stand up to be counted.

I think it has become very clear that there is some protection in Bill C-21 around Olympic shooters. It becomes very clear, though. How can one become, say, for instance, an Olympic kayaker, if one

did not have the opportunity to get into a kayak? That would be very difficult, and perhaps there are people around here who might find that to be a very difficult thing.

I had a great friend. He was in the Olympics in 1980, 1984 and 1988 as a kayaker, a very excellent kayaker. If, in 1988, the use of the kayak were banned in Canada, there could have been many individuals who would have been affected without the ability to go to the Olympics and participate in kayak. We will see that with Olympic shooting now, that there will be people, of course, who will not be able to participate in that.

That being said, I think there are two things I need to round off on. As we have heard here repeatedly, gun crimes, gangs and violence associated with that are not being undertaken by hunters, of course. That is a nonsensical notion. I think a common-sense approach to that would be something that would be exceedingly important.

One final, very sad note is that my Liberal colleagues across the way have often brought the Portapique mass shooting into this debate, which I think is deplorable. It is despicable. It is really something that should never have been done. We know very clearly that the madman, that maniac, who committed those crimes, those murders, that shooting, was not a legal firearms owner, and certainly, that was not done with legal firearms.

To bring that into this was unacceptable. Of course, there was the disrespectful and unacceptable interference we saw with the head of the RCMP, the commissioner of the RCMP at that time, and the use of that incident to talk about this order in council. It was, once again, unacceptable. I just want to highlight that point because, of course, Portapique is in my riding of Cumberland—Colchester.

On that note, hopefully those brief personal experiences, which have great meaning for me, will help Canadians understand what our position on this side of the House is, which is to protect those rights of legal gun owners in Canada.

• (2010)

**Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I have one comment. I shot myself in the military, or I should say, I did not shoot myself, but I was taught to shoot in the military, and I like to go to the range.

If some of the weapons that would be banned were available at the range where we could just go out to rent them and shoot an AR-15, which is a very fun gun to shoot, would that be of interest to the hon. member?

Would the hon. member agree that, in spite of any weapons that are not going to be available in the future, there are still more than enough models available for hunters to go about doing what they do?

**Mr. Stephen Ellis:** Madam Speaker, I am thankful for that comment. I think the big thing is related to the rights of hunters. That is really the moral of the story that I wanted to portray here in the House this evening, which is the understanding that hunting is something that can be a family event. We know that is one of the things that Women That Hunt promote very eloquently.

*Government Orders*

It is about taking someone who has never handled a firearm before, who has not been out in nature, and move them through that process to become a safe user of a firearm and understand how it works. They can understand the benefits of nature.

As I mentioned, people also need to go through the incredibly rigorous process that we already have here in Canada to obtain a firearms licence and be able to purchase a firearm, and people need to better understand that. There has been lots of talk in the House about illegal firearms. However, when Canadians come to understand the process that already exists for vetting people who want to become legal firearms owners and hunters in this country, it becomes very clear that the processes we have now are generally satisfactory and quite rigorous in their application.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Madam Speaker, let us try to be reasonable. I know that my colleague is one of the most reasonable members of his party. I am pleased to address my comments to him.

It is reasonable for me to tell him that we agree with the Conservatives on a whole host of things. This may surprise some people, but there are things that we agree on. For example, there should have been measures for illegal guns. There are none, and something should be done about that.

Also, the Liberal government has really mismanaged this file from the outset, with its infamous exhaustive list, which made no sense. We all agree on that.

Will my colleague agree with us about something that is very reasonable and admit that hunting rifles are definitely not affected by this bill?

• (2015)

[*English*]

**Mr. Stephen Ellis:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his kind comments. The idea of maintaining decorum in this place is an important part of that.

I would go on to suggest that the difficulty with Bill C-21 is that it is an exact replica of what was presented before Canadians spoke out against that original form of the bill. As legislators, I think it is exceedingly important that, when we have an opportunity to hear from Canadians, we need to listen when Canadians voice their opinions to us. That is actually what we are here to do.

I realize I have only been here for 20 months, but I think it is very important we hear from the Canadians we represent. When people have an issue and speak out in numbers, not just loud people but numerous people, they actually have a point, and we need to understand very clearly what their point is because that, in essence, is our job. We are here to represent those folks across this great nation. I am proud to do that.

**Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for sharing his stories. I have good news for him: He can get some practice in on June 6 at the parliamentary outdoor caucus. If he knows any kayakers who want to come out, he should bring them with him.

Why does he think the Liberal government continues to target law-abiding firearms owners? The government had its May 1 prohibition in 2020, its initial amendments around Bill C-21 and even the handgun ban. Restricted firearms owners are three times less likely to commit any crime than an average Canadian. Why are the Liberals focused on law-abiding firearms owners and not criminals?

**Mr. Stephen Ellis:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for that great question. He is a great veteran. He served this country in combat and has incredible firearms experience. I thank him for that. I have great respect for that member. However, he is asking me to get into the heads of Liberals, and I have no idea how to do that, so I am going to refuse to answer that.

**Mr. Rob Morrison (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak out today concerning Bill C-21.

It is National Police Week, and today we stand with the women and men of the OPP, their families and their friends, who have seen three of their own shot, one of whom, sadly, has passed away. Since September 2022, we have seen 10 Canadian police officers killed in the line of duty. This trend cannot be allowed to continue. One soul taken is one too many. There is an illegal gun problem in Canada that needs to be addressed. Police officers go to work every day, leaving their families behind, to protect Canadians. They know they might not make it home at the end of the day. It is the responsibility of lawmakers and the House to do what we can to support and defend the police who protect us all.

Unfortunately, the current government is all set this week to point its ideologically driven legislative guns at law-abiding Canadian hunters, sport shooters, guides, outfitters and farmers to solve the problem. That will not work. It appears that the government, with the support of the NDP, has replaced an evidence-based system with a politically driven, ideologically based system void of evidence. How else can we explain the war on hunters in Kootenay—Columbia? The constituents in my riding are perplexed by this, so, on their behalf, I recently asked the Minister of Public Safety if he could share with me what percentage of crimes were committed by criminals with illegal guns versus the percentage committed by law-abiding Canadians who have legal guns. In an evidence-based legislative system, this is a logical question to ask. It requires a logical answer based on the facts of what is actually happening on the streets and communities across our country. I received a non-answer from the minister.

*Government Orders*

Today, I would like to answer that question for all Canadians, and specifically those in my riding of Kootenay—Columbia who have been in contact with my office expressing concern over the actions of the government. After 35 years of policing, I know the answer: very few legal gun owners using legal guns. This is the truthful answer that the public safety minister refused to provide Canadians. The facts and evidence around gun crime are inconvenient for the current government, so it conveniently ignores them.

Conservatives will not ignore them, and will continue to stand up for law-abiding Canadians. We will go after gangs and organized crime and will provide our policing agencies and border services with the funds needed to effectively stem the importation of illegal guns. Targeting hunters like Bill in Yahk, who uses a legal firearm to put food on his family's table, will not solve the problem. Targeting responsible sport shooters like Ron in Salmo, who uses a legal restricted firearm for sport and competes internationally, will not solve the problem. Targeting hard-working farmers like Mike, who uses a legal firearm to protect himself from bears while out in the field, will not solve the problem.

I agree we need to have gun laws, but the government is targeting Canadians who have legal guns. Why does it not go after the ones who have illegal guns, the criminals? Why does it not redirect the billions of dollars it plans to spend on the confiscation program into education programs? Successful crime prevention, again, not directed at lawful Canadians but at gangs and organized crime, starts with youth and must continue throughout their life. Education programs steering our youth away from gangs and organized crime can be successful when delivered at the right time.

The government should scrap Bill C-21. It is not effective and will not be successful. Once again, there is a fundamental difference in approach between the current government and the government-in-waiting. On this side, we have an evidence-based approach, and on that side they have a politically driven, ideological approach. It is not just with respect to guns that we see this approach failing, but also on housing, violent crimes, bail policies and addictions. After eight years, it all feels broken. The evidence will not be found on the front step of Sussex Drive but is happening in real time in cities like Cranbrook and Nelson, in my riding, where chaos and disorder are rampant.

Over the last eight years, our communities, people and brave police have become less safe, with a 32% increase in violent crime and a doubling of gang murders. We need to immediately bring in tougher laws to address serious, violent offenders. We must end the catch-and-release bail system. We need serious sentencing laws to ensure that violent offenders are kept in prison. We need to support our police by giving them the laws and tools they need to do their job and keep them safe. Several high-profile violent street crimes are in the news. These crimes are often committed by offenders released on bail or parole. This crime wave is causing Canadians to feel less safe taking transit or simply being out in their community. Police associations, provinces and other stakeholder groups have called, for months, for significant bail reforms, stricter penalties and other measures to enhance safety.

• (2020)

Just recently, a man in B.C. was given only 67 days in jail before becoming eligible for release after a violent, random assault on a 70-year-old person who was on a bus. Our communities feel less safe, and the government is doing nothing to stop it. Under current justice laws, mandatory minimums on some gun crimes have been reduced, and we see violent offenders released back on the streets, sometimes the same hour they are arrested. The catch-and-release system puts everyone at risk.

Canadians deserve to feel safe in their community, and repeat violent offenders deserve jail, not bail. The government-in-waiting would bring back mandatory jail time for serious violent crimes, which was repealed by the government, and would crack down on the easy access to bail in Bill C-75, which makes these tragedies more likely. We would bring in bail rules that would ensure serious repeat violent offenders remain behind bars as they await trial. We would put the safety of Canadians first and we would do what is necessary to keep violent criminals, gangs and organized crime, those who are perpetuating gun violence, where they belong, behind bars.

To my constituents, I would say that the government has tried a few variations of Bill C-21, using legislative tricks and last-minute amendments. Each time, the Conservatives have forced them to be accountable to Canadians. However, the public safety minister recently introduced new amendments to the bill to create a definition by which new firearms would be banned. The minister also announced that he would appoint a firearms advisory committee, which would determine future bans of firearms that are presently owned by law-abiding Canadian gun owners. It is expected that, between these measures, most of the firearms previously targeted by the Liberal amendments last year, including hunting rifles, would also be targeted for future bans.

*Government Orders*

The government passed Bill C-21 through committee late in the night by heavily limiting debate on clauses and amendments. Let me be very clear. The Liberals have not changed their ideology; they are simply changing their approach to this legislation, which would allow them to decide, without consultation with the members of the House, the people's representatives, which hunting firearms they would confiscate and which ones they would allow. The Prime Minister already admitted that taking hunting rifles is his goal, when he said, "Our focus now is on saying okay...yes...we're going to have to take [them] away from people who were using them to hunt."

Instead of going after the illegal guns used by criminals and street gangs, the Prime Minister is focused on taking hunting rifles and shotguns from law-abiding farmers, hunters, sport shooters and indigenous peoples, with the support of the NDP. The new definition of firearms to be banned is the same as the old one. It is safe to assume that the commonly used hunting firearms targeted by the government this past fall would be added to a ban by the new government-appointed firearms advisory panel.

Ramming the bill through committee in the dead of night is evidence that the government wants to circumvent democracy, stifle debate and take firearms away from law-abiding Canadians without their knowledge. This ban is not about handguns or so-called assault-style firearms; it is about the government taking steps to confiscate hunting rifles. Canadians are wide awake to these tactics. Conservatives support common-sense firearm policies that keep guns out of the hands of criminals. The government-in-waiting would invest in policing and a secure border rather than spending billions confiscating firearms from law-abiding farmers, hunters, sport shooters and indigenous Canadians. We would crack down on border smuggling and stop the flow of illegal guns to criminals and gangs in Canada.

If the House is serious about returning safe streets to Canadians, we will vote on Bill C-21 based on evidence, not ideology, and we will lay responsibility of gun crime and lost souls at the feet of those responsible: criminals who use illegal guns.

● (2025)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to go back to the fact that there are some very progressive measures in the legislation, including one around ghost guns. Law enforcement agencies have talked a great deal about how this is becoming an issue of a very serious nature, and they are looking for legislation. We are attempting, in the legislation, to provide that tool to law enforcement, and it is being well received.

What does the member have to say about that aspect? Could the member provide some sense of why the Conservatives continue to say that this legislation would prevent people from being able to hunt, or to give that sort of impression, when we know it is just not the case?

**Mr. Rob Morrison:** Mr. Speaker, members might recall that, about two years ago, I brought up ghost guns, before the government decided to move on that. I have family friends, and know many other people, who work in gang enforcement in British Columbia, including in Surrey. I brought up ghost guns and said

that those were what we should be targeting, not hunting rifles. That was a few years ago. Now we are targeting them, so obviously that is the right step.

The other thing we have to think about now is, if we put this legislation through and an advisory panel decides to prohibit hunting rifles, then we are right back at square one. To me, the bill has to be scrapped. The government should put that money towards something that we would get something out of, like education for children, or giving the police more for enforcement along the borders, when we know that 80% of illegal guns are coming from the United States. That money should be put into something from which we would get results.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, but I disagree with his ideology.

We see this bill as being more about the facts, about things that have happened. I think the Conservatives are spreading a lot of disinformation. I would like to point out that hunting weapons are for hunting, not for shooting sprees, so they are not included in this bill. I would like the Conservatives to actually read the bill so they can tell us more about it.

[*English*]

**Mr. Rob Morrison:** Madam Speaker, while we are talking facts, I wonder if the member can show me a fact that says that seizing legal guns from legal gun owners is going to have a benefit. That is what is in this bill, so it is not fact-based; it is ideology.

We could talk about what more we could do to protect not only hunters, guides, outfitters and those who use rifles but also sport shooters who use handguns and want to cross into the U.S. to compete internationally. That is just part of what we, as Conservatives, want to have.

● (2030)

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Madam Speaker, perhaps many members do not know this, but that particular member is a long-serving member of the RCMP, specifically from the Special I division. If anybody here is speaking from a place of authority, it actually would be this particular member who just spoke. I wonder if he could expand on his personal experiences as a police officer and give his opinion on whether Bill C-21 would be able to save the lives of officers in the future.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Rob Morrison:** Madam Speaker, what I am looking for is always results-based. What is going to actually work? What we are doing today is failing right now with the serious crime, the shootings and the deaths of members. What we are doing to battle organized crime and gangs is not working. From my experience, we need to change course. We should be focusing, first, on educational programs for our youth and, second, on enforcement against organized crime and gang activity, which means border crossings with illegal guns. We need to start putting more money into that. Spending a billion dollars on the confiscation of legal guns is absolutely not based on any kind of evidence.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am glad to be joining this debate at this late hour. I have been sitting through many hours of debate on this particular subject of Bill C-21.

I will begin by thanking constituents again for returning me to Parliament. It has been a few years now since the election, but I am thankful every single day that I can represent them in this House. Part of my thanks for them will be that I am going to read into the record later many of the emails I have received with respect to Bill C-21 from hunters and sport shooters who are upset that the government is continuing on with Bill C-21.

I want to begin, though, with a quote from someone I consider an expert on firearms legislation, Dr. Teri Bryant, Alberta's chief firearms officer:

Even after the withdrawal of G-4 and G-46, Bill C-21 continues to undermine confidence in our firearms control system while contributing nothing to reducing the violent misuse of firearms. Bill C-21 is built on a fundamentally flawed premise. Prohibiting specific types of firearms is not an effective way of improving public safety. It will waste billions of taxpayer dollars that could have been used on more effective approaches, such as the enforcement of firearms prohibition orders, reinforcing the border or combatting the drug trade and gang activity.

That is just common-sense Alberta right there from a well-known Albertan, for many of us.

The original definition of a firearm, or what I will call the old definition used by the government, was: "...a rifle or shotgun, that is capable of discharging centre-fire ammunition in a semi-automatic manner and that is designed to accept a detachable cartridge magazine with a capacity greater than five cartridges of the type for which the firearm was originally designed,...".

That original definition alone was in proposed clause G-4, and I have rarely seen so many emails received in my constituency office, that were written by people who were upset that they were being targeted after having done nothing. They were simply sport shooters and hunters who, through no fault of their own, were being targeted by the Minister of Public Safety. Now the Liberals have changed the definition to something new.

It says now, "It would include a firearm that is not a handgun...", and I draw attention to "not a handgun". It continues, "...in a semi-automatic manner and that was originally designed with a detachable magazine with a capacity of six cartridges or more."

I will note also that in the French version of the legislation they have dropped the reference to *fusil de chasse*, and now are using a very odd wording that looks like bad French maybe, but *fusil de chasse* for most francophones anywhere would mean hunting rifle,

which is what the Prime Minister said was the intent of Bill C-21. It was exactly to go after hunters. He himself said, outside of the House, that some hunters would have to lose their hunting rifles. That was the purpose of Bill C-21.

I go on now to some of the comments made by my colleague, the member for Kildonan—St. Paul, again drawing attention of people to comments made by the public safety minister. I have more to expand on that, too. He called into question the fact that in the future, they will have to do something about "permanent alteration of magazines". Now, permanent alteration to magazines of any sort would go a step further than what is being done now and would impact many firearms.

I want to draw attention of the House to the fact that changing magazines would also require changes to a firearm like the Lee-Enfield, a very popular British firearm until about the 1950s. It was used broadly in World War I. It is a firearm widely used in Canada by many indigenous hunters. Many hunters in my riding have these firearms that were passed down through generations. Requiring them to alter that magazine would basically destroy the firearm. That is something the public safety minister is musing publicly. When I see other members of different parties say to trust them and it is written in the legislation, why would we trust them? Why should any hunter or any sport shooter trust them? There are 2.3 million firearms owners in Canada. Why should any of them trust what the Liberals have said so far?

I will draw attention to one more fact that kind of disturbs me. It is that the public safety minister, when Bill C-21 first came in, said there was a public safety crisis across Canada. He said that there were these "assault-style rifles" and then said it was a public emergency that Bill C-21 needed to be passed right away. Now in this legislation, months and months later after so much public blowback, the Liberals are grandfathering all previous firearms. Therefore, now it is okay to have these so-called by his own words assault-style rifles and now they are grandfathered in. They are not affected; only future firearms are affected. It is actually a point that has been made by several members of the Bloc and by the New Democrats as well that it is only future firearms that have not been manufactured yet, and hunters should be satisfied with that.

*Government Orders*

• (2035)

One, two or three generations from now, these firearms will get older, break down, be lost or damaged through use or misuse or simply be sold off due to families not wanting to keep them anymore because there is so much licensing involved. The Liberals are talking about the future. There will be a dwindling number of hunters, and the intention of the government is to dwindle them down. The public safety minister claimed there was this crisis going on, that we must seize these firearms from lawful firearms owners, that they should be taken away from hunters, and now, suddenly, we do not have this crisis. Now it is suddenly okay. Now they are grandfathered. I find that interesting. Constituents pointed it out to me.

More seriously, though, a member is a former member of the RCMP, in I Division. We used to joke in our caucus that decades ago, if we heard a cough at the end of our analog phone line, it was probably I Division listening in. The member was an RCMP officer. I was looking at the statistics for how many peace officers and police officers have been killed. In the past 20 years, 40 police officers and peace officers have been killed in the line of duty, 11 in the last 30 months and eight in the last nine months.

The reason we are going down this dark path is government legislation that has been passed since 2015. Bill C-21 is trying to make up for the errors the Liberals have made in criminal justice legislation, from Bill C-75 that hybridized a bunch of offences to Bill C-5. In Bill C-5, they changed things like extortion with a firearm, weapons trafficking, importing or exporting, knowing the firearm is unauthorized, discharging a firearm with intent, including things like drive-by shootings, possession of a firearm, knowing its possession is unauthorized or illegally possessing a firearm. None of those have mandatory prison time any longer. The offenders serve their time at home if the judge determines that is appropriate.

I have a Yiddish proverb, before I read some thoughts from my constituents, who are my bosses. The proverb is, "The truth comes out like oil on water." It percolates right to the top. I have been listening to the speeches and interventions by different members so far in this House. Again, we were told by the public safety minister that there was an urgent public safety crisis on our streets with these Black Stock firearms that should be taken off our streets, and now, suddenly, they are all grandfathered in. That has now become a talking point with some members. Something has changed. What has changed is low polling numbers and bad emails from upset constituents.

I will read some emails from my constituents, but I will only use their first names because I do not want the government to go after them. Ryan said, "Today, the federal Liberal government and their disgusting coalition with the federal NDP, as well as the Bloc, shut down the possibility of any further debate around their proposed amendments to C-21. The plan moving forward will be to appoint a meaningless panel that will essentially prohibit any firearm that they see fit." A wise man is this Ryan. He knows exactly where this is going with this so-called firearms advisory committee. He went on to say, "All whilst completely disregarding the long heritage and tradition of firearms in Canada. This is a vicious slap in the face to the millions of responsible PAL and RPAL holders in Canada."

I should probably disclose to Ryan and other constituents that I do not have a PAL or an RPAL, but I do appreciate the fact that they have a right to hunt and sharp shoot.

Christina and Maury said, "Considering the unethical and unconstitutional implementation of Bill C-21 originally, I would suggest that the bill be scrapped in its entirety." Terence said, "Stop motion on Bill C-21." Matthew said, "I'm not asking to kill the bill but vote against the Liberals' motion to ram the bill through the House without proper representation and debate."

Craig said, "What the Liberals are doing is not democratic or constitutional. As a law-abiding firearms owner I feel insulted this bill is before us in the first place. We are not the issue, the criminals are the issue and yet it feels like they are getting a free pass." Darren said, "This federal government is circumventing democratic and parliamentary due process and it must be stopped." Another Matthew said, "I want it also to be known that I strongly oppose bills C-11, C-15 and C-21."

When the general public knows the numbers of the bills, we know that there is a problem. We know that the oil has floated up to the top of the water, and the common-sense Canadian is seeing that Bill C-21 makes no sense.

An email from Brian said, "Like the many law-abiding hunters, farmers, sport shooters and indigenous peoples in this country I feel betrayed [by the Liberal government]." Pat said, "It will cost taxpayers upwards of a billion dollars, money that would be better spent on increased monitoring of our borders to prevent gun trafficking." Lee-Ann said, "Those of us who own guns have gone through training and vetting to be able to legally purchase and own these guns. We are responsible members of society who are being unfairly penalized because of leftist ideology, and it needs to be stopped."

• (2040)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, what is very clear from the member is that the Conservative Party is responding more to the gun lobbyists. He cites constituents and says he will give their first names, but not the last names because he does not want the government to attack them in any fashion. There is this whole fear factor that the Conservative Party continues to spread with misinformation, as if hunters, indigenous people and other law-abiding gun owners are going to be attacked by this legislation, when it is just not true.

*Government Orders*

Why do the Conservatives continue to spread misinformation when they know many of the things they are saying are just not true?

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Madam Speaker, to respond to that ridiculous question, the only lobbyists I care about are my constituents who are lobbying me to vote against Bill C-21. So let us continue. George wrote, “I am tired of being lied to about licensed gun owners being the cause of firearm-related violence.... I am losing my firearms based on this new law and its amendments. I will never vote for them or their party if they don't withdraw C-21 in its entirety.”

Ryan wrote, “I am writing you this email to let you know how against this bill me and family are. I am a 45-year-old man who has been raised on wild meat all my life. I started hunting with my family when I was a child. Every year we go out and get meat for our families and we do so with our firearms. I have done this for over 30 years. I am a law-abiding citizen, a small business owner, a father and a provider. Now, am I going to become a criminal because of this bill?”

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Madam Speaker, in his speech, my colleague talked about those two little words, “hunting gun”, which were in the government's first definition of prohibited weapons. He saw that and raised a hue and cry, accusing the big bad Liberal government of wanting to prohibit hunting guns.

When we saw that, we took action. We went to see the government. We asked it to go back to the drawing board and take those words out of the definition because they caused confusion. We asked the government to remove the list it was trying to put in the Criminal Code that would have prohibited weapons that are reasonably used for hunting. That was the Bloc Québécois's approach, and it succeeded. We now have a new definition that does not include hunting guns.

Instead of hitting the panic button and scaring hunters, instead of spreading disinformation about the bill, the Conservative Party could have worked with the Bloc Québécois to improve this bill.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Madam Speaker, alas, I do not have any constituents who wrote to me in French so that I could read what they think of this bill. I do want to remind him that the member for Rivière-du-Nord said, when Bill C-21 came out, that they could not have done better. It is therefore completely ridiculous to hear some members now brag about having worked hard when they agreed with the Liberals' bill.

• (2045)

[*English*]

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, to my hon. friend for Calgary Shepard, I do enjoy the use of Yiddish proverbs. One comes to mind from Tim Robbins from his novel, *Still Life With Woodpecker*: “Life is like a stew, you have to stir it frequently, or all the scum rises to the top.” Here in this place we have to stir and stir and do what we should do for Canadians, which is to give them the best possible service as MPs.

I ask the member, in that context, if he does not find it troubling that the very bills that have been, with due respect, hyped up in terms of rhetoric by the Conservatives in the House are the ones that come back to him. Does he think that perhaps it would behoove my friends in the Conservative Party to try to be more balanced in what is wrong with the bill, what is good with the bill and how we work together to give Canadians the best possible meal and keep the scum from rising to the top?

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Madam Speaker, I am a little worried in the way the member just described my constituents who are emailing me on this issue. They deserve to be heard, not to be name-called. They are concerned not because of what we are saying on this side of the House; they are concerned because the contents of the legislation are bad news for them.

I do not need to go around in my constituency raising up fears. They are fearful on their own. I have had many meetings on Bill C-21 and firearms legislation in the past six to eight months from constituents who do not reach out to me on a regular basis. I invite the member to come out to my riding, an urban Calgary riding, where this is the second most important issue. They deserve to be read into the record.

**Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC):** Madam Speaker, this is an interesting evening and an interesting debate, but we need a little history when we are talking about guns.

The Chinese invented gunpowder, and by the 10th century they figured out how to put it in bamboo and invented guns. By the 13th century, we had the old metal barrels attached to them. By the 17th century, we figured out how to do muzzle loaders. By the 20th century, there was the Lee-Enfield gun and the Ross rifle. In the First World War, Canadians were quickly dumping the Ross rifle, a beautifully made Canadian gun that had no place in the trenches of World War I, so they could find a Lee-Enfield. By the way, we still use that rifle in an indigenous context, and the rangers in the north are still using the Lee-Enfield rifle. The Canadian Ross rifle is long gone. Today, the most popular hunting rifle in Canada is the .30-06 Springfield gun.

I have shot a .30-06. I am not an avid hunter, but I have shot most guns. When I grew up, as kids we started with air rifles and then moved up to BB guns. Yes, we had those, and our mothers always warned us that we were going shoot each other's eyes out eventually with those things. We were pretty good at taking them apart, putting them back together, finding other parts and making them work. However, we did progress to the bigger guns as we got older.

To the point we are talking about, the Prime Minister has said, “there are some guns, yes, that we're going to have to take away from people who were using them to hunt”. That is concerning, in a sense. Some people say we are out there spreading falsehoods and not talking about the truth, but when the Prime Minister says that, people get a little concerned.

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There is a list of places in my riding. There is the Bassano Gun Club, the Brooks & District Fish & Game Association, the Brooks Pistol & Smallbore Rifle Club, the Mossleigh Gun Club, the Taber Pistol & Revolver Club, the Taber Shooting Foundation, the Vauxhall Fish & Game—Rod & Gun Club, the Hussar Fish and Game Club, the Milo gun range and the Vulcan and District Gun Club. These are shooting groups within my riding.

There is a report out there about violent crime. It said that of all instances of violent crime in Canada, a rifle or shotgun was present in 0.4% of cases. There is a lot of violent crime, a 32% increase, but very little has a rifle or shotgun.

It has been said many times in the House today that the Liberals introduced legislation by order in council. They have put about 1,500 types of guns in there. That did not go so well, so finally they introduced legislation, Bill C-21, about a year later. Then it headed to committee stage, and at the end of the committee stage, the Liberals dropped in a bunch of amendments, 500 pages' worth of them. We pushed back, and they withdrew those. Then they finally introduced more legislation.

We can tell that legislation is really flawed when the government brings in a zillion amendments to its own legislation. It is nuts. We can tell how flawed it is through the process that has been going on for three years. It is not well-designed legislation and will not work in the end.

Last, the Liberals put in an advisory committee. What is the advisory committee for? It would get to define more stuff afterwards. What? It is not in the legislation, other than that it is there. More consultants are going to be hired to figure out how to do an advisory committee.

The root cause of this, in my mind, is legislation that has been passed, Bill C-75, on bail reform. The police, whom I have met with a lot over the years, for rural crime in particular, work really hard to solve crimes and find criminals. However, after the police get the criminals charged and go to all that work, those guys are out in the parking lot in their vehicles before the police can get out of the courthouse. They are out there stealing another car before the police can get out of there.

● (2050)

The bail reform bill the minister announced today does not go anywhere near covering the problems we have with Bill C-75. Violent crime is up 32%.

I want to talk a bit more about the organizations in my riding. One of them is the Brooks Pistol & Smallbore Rifle Club. It had an economic study done. It found that for events in 2021, \$337,000 came in from non-residents to this one gun club in my riding. The economic output for that year for one gun club was \$1,088,000. That is one club out of the many I listed. Some 46% of people spent more than \$500 a person in my community on accommodations and food. This is what those organizations do and this is what the government wants to get rid of.

Sport shooting furthers youth in firearms training, local hunter education, and safety in firearms and handling courses. There is a place where the local police and conservation officers come for

their training and recertification, but this legislation would get rid of it. Sport shooting is a huge part of our communities. I listed the different places in my riding where people learn how to properly use sport shooting equipment. What this piece of legislation is going to do is eliminate them.

How about Canada-wide, as that is one constituency? Regarding the impact on sport shooters in Canada, according to a survey conducted in 2018, Canadians spent an estimated \$8.5 billion on hunting and sport shooting, with Albertans accounting for more than \$1 billion of that number. A survey also found that the recreational firearms industry accounted for 48,000 jobs. Small businesses that have an inventory of things to support sport shooting are now going to lose part of their businesses. Part of their businesses, the government says, is going to be illegal. Sport shooting is done.

Sure, we will grandfather the people who have them. However, what we will have is a bunch of old people like me left in the gun clubs because that is who will be left with the guns. New youth will not be trained, will not know how to use them and will not be involved in competitions. This hurts small businesses in this country.

I want to go back to my quote one more time. The Prime Minister said, “there are some guns, yes, that we’re going to have to take away from people who were using them to hunt”. The problem we have here is that people do not understand sport shooting. In a rural area like mine, guns are tools that families grow up with. They are tools in the ranching business and in the farming business. They are useful tools and needed tools.

This piece of legislation is flawed. It has been three years making its journey to where it is now, and it will not work in the end. It is not going to deal with illegal handguns. The problem we have is gang violence and criminal activity, and this will continue on. This legislation will not stop it. In fact, handguns will become more valuable on the black market, and the criminal element is going to make money off that. This is a flawed piece of legislation and it will not solve crime.

● (2055)

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, my colleague mentioned bail reform and the need for violent, serious offenders to face stricter scrutiny when released on bail. Today, our government tabled Bill C-48. Many different stakeholders, including the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, have come forward and are very happy with the proposal put forward. In fact, the president of the Canadian Police Association said this is “common-sense legislation”.

I am wondering if we can count on the member opposite to fast-track this legislation and make sure we have unanimous to pass it in the House so it can go to committee and then off to the Senate?

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague across the way. We have worked on a few things in the past on a few committees, and I appreciate working with him.

When someone has a young child or a baby, one of the most exciting times is when they are months old or a year old and take their first step. We get excited. We take pictures. We phone their grandparents and say, "My baby took their first step." That first step is so small in the life of a child given what they can do. It is all they have done. It is so small. It is not going to touch what they can do when they can run. That is what we will do as we cover the legislation on bail reform, because we can run to do it.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Madam Speaker, at the beginning of his speech, my colleague talked about hunting rifles. I have two questions for him.

Here is the real question. According to him, is the current bill about hunting rifles, yes or no? We know that hunting rifles are not affected by this bill.

The second question is the following. When the member alluded to that, he claimed that the Prime Minister said that this bill affected hunting rifles and therefore that appeared to be true. Is the member telling us that the Prime Minister always tells the truth?

[*English*]

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Madam Speaker, it is getting late in the day and the humour is getting really good. It is hilarious. I thank him for that second one.

Going back to the first one about rifles, has anyone been to Cuba? It has great cars but only up to about 1958 because it cannot get any newer cars. That is what this legislation does. It says someone cannot buy a new gun after a certain date, so we are going to be left with relics, guns that do not work and guns that are broken. One way to get rid of hunting rifles is by saying people cannot buy a new one.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, a lot of criticism of this bill has come from the very groups that have organized for years to ban the guns that they believe, with their evidence, are used to kill people. Groups have formed in Quebec, for instance, that recall the massacre at École Polytechnique, and they are angry with the Liberals for weakening this bill.

In this debate tonight, and on Bill C-21 in general, there are certainly flaws with how the Liberals have delivered this legislation. I will not disagree with that. However, it is becoming a dialogue and debate that is deeper in rhetoric than in fact. I think it is important to note that advocates for gun control are very disappointed with the government.

I wonder what my colleague makes of that in light of his criticisms.

• (2100)

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Madam Speaker, I would totally agree with the member. I am totally disappointed with the government as well. We would totally agree on that. I think the government has flawed

legislation; it really does. I think it is going to eliminate sport shooting. There is fact in that.

I had a student who went through school and became a world-class fencer. She started when she was in elementary school with a local high school coach. She was in the Olympics four times. She used a sword. That is a weapon. She could learn that when she was in elementary school. We have eliminated the possibility for youth in our country to do sport shooting at the Olympic level. That is a fact, not rhetoric.

**Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Madam Speaker, today I rise to talk about how the Liberal Party has turned its back on law-abiding firearms owners, while it has given gangs and criminals the green light to continue terrorizing our streets with little worry of any consequences.

Bill C-21 is nothing more than the government's overreach, an attempt by the Liberals to push forward their flawed ideology on firearms ownership. Nobody believes that going after hunters, farmers and sport shooters or legitimate hunting rifles would reduce violent crime in this country. Hunting and farming have been part of the fabric of this country since it was formed. Canadians, especially rural Canadians, enjoy their way of life peacefully and lawfully.

I am an RPAL holder. As a farmer, I understand too well the challenges that are faced by rural Canadians. I have been on the land at night, by myself, and I am vulnerable to any wildlife that may be prowling around in the dark. Being stalked by an animal is real. It is necessary to have a firearm for protection. It is one of the tools that farmers use.

Last November, the Liberals' eleventh-hour amendments to Bill C-21 showed how out of touch they are. Hunters, firearms owners and indigenous Canadians all said in unison that Bill C-21 is an overreach. That sent the Minister of Public Safety into hiding.

Here we are, six months later, with an updated bill. There is no update; it is the same bill with different packaging. Hunting rifles are safe today, but the new Liberal firearms advisory panel could decide that hunting rifles should be banned. Instead of allowing for debate, the Liberal-NDP coalition voted to limit time on this debate and to push this bill through. Sport shooters, hunters and indigenous Canadians are very concerned about the passing of this bill.

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How do criminals feel about the bill? In early February, the Liberals voted against, and defeated, Bill C-283, a Conservative private member's bill, which would have imposed tougher sentences for criminals caught smuggling or found in possession of illegal guns.

On February 18, 2021, the government introduced Bill C-22, which would actually reduce the sentence for illegal gun smugglers and remove mandatory minimum sentences for a list of serious offences. These crimes are exactly what the government claims it wants to stop, yet it continues to vote down legislation that would do just that.

Does this sound like a government that is serious about tackling gun crime? Instead of getting tough on gun crime and gun smuggling, the Prime Minister let Canadians know that he is in fact targeting hunters, collectors and sport shooters and their firearms. In a recent CTV interview, he said, "Our focus now is on saying okay, there are some guns, yes, that we're going to have to take away from people who were using them to hunt".

Hunters, indigenous Canadians, sport shooters and academics see through this Trojan horse bill. I could easily quote from dozens of stakeholders on how useless this bill would be in tackling gun crime, but I will quote one that encompasses my view and the sentiment of my party. Mark Ryckman from the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters said the following:

Firearms are not the disease, particularly in a nation like Canada with robust gun laws. Gun violence is often symptomatic of much bigger societal issues. Taking firearms away from law-abiding Canadians will not reduce the upstream issues that fuel criminal activity and demand for illicit firearms. Therefore, model-based firearm prohibitions will continue to fail as they won't be able to have a detectable impact on reducing gun violence or enhancing public safety.

Both Canadians and Conservatives see this bill as ineffective. It should not pass, but if it does, Conservatives will repeal this bill once we form government.

It is interesting to note how the NDP is willing to sacrifice rural communities for this flawed bill. The rural NDP MPs all know Grandpa Joe and once spoke on his behalf. The Liberals have succeeded in muzzling the NDP on ideological grounds. The law-abiding hunters, indigenous Canadians and sport shooters in NDP ridings should remember how their voices were silenced by their NDP representatives.

Conservatives would not confiscate their firearms. We know they are not the problem. We will be voting against Bill C-21. We see through the Liberal plan to distract and divide, and we are glad that they do too.

Let us talk about those illegally obtained guns and start with the obvious. Criminals do not buy their guns at a store, and they do not register them. The public safety minister's own statistics prove that 70% of guns used in crime in Canada over the last 10 years were illegally smuggled across the border.

That is why Conservatives believe that the government should invest in police anti-gang and gun units. The Canada Border Services Agency should provide law enforcement with the resources it needs to stop illegal smuggling operations. The minister says that there is more money going to border security, but we see little difference being made. Illegal guns are still coming in.

• (2105)

Frontline officers, investigators and those doing the gritty work of securing our borders and streets are fighting an uphill battle. Surely, funding would be used to employ more staff in that department.

In 2015, when the Liberals took power, we had just under 8,400 frontline workers. In eight years, under the current government, only 25 more have been added. What has grown? The number of middle managers has grown. In 2015, there were 2,000 managerial staff. Today, there are 4,000. One should not misinterpret my words as a critique of middle management; I really appreciate all the work our public servants do for our country and to keep us safe, but when dealing with border security, our frontline staff should be the main priority.

Bill C-21 includes two changes to the Criminal Code that directly impact airsoft. In my riding of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, there are a lot of people who are involved in airsoft. The first change is to the definition of "replica" in subsection 84(1) of the Criminal Code, which encompasses more than 95% of airsoft blasters. The ambiguity of the bill could increase it to all airsoft. Many pellet guns, realistic paintball markers and even toy guns are being banned.

The economic impact of treating airsoft like firearms is a big one. The airsoft industry contributes \$220 million to the Canadian economy. In large portion, these businesses are owned by immigrants and visible minorities. Many airsoft- and paintball-loving constituents in Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, along with 60,000 other Canadians, risk losing their beloved hobby. The lack of common sense that the Liberals are showing is insane. How can they make a connection between gun crime, airsoft and pellet guns? If this bill does not scream overreach, then I do not know what does.

When asked why the government is not getting tougher on criminals, the Liberals' default is to say that they implemented a prohibition on "military-style" assault rifles. We know that they mean hunting rifles. First, the term "military-style" assault rifle is of course invented, with no legal definition, but it does sound scary. The reality is that fully automatic weapons have been banned in Canada for years. Therefore, when people talk about AK-47s, they have been banned since the 1970s in Canada. As I have said from the start, these and other weapons like them were never registered. Nobody can own one. They are illegally obtained and will continue to be unless the current government strengthens the sieve that is our border.

There are 230,000 Canadians who have signed a petition saying they do not agree with the government's legislation, and I join them in their opposition. In the last federal election, Conservatives were clear that we would get tough on gangs by giving law enforcement the tools it needs to keep Canadians and our streets safe, cracking down on illegal gun smuggling, and repealing Bill C-71 once and for all.

A Conservative government would also restore mandatory prison times for criminals who use a firearm in the commission of a crime and significantly increase funding and coordination for border security to crack down on illegal firearms smuggling. We would review existing firearms legislation to ensure it focuses strictly on dealing with criminals rather than making life more difficult for law-abiding firearms owners, and we would restore mandatory minimum sentences to keep violent gang members off the street and focus on gangs and criminals by ending automatic bail, revoking parole for gang members, and having new and tougher sentences for the ordering of or involvement in a gang crime.

Bill C-21 does not address the major cause of gun crime in Canada. All MPs really owe it to the victims of violent crime in Canada, past, present and future, to get serious about gun smuggling, gangs and criminals.

A closure motion and one day of debate is all we were afforded to speak to Bill C-21. Canadians have been clear that this bill does not address gun crime, yet the Liberals continue to keep their heads in the sand. My constituents are common-sense people, like many others in this country. Bill C-21 is another proof that the Liberals have lost the plot and are more interested in pushing their own ideology than listening to law-abiding Canadians.

I cannot support this bill.

• (2110)

**Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I have to give the hon. member and her colleagues credit; it is getting late in the evening, but the hysteria and hyperbole continue to mount.

I am looking at a site here that shows 532 different rifles for sale legally in Canada; they are non-restricted. Where do the Conservatives come up with this idea that hunters will not have access to rifles? There are hundreds, probably thousands of models available out there, so why are they pitching this story?

**Ms. Lianne Rood:** Madam Speaker, the reality is that we live in a vast country. We live in a country that has predominantly agricul-

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ture in our rural areas. We have pastimes in this country. Since the inception of this country, we have used hunting rifles, and the Liberals are coming and targeting law-abiding farmers, hunters, indigenous Canadians and sport shooters. They are targeting things that are pastimes in Canada, which we have done safely for years in this country.

Quite frankly, the bill would do nothing for crime. It would not do anything to protect people on the streets or to remove gangs and criminals from our streets who are smuggling those guns illegally over our border.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I talked about that earlier when I was asking questions and sharing my thoughts on Bill C-21. This ongoing disinformation campaign is shocking.

I heard the member say that hunters would be affected. Again, that is an improvement the Bloc Québécois brought about thanks to my colleague from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, who got the notion of hunters removed from the definition. It is no longer there. I also heard the member talk about airsoft guns. That is another improvement to the Bloc Québécois's credit. Let me reiterate the Bloc Québécois's position. We succeeded in getting the clause prohibiting airsoft guns deleted. Airsoft association members will be happy.

In both cases, what she said was completely false. Those things are not in Bill C-21.

[*English*]

**Ms. Lianne Rood:** Madam Speaker, I have heard from many constituents in my riding, including many who are in the airsoft industry and many who are hunters and farmers. In fact, James from Chatham said that the bill is "Nothing more than misguided nonsense from the...government. Expensive and stupid."

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Maybe a little bit softer.

**Ms. Lianne Rood:** Madam Speaker, sure, I have another note from Don from Dover Centre, who said, "Legally owned firearms is not the problem in this country. It is the ghost guns and the illegal guns brought into Canada."

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I have another from Eric, who said, “This bill is nothing more than an attack on legal firearms owners in Canada. It does nothing to make Canadians safer. I am a legal firearms owner who enjoys hunting and sport shooting. I have shared my passion for these activities with my son. He now enjoys them as much as I do. On November 22, the Liberal government made an amendment to Bill 21 and added numerous hunting and sport shooting firearms to the list of now prohibited firearms. Property which was legally obtained and classed as a ‘non restricted firearm’ and is now ‘prohibited’ and has to be surrendered or confiscated?”

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, that is exactly the point. The issue of ghost guns is the primary focus of Bill C-21. The member, like so many Conservatives who have spoken tonight, obviously has not read the bill. This is a major problem when we have members of Parliament who are speaking but have not actually read the legislation that they are speaking on.

Ghost guns are targeted. This is what law enforcement has called for. Conservatives basically blocked that up in weeks of filibuster instead of putting the tools in the hands of law enforcement to crack down on those criminal gangs who use these untraceable ghost guns.

I have two simple questions, and I would love one Conservative to answer them. First, could you name one firearm that is impacted by Bill C-21 since the NDP forced the withdrawal of those amendments? Inconceivably, the Conservatives are moving tonight, at report stage, to eliminate the exemption on handguns that applies to sport shooters, including Olympic sport shooters. Therefore, second, why are the Conservatives moving to eliminate that clause?

● (2115)

**Ms. Lianne Rood:** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, although I do not need the mansplaining. I think I understand the bill very well, and so do my constituents. Five hundred of them have written to me on my recent mailer.

Here is one from Laura. She said, “As a retired police officer, I strongly object to taking guns from legal gun owners. They are not the problem.” Here is one from Fred, who said, “It is not the hunters and farmers that are killing people, and when they catch the crook they should put them away and not send them back on the street.”

I have talked to numerous police officers and military personnel who have collections and use firearms on their off time to practise and get better at what they need to do in their jobs. This is also hurting our law enforcement officers—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Kildonan—St. Paul is rising on a point of order.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Madam Speaker, the hon. member just misled the House. I would ask him to correct the record. He is well aware that a clerical error was made on the Conservative side. We need his unanimous consent to withdraw that clerical error. He has refused.

I would ask him to stop spreading—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I will remind the hon. member that requests for unanimous consent are not possible at this time.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ):** Madam Speaker, Bill C-21, which has come back to the House from the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security with a number of amendments, is a bit better than its original version, but it is still far from perfect. Some people are still dissatisfied with its current form, and it does not meet the expectations of certain groups. I would even say that Bill C-21, in its current form, is very disappointing to many people.

Let me be clear. When the bill was introduced in May 2022, it was nowhere near ready.

Let us be frank. The government only introduced it because it was riding the wave of support for gun control in the wake of the shooting in Uvalde, Texas. The proof is that the government had to introduce a package of amendments to its own bill in the fall of 2022. More than 400 pages of amendments were tabled in the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security after the study was already completed. These amendments caused discontent and concern among some groups, including hunters and members of indigenous communities.

Let us not forget that these amendments were presented without any explanation, without any briefings and without a press conference. Even the Liberal members of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security seemed unable to explain these amendments.

It is important to remember the facts. These amendments included new measures to take action on ghost guns as well as a definition of prohibited assault-style firearms and a list of prohibited firearms that was over 300 pages long. The Bloc Québécois was opposed to including the list in the Criminal Code because it made it unnecessarily burdensome. The Criminal Code does not reflect in real time the models of firearms and their classification since it needs to be amended. An additional 482 models of weapons would have been prohibited by this list. However, the government could very well have done this through an order in council, as it has done in the past. The result is that the pro-gun groups were easily able to strike fear into the hearts of hunters, who looked at the list and saw their own weapons there. However, the list included both legal and prohibited weapons, depending on the calibre.

It is important to remember that the government did not consult with major hunting associations. Hunters had major concerns following the government's botched announcement of amendments in the fall of 2022. Thanks to the work and interventions of the Bloc Québécois, the confusing list was withdrawn, as was the reference to “hunting rifle” in the definition of assault weapons.

Hunting is a passion for many people in my riding. It is a major economic driver for towns like Senneterre and Chibougamau and northern Quebec. I could go on and on, because my riding covers 800,000 square kilometres.

As a result of our efforts, the Fédération québécoise des chasseurs et pêcheurs said that it was satisfied. The Bloc Québécois put pressure on the government to remove that ill-advised mention of hunting rifles from the definition and leave them out of the picture altogether.

I thank my colleague from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia for her excellent work in committee.

In short, by doing such a bad job of presenting its amendments, the government predictably raised the ire of hunters. Members had to wait several days for a technical briefing to explain the content of the amendments. Since the amendments were tabled at the clause-by-clause stage, the committee had heard from witnesses on things that had nothing to do with assault weapons. The study was complete when the government completely changed the scope of the bill. That was when the Bloc Québécois proposed to reopen the study so that experts could come testify about assault-style weapons.

In the end, as a result of the outcry from the public, indigenous peoples and Liberal and NDP members, the government withdrew its own amendments in early 2023 and went back to the drawing board.

In commenting on Bill C-21, professor and political scientist Geneviève Tellier said, “Not everyone agrees with this new version of the legislation. Ultimately, it further polarizes the debate between those who are in favour of the right to have firearms and those who say we must limit them because they cause unfortunate victims.”

Professor Tellier said that the government cannot reconcile these two groups' wishes. What is more, she believes that the victims, including the victims of the Polytechnique massacre and the Quebec City shooting, were expecting their concerns to be considered.

She stated, and I quote:

Let us not forget that this was also a Liberal election promise. It is a bit of broken promise from the [Prime Minister], in the sense that it does not go as far as he promised during the election. These people expected the government to send a strong message of zero tolerance. Instead, the government seems to be saying that it did what it could, but it cannot do everything it promised. That is why these amendments are leaving many people unsatisfied—

• (2120)

The same political scientist also said the Liberals' approach was dictated by vote pandering.

It is important to remember that throughout the process, the government refused very reasonable proposals from the Bloc Québécois, proposals that would have produced a better bill. Throughout the process, the government did a poor job and created a tempest of its own making. However, we must admit that, thanks to the Bloc Québécois's work, the bill, which was initially criticized by hunters, gun control groups and airsoft aficionados, was improved and is now satisfactory for most of these groups.

The dangerous slippery slope of Bill C-21 on gun control is simply the result of poor planning and sloppy consultation by the Liberals.

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Amendments were reintroduced on May 2, 2023. The government scrapped the list that was causing so much confusion and anger. It also removed the reference to “hunting rifle” from the definition, which was causing a lot of fear among hunters even though, technically, the term was appropriate.

These new government amendments have reassured hunters, but they have also angered gun control groups like PolyRemembers and the Quebec City mosque survivors.

The government's new definition for assault weapons is prospective, meaning that it covers only future firearms. The 482 models of firearms that had been designated by the government as assault weapons in its never-ending list are therefore not banned. The government prefers to defer to an advisory committee, which it will establish.

However, many of these firearms have similar characteristics to the AR-15 and are not at all used for hunting. It would have been utterly ridiculous for the government to keep these firearms legal when it banned more than 2,000 by regulation on May 1, 2020.

The Bloc Québécois has called on the government to immediately ban the 470 models that are not used for hunting and to ask the advisory committee about the 12 models that are potentially used for hunting, such as the popular SKS, which has often been used in killings.

During the last election campaign, PolyRemembers backed the Liberal Party as the only party that could improve gun control. The group welcomed Bill C-21 as an important step forward. The group also welcomed the automatic revocation for domestic abuse, including emotional abuse.

The survivors of the Quebec City mosque shooting also welcomed this bill. Let us recall that the shooter burst into the mosque with an assault weapon that jammed and committed a massacre with a handgun. Later, they learned that the Liberals had promised that they would amend the bill to add a definition prohibiting assault weapons. The Liberals finally backed down by adopting a less robust and prospective definition and not immediately prohibiting the 482 models identified as being assault weapons.

On the other hand, the Bloc Québécois's proposal to immediately prohibit by decree the 470 or so models that are not reasonably used by hunters would address the concerns of these groups. As I said earlier, we are asking the government to have the advisory committee that it wants to re-establish look at the dozen assault weapons that are potentially used for hunting.

We should also note that the bill freezes the acquisition of legal handguns, but we will have to wait many years before all these guns are gone through attrition. Unfortunately, the number of illegal guns will continue to grow.

In closing, I want to say that, even though Bill C-21 is not perfect, the Bloc Québécois will be voting in favour of it. It is just unfortunate that the government ignored some good suggestions from the Bloc Québécois and broke its election promises. Let us remember the tragic events that have occurred, the lives that have been lost and the families who have lost loved ones because of assault weapons and illegal firearms.

*Government Orders*

• (2125)

[English]

**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 her thoughts in regard to the spreading of misinformation. I will refer to the most recent Conservative speaker, who indicated, for example, that there is an airsoft ban. Well, there is no airsoft ban. That has been changed, and the Conservatives know that, yet they still talk about an airsoft ban. The member also made reference to ghost guns not being dealt with, citing a specific letter. Again, ghost guns are being dealt with in the legislation.

What we hear consistently from the Conservative Party is misinformation. This is not an attack on the hunters, the farmers and indigenous people. I wonder if the member could provide a comment on what she believes is the damage caused by the spreading of misinformation.

[Translation]

**Ms. Sylvie Bérubé:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his questions. I agree that the Conservatives are spreading disinformation.

This was a collaborative effort. The Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security tried to make this bill into one that will at least keep people safe and prevent the use of weapons used in mass killings. It is important to have a gun control bill.

Hunting rifles are not affected at all. Once again, the Conservatives are spreading disinformation and propaganda.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I have a similar question. This evening there are Conservatives who clearly never read Bill C-21, who have no understanding of what it contains. They read the notes that have been drafted, I imagine by the office of the leader, the member for Carleton, without having the slightest understanding of what is in the bill.

The Conservatives keep saying that we need to go after the criminals but we know that ghost guns are an important part of the new version of Bill C-21. The NDP and the Bloc Québécois worked hard on this new version.

For people watching the debate this evening, how does it feel to see a political party, in other words the Conservative Party, clearly have no knowledge of what we are discussing?

• (2130)

**Ms. Sylvie Bérubé:** Madam Speaker, the Conservatives did not read Bill C-21. They are unaware of what it contains. I am certain that, even in committee, they were not listening to what the members of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security had to say about Bill C-21.

I just want to remind the Conservative Party that the important thing is that hunting rifles are not affected by the ban.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou for a very honest speech. She recognized the

work done in committee. There were amendments concerning airsoft guns, and other amendments for which we found solutions.

I now feel at ease with Bill C-21. We all understand that there were a few versions and a few drafts. The problems with the first version have now been fixed, as my colleague mentioned.

Would she have the time to lay out the facts?

**Ms. Sylvie Bérubé:** Madam Speaker, it is indeed very important to talk about what the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security did to improve this bill. As I was saying, we are getting rid of assault weapons and illegal firearms.

The bill is not perfect, but I am sure that it will be improved. It is important to pass this bill and it is important to point out that hunting rifles are not included in Bill C-21.

[English]

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise this evening at this relatively late hour to speak to this bill.

I just want to mention, before I start, that, earlier this evening, I had a chance to spend some time with Persian Gulf War veterans. We were at an event, the airing of a new film on the Canadian involvement in the Persian Gulf War. These veterans are fighting the government for the classification of wartime service, and I think it is about time that we classify them as having wartime service, and even our Afghanistan veterans, as well. It was a very powerful evening, and I am very glad to have been there in support of our veterans.

As we sit here to discuss report stage amendments on Bill C-21, let us not get lost on the history of how we got to this point. Sadly, the events in Nova Scotia and the mass killing out there really led to a political response by the government. It saw an opportunity. It issued an order in council on May 1, 2020, that effectively banned thousands and thousands of what were legal firearms in the country. It was so rushed, in fact, to propose the order in council, that they banned the cannon at Stanley Park that fires ceremoniously at nine o'clock every evening as part of this order in council ban.

As we moved forward, the government was indicating that it was going to push a gun ban in this country, effectively an attack on law-abiding firearms owners. It was about a year ago that we saw the iteration of Bill C-21 that was tabled as legislation, and immediately, the reaction across the country was one of shock at the fact that they included an additional thousands more of what were legal firearms. They proposed a handgun ban as well if we will recall.

That sent a ripple effect right across the country because they were attacking not only law-abiding firearms owners, but also hunters and indigenous people. Basically, hundreds of years of history in this country were being attacked by the Liberal government, aided and abetted by their partners in the NDP, but a funny thing happened with the NDP. When the legislation was proposed, its members were joyous about the fact that the government had proposed such a sweeping ban of firearms against law-abiding firearms owners, until they realized just what an impact this was going to have, a disproportionate impact, on rural Canadians. Then, all of a sudden, they started backing up.

They said whoa, and that this piece of legislation is going way too far, because they saw that there was a political threat in those rural and remote ridings where rural Canadians and indigenous Canadians use guns to hunt, feed themselves and participate in a long-standing cultural heritage in this country, not to mention to protect themselves in those rural and remote areas.

All of a sudden, here we were, revisiting this legislation. It is clear that the Liberal government and the public safety minister did not think of the implications of this and the impact it would have on hunters and indigenous people, and they were backtracking. They said whoa, they were not going to introduce this iteration. They were going to pull back on this and go back into consultation with Canadians to try to figure out how to get this right.

The reason why they were in this place was because they made a political calculation, because law-abiding firearms owners in this country have always been an easy target, pardon the pun, for Liberal and leftist-leaning governments. They are the target. They are not worried about going after gangs, guns and illegal smuggling. That is the hard work. The easy work is to go after the low-hanging fruit, and that is law-abiding firearms owners.

Canada has the most strict regime of registration and training of firearms owners anywhere in the world. I do not have an RPAL. I do not own a firearm. I have fired one firearm in my life, at the Barrie Gun Club, in a controlled environment, so I have no skin in the game.

● (2135)

What I believe in is the right of individuals in this country, because of our culture and our heritage, because of our laws and because of the training, to have the right to own firearms and use them responsibly. What I do not agree with are gangs, illegal smuggling and those guns that are coming in across the border, which are easily obtained by gangs in the use of criminal activity. We have seen an increase in gang-related activity, and we have seen an increase in gun-related activity, so instead of going after the low-hanging fruit, instead of going after the law-abiding firearms owners, they are not doing what they need to do as far as guns and gangs.

One only has to follow the Toronto Police Service operations twitter feed to understand the depth of the problem in Toronto, not to mention there is a problem in Vancouver and Montreal as well. It is illegal guns. It is gangs and gang-related activity that are showing the most increases in illegal gun activity in this country. It is not law-abiding firearms owners.

### *Government Orders*

I had the opportunity to go to the Moncton Fish and Game Association, as I did some stakeholder engagement on this issue, when we were at the height of it. The government at that time was rethinking its position. There was a policy proposal. Colleagues may recall in 2017 the then minister of public safety was going around the country because they were thinking about implementing additional firearms restrictions.

I had an opportunity to speak to members of the Moncton Fish and Game Association, who are salt-of-the-earth guys, responsible firearms owners and proud Canadians. They submitted a document to the then minister of public safety that should have served as a template for any discussion. It was called a discussion paper, but it should have served as a template for what the discussion was to be about. They talked about the “long history of firearms control in this country.” The document said, “1892 saw the first Criminal Code controls with a permit system for small arms; 1934 saw the requirement for all handguns to be registered with police with RCMP issuing registration certificates”.

The discussion paper that was submitted to the then minister of public safety could have and should have been used as a template. It went on:

There is no clear definition as to what Canada considers to be an “assault weapon” or “assault rifle”. The outdated US Dept of Justice definition (1994-2004) is so broad that a typical rabbit hunting rifle such as the semi-automatic Marlin 60 with a tube magazine that can hold 15 rounds of 22LR ammunition might be construed as an assault weapon as might the Ruger 10/22.

There have been some amendments, clearly, as we have dealt with this to not classify some of these weapons, but had these stakeholders been listened to, had there been a thorough discussion, I think the then minister of public safety would have really understood just the level and the depth of responsible firearms ownership in this country and how they want to be part of the solution to the gun and gang problem.

The discussion paper goes on. One part that stood out for me, section 26, stated:

Unfortunately, with every “mass shooting” and even for single victim incidents, there is an immediate reaction by the media and especially politicians to immediately blame the object for the actions that were perpetrated. It is easy for the Mayor of Toronto, Toronto Council or Montreal City Council to blame the object and call for a gun ban, but it takes political courage to identify the underlying social issues and address realistic solutions that protect people from harm by addressing the root causes of violence. The issue is not “what” was used in the incident but rather “why” the event happened, “what” was the reason, “how” was the firearm obtained and “how” could it have been prevented? It is easy to blame the gun and ignore the underlying and difficult to address societal or mental health factors.

This piece of legislation is flawed in many ways. It still continues to attack law-abiding firearms owners. There are other concerns that I will address in questions and comments.

*Government Orders*

• (2140)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member is wrong to make the assertion he is alleging that this gun registration, or attack on guns, would affect our hunters, farmers and indigenous people. It is just wrong to say that those guns are going to be taken away. The information the Conservatives are putting out there is definitely misleading, and I am being kind in my wording.

There are some benefits within the legislation. I have made reference to one, and I will continue to do so. Ghost guns are a serious issue across Canada. This is a wonderful step forward in dealing with that issue. Could the member clearly indicate what parts of the legislation he does support, if any at all.

**Mr. John Brassard:** Madam Speaker, here is what the Liberals have done. They have all of a sudden changed the narrative from hunters and indigenous Canadians to ghost guns. That is what they have been talking about today. They have also been talking about spreading misinformation and disinformation. They have absolutely no idea what they are talking about.

Here is another concern that Canadians should have. The public safety minister has indicated that there will be a firearms advisory council. There is no indication yet about the makeup, who is going to be on it and what their decisions are going to be. However, the minister did say that this firearms advisory council will have an opportunity to look at certain guns, make decisions and recommendations to the government, and then the government can issue a ban through the order in council. How is that transparent?

The Liberals are going to continue to attack law-abiding firearms owners. They are just going to back-end it or do an end-around to accommodate that.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I like the member, but I must say the information he is putting out, as we have seen with other Conservatives tonight, has been flat out wrong. The reality is, when they read through the bill, which Canadians can do, they can see the heavy emphasis on cracking down on criminals and on ghost guns that are being used by gangs and criminals.

These are untraceable weapons. We have seen in certain parts of the country an exponential rise, up to 10 times over the course of the past year, of the number of seized weapons and ghost guns over the course of the previous year. That means, on a monthly basis, a rise of 100%. Conservatives filibustered, blocking these important initiatives that combat criminals and criminal gangs. Why have the Conservatives fought so hard to avoid ghost guns and criminal repercussions for the criminal activities?

• (2145)

**Mr. John Brassard:** Madam Speaker, that is three times the member mentioned ghost guns, which goes to my point earlier about changing the narrative.

Madam Speaker, I am going to say this and you can cut me off. I have absolutely zero respect for anything that this member says. When I was House leader, he proved himself not to be honourable

and to not conduct himself with integrity, so every word he says in this place tonight I take with a grain of salt.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I do not believe it is appropriate for a member of the chamber to give such a verbal attack on another member. All members in the House are hon. members, and I do request that the member reflect on what he said, do the honourable thing and apologize.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, the Conservatives are obviously losing the debate. They are engaging in personal insults. That member, as a former House leader, knows very well that he needs to retract and apologize.

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** Madam Speaker, to the same point of order, a lot of things have happened in the House over the last couple of hours. One thing that has proven to be true is that the member did not tell the truth about the amendment 43. It was supposed to be taken back, so if he wants to be called an hon. member, he should act that way.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Some of that is a point of debate, but definitely some of it is a personal attack on the hon. member. The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil knows full well, because he was a House leader at one point, that calling somebody dishonourable is not acceptable. Therefore, I would ask him to retract his comments.

**Mr. John Brassard:** Madam Speaker, I am just stating my experience. I will retract it.

I have sat in this debate tonight frustrated, and not because of the points we are making but because of the assertion that somehow Conservatives are spreading misinformation and disinformation. I will say this again: What we are doing is reflecting the words of our constituents, and I do that tonight as the member for Barrie—Innisfil.

I will say in all honesty that 95% of the people who have reached to me are opposed to Bill C-21, the amendments that have been made and the work the government, aided and abetted by the NDP, is doing.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I was grateful that the member for Barrie—Innisfil made the claim that Canada had the toughest gun laws in the world, because I decided to look it up. I do not think he was trying to mislead the House. I think he made that assumption, but it turns out Canada is not among the top 10 countries for tough gun laws. Japan is first, followed by South Korea, the Netherlands, Ireland, the U.K. and Israel. I think it might be interesting to note that we rate way better than the United States, but not in the top 10.

**Mr. John Brassard:** Madam Speaker, I believe I said it was one of the top licensing regimes in the world, or whatever it was I said. I do not project that we have the best, but we are certainly up there when it comes to comparables in other countries. I think the record will show that.

*Government Orders*

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Before we continue, I just want to remind members of something. I know this is a topic of discussion that can be very passionate. I just want to remind members to be very respectful, not to speak when others are speaking and not to try to answer questions when it is not time for them to answer questions or make comments.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour to stand tonight and speak to the debate on Bill C-21, discussing firearms in this nation of ours, Canada. I am not simply standing here as a Conservative member of Parliament. I do not want to improperly represent anything or anybody, because the people I am representing here tonight are amazing people. They are not just people from my riding; they are people from right across this country who see this legislation as something nefarious, quite honestly.

I look at the whole process that the government, the NDP-Liberal coalition, has gone through in contortions of creating an order in council that banned certain firearms, then moving to handguns and then bringing in amendments to add in a huge plethora of other firearms to that list. Then it reneged on that and took the list away, and now it just has a definition. Whoever made that list up for the government had fun doing it, because it is clear they really did not understand the breadth of firearms on that list and how ridiculous it is that so many of them were even there.

When I am speaking here tonight, I am speaking on behalf of people across this country who truly understand firearms and know exactly what this legislation is. I get the impression that Liberals are talking about firearms owners, hunters, farmers and even indigenous people as those who do not really know what is going on here, and they are the ones who are speaking out.

As with so many issues in this House, we are standing on this side of the floor and I firmly believe we are the ones who are representing the majority of Canadians in this place, who see legislation brought forward that says one thing but suddenly there are all these additional amendments, or it is a bill brought in with nothing and everything needs to be added in after they have made their speeches about what it is.

It is very clear that what we have here is a government and its partner turning themselves into pretzels trying to figure out how to carry on with what they truly want to do. I can say very confidently that I hear over and over again that this emperor has no clothes. Canadians are seeing through what their intentions are. It is so clear because common sense does not exist in the majority of this legislation.

What we are supposedly talking about here is public safety and protecting Canadians, yet as the government is introducing this legislation and other pieces, crime in Canada has grown exponentially. There is no clear rational reason to focus on hunters, farmers and indigenous people who use firearms responsibly, safely and legally as a means of dealing with the violence we are facing, which is growing in our nation.

It is really clear that this legislation would not impact the important things in regard to violence in our country. Catch-and-release

policies of the government have been brutal, where Canadians have become victims because it has been so poorly laid out. Now all of a sudden Liberals will say they are fixing this and fixing that. My word, it never should have gotten to where it needs to be fixed to this extent eight years into the government's mandate. Violent crime has increased 32%. Gang-related murders have doubled. People have been killed across this country in all kinds of scenarios in larger numbers, with no relation to the person who was attacking them in any way.

• (2150)

It seems the only focus of the legislation before us is on the law-abiding people in Canada, so that is a question that comes to me all the time, not just from people in my riding, but quite honestly from rural ridings right across the country. We know that on that side of the floor there are Liberal members who have barely won their ridings in rural Canada. We pit east against west, but rural Canada is rural Canada, and firearms owned by respectable, honest Canadians, rurally, should not even be considered by the government in trying to deal with the issues it has with growing violence in this country. It is the Liberals' poor mandates and it is their poor legislation that are opening up crime more and more in our country.

The new Liberal definition is exactly the same as the old one. It is simply under a new look and a new package, because that definition still describes many of the firearms that are used legally, that are used properly and that are not part of the dynamics of violence in our country. We do not support confiscating the firearms of law-abiding farmers, hunters and indigenous people, and we are on the right side of the Canadian public on this issue.

No one believes that going after hunters and legitimate hunting rifles would reduce violent crime across this country. This is part of the Liberals' plan to distract and divide Canadians, and we refuse to be divided on this issue. Right across the nation, the majority of Canadians agree that this emperor has no clothes. There is some reason behind this mandate that the Liberals want to press onto Canadians to remove the freedoms we have in this country to be law-abiding firearms owners.

*Government Orders*

The Liberals are making life easier for violent criminals by repealing mandatory minimum sentences for gun crimes with Bill C-5. How in the world does that make sense next to removing firearms from law-abiding Canadians? The Liberals have made it easier to get bail with Bill C-75, and they are failing to stop the flow of illegal guns across the U.S. border. I would suggest that they focus their energies on doing what would make the big difference on violence in this country, because as we have heard, and it is true, in cases where a firearm is used illegally and violently, it is about the person holding that firearm.

Maybe we need to do more research on who commits these crimes and why we let them out of jail over and over again to the point that, as we heard earlier today, the majority of crimes in our large cities, and New York City was actually mentioned as well, are committed by repeat offenders who get out and do it again, and then get out and do it again. The focus here is on law-abiding firearms owners: hunters, farmers and indigenous people. We support common-sense firearms policies that keep guns out of the hands of dangerous criminals.

I am going to switch to some comments where there is unity in this country on firearms. I am going to quote Vice-Chief Heather Bear from the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations. She said:

When you go out to hunt, you're not just hunting. You're teaching your child courage and you're bonding. You are passing on protocols, ceremonial protocols, of how to look after your kill. There are the rites of passage, the reverence to the animal and the tobacco. Along with that tool come many teachings and also matters of safety. When you take a gun away, you take away the opportunity for that oral tradition to happen.

I am just going to quote something I said at the Parkland Outdoor Show & Expo in Yorkton, the largest outdoor show in Canada, where the focus is on outdoor activities. I said, "The Parkland Outdoor Show & Expo champions our great outdoors heritage by celebrating nature, environment, hunting, angling, trapping, hiking, camping and more. What impacted me the most as I reflected on my experiences year after year with this event is the visible passion and joy I see for those who spend quality time with family and friends while they are teaching skills, respect and how to deeply enjoy the great outdoors to the next generation."

• (2155)

"On behalf of the federal Government of Canada," I said, "and as the member of Parliament for Yorkton—Melville, serving His Majesty's Official Opposition, with an amazing group of people, under the servant leadership of the Leader of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition, I thank them for enjoying, promoting and valuing Canada's natural beauty, our heritage and outdoor traditions—"

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Questions and comments. The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member talked about the support base. Leger did a poll on the issue of gun control and found that 84% of Canadians believe that the government is on the right track in dealing with the issue of gun control.

The final report from the Mass Casualty Commission, investigating the April 2020 mass shooting in Nova Scotia that left 22 people dead, made several recommendations to meaningfully change Canada's gun laws. In essence, the report calls for stricter gun laws. It is significant.

I am wondering if the member could be a little clearer in terms of specifically what it is in the legislation that she opposes. It is not fair to say that we are taking guns from hunters, indigenous people or farmers. That is just not true. The member is trying to give the impression that hunters and so forth are not going to have guns as a result of the passage of this legislation.

• (2200)

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** Madam Speaker, I do appreciate the question.

The truth of the matter is the focus of the Liberal government needs to be on the people who commit violence with firearms.

Hunters, farmers and indigenous people using their firearms in the way that I described here today have nothing to do with the violence in Canada. If the Liberals want to deal with ghost guns, it is a great idea but they do not have to take away the opportunity for the majority of Canadians who want to have a firearm to use them.

Mark Ryckman, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters said, "Firearms are not the disease, particularly in a nation like Canada with robust gun laws."

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I like the member. I know she would not do what other Conservatives have done tonight, which is, when asked very simple questions, have a temper tantrum and explode with insults rather than answering some basic questions.

The first, of course, is on the provisions for ghost guns that mean that Bill C-21, reformulated because the NDP pushed for that, actually tackles criminals. The member is aware of that.

Second, will the member admit that amendments G-4 and G-46, which were the two amendments that she spent the most time on in her speech, were actually withdrawn? They are not relevant to this debate.

Third, there is the issue of the Conservatives moving to end the exemption for handguns for sport shooters, particularly those who are involved in the Olympics. It is bizarre and strange. How do the Conservatives justify having tabled that amendment?

Those are three questions Canadians are asking. I hope the member answers them, because other Conservatives have been unable to.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I want to remind members not to yell while others have the floor.

*Government Orders*

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** Madam Speaker, the Liberals and their NDP partners in crime have succeeded in shutting down debate on Bill C-21, a bill that would not prevent a single drug dealer or a gang member from obtaining an illegal gun, because it is focused entirely on law-abiding Canadians.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Madam Speaker, I asked three questions. The member did not answer any of them.

I understand that her leader's office has given her packaged talking points that date back to last November, but the issues were ghost guns, the amendments that were withdrawn, she cannot name a single firearm that there is a consequence to as a result of this legislation, and the move by the Conservatives to end the exemption of handguns for sport shooters.

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order. The hon. member knows that the Conservatives asked for unanimous consent, there is an email right here that I am willing to table if the hon. member would let me—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Order. The hon. member cannot point to something he may be holding and make reference to it. This seems to be a point of debate more than anything else. I am going to ask the hon. member to finish up his question so that I could get the answer.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Madam Speaker, the Conservatives are badly losing the debate tonight and that is why their tempers are flaring. They should just start to answer simple questions that are being addressed to them. Canadians seek answers.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** Madam Speaker, I would like to tell the member that I will not take any of that kind of treatment. I make my decisions about what I am going to say on this floor. They talk about us. The vitriol in this House that is sent in this direction over and over again is despicable. I have no desire to answer the member's questions because there is no purpose to them.

We know there is a new Liberal firearms advisory panel being created. I would not be surprised if it has already been created, and that is why Canadians have no confidence in any decisions made by the government.

• (2205)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Again I want to remind members to be respectful during the debate. It is not proper to personalize it, so members need to focus specifically on the bill itself.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Madam Speaker, 32% is the Liberal government's record after eight years in power. Violent crime in Canada has increased by 32% since the election of this Prime Minister and his Liberal ideology of freeing criminals as quickly as possible, allowing them to be released more quickly and serve their sentences in their living rooms.

After eight years of this Liberal government, gang-related homicides have doubled. In 2019, the Liberal government saw fit to pass Bill C-5, which I will refer to in a moment, that makes the bail pro-

cess easier. As a direct result of that legislation, more and more criminals are ending up at home rather than in prison. Let us remember this number: a 32% increase in violent crime.

Today we are discussing the Liberal government's solution to this violence. I want to ask my colleagues to use their imagination. Imagine the kind of scenario that resulted in the Liberal Party making a recommendation such as this and introducing a bill such as this. Imagine the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Public Safety meeting in a coffee shop, probably downtown in some major Canadian city, wondering how to combat gun crime on the streets. The Minister of Justice, seeing the number of illegal guns coming into the country, tells the Minister of Public Safety that the government cannot ban illegal guns because they are already illegal. The Minister of Public Safety adds that weapons that enter illegally at the borders are not easy to seize, because criminals have their ways, obviously. The Minister of Justice says he wants nothing to do with threatening armed citizens who commit violent crimes with longer prison sentences. The Prime Minister said not to be too tough on criminals.

It was in that coffee shop that the Minister of Public Safety came up with this brilliant idea. He knows who owns firearms and he even knows where to find them. They have licences. They took courses, and they have a lot of guns. The Minister of Justice was starting to question all of this, but he already saw a good opportunity to divert attention from his inability to put an end to violence in the streets, violence that has made families in too many of our cities afraid. He asked where those guns can be found. The Minister of Public Safety proudly responded that they can be found in all regions of Canada, on farms, in the north and in indigenous communities. They could seize thousands of weapons. The Minister of Justice felt like saying that those guns are not used to commit crimes, but he did not. He preferred to remain silent. Why let facts get in the way of a great Liberal initiative?

In this story, that is how Bill C-21 was born, and quite frankly, I do not see any other way it could have happened, since the Liberals are so far off the mark. This bill had just one objective: to make the Liberal government look good. Unfortunately, it was to the detriment of law-abiding gun owners and sport shooters.

I listened to several speeches today. I should point out that this bill was supported by the Bloc Québécois, who left out a part of the story in everything it was saying today. When the Liberal amendment that would have made hunting rifles and sport shooter firearms illegal, the Bloc member from Rivière-du-Nord said in committee that the definition contained in amendment G4 almost feels like the Bloc Québécois wrote it. It meets our expectations.

I do not often quote members of the Bloc Québécois, but when it is time to set the record straight, I like to set the record straight. That truly is what the member for Rivière-du-Nord said. It is a fact.

*Government Orders*

Then they strut their stuff and claim that they changed things, but when we see that from the outset they supported a bill that would ban firearms used in every region of Canada and did not react when they realized that people were reacting in their own region, there is a problem. Most of all, there is a lack of credibility.

• (2210)

We are here after hours of debate to ask the government to see the light. Although they did backtrack, which was rather strategic and the result of the strong opposition from the Conservatives, hunters and residents of rural areas in Canada, no one has any illusions about the Liberals' intent to go after honest people who are just engaging in a centuries-long tradition.

We expect that, as a result of these measures, most of the firearms targeted by the Liberal amendments at the end of last year, including hunting rifles, will again be subject to prohibitions in the future, end of story. We are saying this because we have lost confidence in the Liberal government. Unfortunately, I deplore the naivety of the Bloc Québécois, who seems to be defending the government today. It seems to want to have faith in the Liberal government once again.

I must admit that I am not surprised by the position of the NDP, the Liberal government's coalition partner. It cannot be denied that the NDP also reacted to public opinion. It too had openly supported Bill C-21, its first iteration and the amendments.

Why do I not trust the Liberals? It is not because I am a Conservative. It is not because I listened to the hunters. It is because the Prime Minister himself, the member for Papineau, was very clear when he said, "our focus now is on saying...yes...we're going to have to take [these rifles] away from people who were using them to hunt". Instead of going after the illegal guns used by criminals and street gangs, the Prime Minister is going to great effort to confiscate the hunting rifles of law-abiding farmers, hunters and indigenous people.

Let me be clear. The new definition, or the supposed new definition, is really the same as the old one. Commonly used hunting rifles, which were targeted by the Liberals in the fall, will likely be added to the ban by the new Liberal firearms advisory committee. I am sure a bunch of very independent people will also be appointed to this committee. I would not be surprised to see a Trudeau Foundation executive on this committee.

I have had the opportunity to speak with hunters in the Mégantic—L'Érable area. That is why I am here today. They are not reassured by the government's changes to Bill C-21, nor by the amendments. Most of all, they are hurt that they are being used by the Liberal government for political purposes. They have witnessed the increase in violent crime in Montreal, as we all have. They are shocked that they have been targeted by the government as criminals. These people are careful, trained, and most importantly, they take gun safety very seriously.

The Liberal government has the wrong target in its crosshairs. Hunters, sport shooters and farmers are paying the price. No one believes the Liberal government anymore.

That being said, these people are realists. They are wiser. I want to quote Martin Bourget from Aventure Chasse Pêche, with whom I had the pleasure of speaking during a big interview on Bill C-21. He said, and I quote, "Legitimate gun owners in Canada are deeply puzzled about the very legitimacy of the process set out in Bill C-21 and the enforcement of these measures. They are asking for nothing less than a study of the bill's true impact on the safety of Canadians and on traditional hunting and harvesting, and sport shooting."

Does that sound extreme? No, not at all. It is reasonable. People want to know whether Bill C-21 will really bring down the crime rate on the streets of big cities and across the country.

In closing, I would like to remind members that violent crime in Canada is up 32%. That is the Liberal government's track record over the past eight years. That is the Liberals' grade, and it is not even a passing grade. Unfortunately, because of what they have done in the past, we do not have any confidence in them moving forward.

• (2215)

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, between 2020 and 2021, there was a 5% decrease across the country in gun crime. The member can say whatever he likes, but he cannot change that particular fact.

I would remind the member opposite that last year, through border controls, over 1,200 guns and over 73,000 weapons were confiscated at the border. However, as we bring forward legislation and present budgets to deal with the issue of public safety, the Conservatives continue to spread misinformation.

Can the member indicate how many guns were confiscated at the border while Stephen Harper was the prime minister?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Madam Speaker, since the Harper government was in power, it is 32%. That is the figure that the member for Winnipeg North should remember.

There has been a 32% increase in violent crime in Canada despite everything the Liberals have done. Actually, I should say because of everything they have done, such as the changes in Bill C-5 concerning parole and violent offenders serving their sentences at home in their living rooms. That is the Liberal government's record after eight years.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable. I especially appreciate the fact that he is one of the only Conservatives to speak this evening who was not hysterical in his approach to the bill.

I have seen how the Conservatives have approached the discussion this evening. It does not give us much confidence in their position.

*Government Orders*

My colleague talked about crime. We know very well that ghost guns are exploding in popularity across the country. In the greater Vancouver area alone, the number of ghost guns seized has increased tenfold. These are firearms that are not traceable and that are used by criminals.

Does the member agree with me and most members of the House that we absolutely need to take action on ghost guns?

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Madam Speaker, I wish my colleague had listened to the speeches. Since coming here today, I have had the opportunity to listen to several speeches. I did not hear hysteria in any of the speeches given by my colleagues.

I heard about fears, the fears raised by hunters and farmers in their ridings, their legitimate fears because they feel that the Liberal government is attacking them and using them to cover up for its own inaction when faced with the increase in violent crime in our municipalities and all across the country. There has been a 32% increase.

What the government wants to do is take guns away from hunters and sport shooters, even though these are not the types of guns that are used to commit crimes. That is unacceptable.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my colleague mentioned a rather spectacular about-face by the Bloc Québécois.

In December, when the government had the nerve to table totally unacceptable amendments with hundreds of pages where antique firearms and rifles used solely for hunting were simply banned, the Bloc Québécois was an accomplice to this larceny of farmers' liberties.

What does the member think of the Bloc Québécois's attitude, which was a partisan, a cheerleader of the amendments that we, the Conservatives, thanks to the support and involvement of thousands of hunters, farmers and first nations people across the country, fiercely condemned?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable for a brief answer.

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Madam Speaker, the best way to have a brief answer is to quote the Bloc Québécois itself.

The Bloc MPs were so proud of the amendments proposed by the Liberals that they said, and I quote the member for Rivière-du-Nord, "the definition contained in amendment G4 almost feels like the Bloc Québécois wrote it. ...it meets our expectations."

That is the reality.

• (2220)

[*English*]

**Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise this evening in the chamber to speak to Bill C-21, the Liberals' firearms confiscation plan that, unfortunately, we have seen get rammed through the House of Commons with little debate and with support from the NDP to move it forward.

It is a shame because here we go again. Every single time it seems the Liberals get into trouble, whether it is with the inflationary crisis they caused or the incredibly concerning allegations of

foreign election interference, and whenever there is an issue facing the Liberals, they always have a new gun law or a new gun proposal to bring forward to try to distract Canadians from their crises. Unfortunately, while they are doing that, they are diverting precious resources away from real solutions that could keep Canadians safe.

As mentioned by my colleague before me and many others in the chamber, not only this evening but in many days prior, we have seen violent crime increase across the country since the Liberals took office by, I believe, over 30%. That is a direct result of a lot of the broken policies the government has brought forward. I will speak more to that later on in my remarks.

I want to share another concern I have, a broad concern, with the Liberal approach to firearms. Whenever they are speaking about firearms, they use very aggressive terminology that even they cannot define. It is things like "assault-style weapons", things of that nature. One would think they are trying to move forward with banning AK-47s or fully automatic machine guns, which are already prohibited, but that is the way the Liberals talk every time they are talking about firearms and what they are trying to supposedly get off our streets. I think it shows a real lack of understanding of the issue of violent crime across the country and a lack of understanding of firearms more broadly.

I want to speak to the issue of community safety, because, as I mentioned, violent crime is up 32% since the Liberals took office. We are seeing, quite unfortunately in growing frequency, assaults, murders and very violent crimes and attacks right across the country. It is something we are seeing in northern Ontario and north-western Ontario as well. In small communities of just a few thousand people, we are seeing, in greater frequency, these types of attacks.

I had the opportunity to speak with an individual from Sioux Lookout earlier this morning. His name is Howard, and he shared with me a story of his 22-year-old son, Skyler, who was killed just a few years ago. The perpetrator of that act was someone who had recently been released and who was previously convicted of murder.

It was incredibly difficult to have this conversation with Howard and to hear his incredible concern about the broken bail system that led to this individual's release. He knows, unfortunately, that there is nothing he can do to get his son back, but he is trying very hard to advocate for solutions to make sure this never happens again. I share that story with members because it hit me incredibly hard, and I know there are many people right across the country who are facing similar stories, unfortunately. Too many families have been torn apart.

*Government Orders*

That is why our party has put forward a plan to fix the broken bail system to ensure that violent repeat offenders face jail time instead of being released back into our communities, where they are able to perpetrate further crimes. The same could be said for hardened drug dealers, people who are preying upon vulnerable individuals with addictions and fuelling another side of the community safety crisis that we are seeing, again, right across northwestern Ontario.

● (2225)

I have spoken in the House previously about the unfortunately large homeless population, not only in the city of Kenora, but also in Dryden, Sioux Lookout and right across our region. Far too many people who are on the streets are addicted to drugs and alcohol, which is leading to needles being found throughout the community, more assaults and threats, and more people all around the community feeling unsafe. Tourists feel unsafe when they come to visit our beautiful region as well. It is another aspect of community safety that I think is greatly missing.

The Liberals have done nothing to address the broken bail system. They have not done enough to ensure that there are proper treatment and recovery options for those who are struggling with addictions to get the help they need so they can hopefully break that cycle and be able to get their life back, get a home and a job, reunite with their family and be able to lead a better life.

Something we see playing out across our district is that the number of HIV cases is up as a result of the drug crisis in northern Ontario. In the Kenora district, we unfortunately have one of the highest per capita rates of overdose deaths in the entire province of Ontario, which is in large part attributable to the lack of resources and proper support systems for those who are struggling. As a result, our community is not safe for anybody, including for the most vulnerable, the unhoused population, or for business owners, who are scared to keep their doors open to customers because of the potential consequences of that. It is not safe for our residents. I spoke with Marliana, another constituent from Kenora, earlier today. She mentioned something to me that I have heard time and again from people when I have been going door to door. She is scared to go downtown to go shopping. She has lived in Kenora for over 40 years. This was never a concern for her until very recently, because we have seen such a rapid escalation in violence and community safety concerns.

It is really sad for our community to be in this situation, and I really do believe that the Liberals do not have an answer for it. They are bringing forward bills like Bill C-21, which is not addressing the bail system or the addiction crisis. The Liberals are really not targeting criminals at all, in large part. Again, this bill is focused on the law-abiding firearm owners in northern Ontario and across the country, whether the hunters in my riding who enjoy hunting as a means of providing for their family or the sport shooters who enjoy going to the range and enjoy the sport. It is incredibly concerning for indigenous people across northern Ontario. I represent 42 first nations, many of which are remote, with no road access and very few resources. There may be only one grocery store in the community and limited options for people to feed their family. They need their firearms to be able to put food on the table.

This is a concern I have heard from residents, chiefs and leaders right across the district.

I want to emphasize, in the time I have left, that I believe this approach from the Liberals, with the support of the NDP, is misguided. They are not doing enough to address the very real issues of crime and violence we are seeing across the country and are only targeting the lawful firearms owners, hunters, sport shooters and indigenous peoples like those in the Kenora riding, who are not the problem. Taking firearms away from these individuals is not going to increase community safety in our large urban centres.

● (2230)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member talked about bail reform, which is in Bill C-48. Allow me to provide a quote that comes from the association representing Canada's frontline law enforcement personnel. It was released earlier today, I believe. It states:

Front-line law enforcement personnel have been asking the government to take concrete steps to address the small number of repeat violent offenders who commit a disproportionate number of offences that put the safety of our communities at risk.

We appreciate that [the justice minister and the public safety minister] have worked collaboratively with stakeholders and introduced this common-sense legislation that responds to the concerns that our members have raised.

We have seen a great deal of filibustering on Bill C-21. I wonder if the member is of the same opinion as I am that, when it comes to Bill C-48, we should get some sort of unanimous consent to have a round of debate on it and then allow it to go to committee so we can deal with it in a quicker fashion.

**Mr. Eric Melillo:** Madam Speaker, I have to disagree with the context that the member brought forward, of a filibuster on Bill C-21. We have very legitimate concerns on this side of the aisle, as I mentioned, concerns that have been raised by members of 42 first nations I represent and the people at the sport shooting clubs. I just want to really push back on that assertion of a filibuster. We are here doing our job of raising the concerns of our constituents.

Briefly, I do appreciate that the government finally understands that there is a need to address bail reform. Unfortunately, Canadians really do not trust the government that broke the bail system to fix the bail system. That is why Conservatives are going to keep fighting for a common-sense approach to that.

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about my riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam. There was recently a seizure of ghost guns in my riding, 3-D-printed ghost guns that can use real ammunition. The comments from the RCMP about these seizures were that, although these firearms were seized in my riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam, they had the potential to be sold and used to carry out acts of violence in any of our communities. Seizures of this nature directly impact the safety of all of us.

*Government Orders*

My question for the member is this: Is he worried about the proliferation of these 3-D-printed ghost guns, which can impact all of our communities?

**Mr. Eric Melillo:** Madam Speaker, I certainly am very much concerned about ghost guns and, as the member mentioned, the proliferation of ghost guns. In my comments, I did not have enough time to get into details, but we definitely have to focus on all of those aspects of crime. We have to bolster the borders to ensure that firearms are not coming across the borders illegally, and we have to ensure that there are enough proper resources for law enforcement to combat all forms of illegal firearms, including ghost guns.

**Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Madam Speaker, at the public safety committee, the Toronto deputy police chief said that 86% of guns that they recover from crimes are illegal guns smuggled in from the United States. I am wondering what the member thinks this bill would do about that, if anything.

**Mr. Eric Melillo:** Madam Speaker, the simple answer is that it certainly would not do enough. The government, over the last eight years, has continually targeted, as I mentioned in my speech, law-abiding firearms owners, the hunters and sport shooters who have never done anything wrong. They are now having their private property attacked by the government rather than having the government focus on addressing the very real issues of illegal guns that are being smuggled across the borders and the gang activity in our cities.

**Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, this member does represent a large indigenous community in his riding. He said there are 42 communities. I was wondering, out of those communities, how many support Bill C-21.

**Mr. Eric Melillo:** Madam Speaker, to answer briefly, I have not heard of any community leaders or residents who support Bill C-21. I have heard a number of chiefs come forward with concerns about it, including Chief Rudy Turtle, who was a former NDP candidate. He ran against me in 2019, but I am proud to call him a good friend now. He is someone who has continually raised concerns around how this would impact indigenous rights to hunt.

● (2235)

**Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise at this late hour on behalf of my constituents in Edmonton—Wetaskiwin to talk about this important issue.

I have to admit that I am not a firearm owner and I do not have a PAL, but I know more about the issue of firearms than I ever thought I would know, because my constituents, in hundreds of round table meetings over the 17 years that I have been a member of Parliament, have brought the issue forward, particularly in the last eight years as we have had a Liberal government in office, with significant concerns. In fact, particularly in the last seven or eight years, it has been one of the top issues raised in my constituency. We are talking about folks who are hunters, sport shooters, collectors and farmers. They are among the most vetted Canadians in any walk of life in any area, and some of the kindest people one would ever meet. They come to raise very legitimate concerns that we are hearing expressed in here.

It is interesting that, as I have been listening to the debate, I have heard the hon. member for Winnipeg North, the Liberal parliamentary secretary to the House leader, stand up time and time again and just throw accusations of misinformation and disinformation at Conservative members of Parliament who are standing up on behalf of their constituents to raise something that is very important to them. At one point, the member used the words “fear factor” to talk about what Conservatives were talking about. He is applauding himself now, even as I am speaking.

However, quite honestly, I do not think the Liberals believe that these Canadians are scary. I do not think they actually believe that. The scariest thing about these folks for the Liberals is that they do not vote Liberal. That is the scariest thing about these people, and because they do not vote Liberal, their concerns mean nothing to Liberal members of Parliament. Not only do they not have any idea of what life is like for these constituents but they really do not seem to care. In fact, they use these legitimate concerns to pit one group of Canadians against another group of Canadians on a regular basis.

When we talk about fear, another thing that comes up at my round tables on a regular basis is legitimate fear and legitimate concerns that we hear from Canadians across the country, Canadians who are afraid to walk around their neighbourhoods at certain times at night, and Canadians who are afraid, in every city in this country, to ride public transit, which is absolutely not a feeling or a concern that I heard on a regular basis eight years ago, but we are hearing it every day now. We have seen the numbers, the objective facts, and if we want to talk about information, let us take a look at objective facts. Violent crime is up 32% since the government took office. I was reading a statistic that said there are 124,000 more incidents per year. We see this sort of Liberal cycle. We see that crime has gone up. It is a very real thing, so fears have gone up.

We see a very significant mental health crisis in this country, and we all know about it. We all witness it and we all hear from constituents who are struggling with mental health issues. We see that Canadians are increasingly afraid to ride public transit and increasingly afraid to walk around their communities, and then we see the Liberals repeatedly stoke those fears for their political advantage. There is no other way to put it. Then, they stand up today and accuse Conservatives, who are raising the legitimate concerns of our constituents, of being the ones increasing the fear factor in this country.

● (2240)

If the Liberals are serious about crime and if they are serious about addressing the legitimate fears in this country, then they will do something about the real challenges and the real problems that are causing that fear. When they take a look at what those real causes are and look at gun smuggling, the illegal guns that are coming across the border, we have heard experts say that over 80% of the crimes committed with firearms are committed by illegal firearms. One witness talked about 86%. Liberals are doing nothing to stop that.

*Government Orders*

Again, we have talked a lot in this House over the last few weeks about the catch-and-release bail policies of the government. Liberals have gotten up and said that today after eight years they are finally doing something to address it, saying “why do we not pass it unanimously” and “why do we not stop talking about Bill C-21” and “quit filibustering Bill C-21 and let us pass this other thing unanimously”. However, it has been eight years and there is zero faith among Canadians that the Liberals are serious about dealing with these very real challenges.

I mentioned the mental health crisis in this country. The Liberals promised on page 75 of their platform in the costing document \$4.5 billion for a Canada mental health transfer. It was laid out in black and white: over five years, \$4.5 billion. They were supposed to have delivered \$250 million a couple of years ago and then about another \$700 million last year. They are supposed to be halfway through their plans to spend this \$4.5 billion on a Canada mental health transfer, but they cannot find the money.

Here, the New Democrats stand up in the House, backing the Liberals at every turn in this debate. What I am interested to hear from the NDP is why, with all of the negotiating power it had when they were putting together a coalition, the one thing that the New Democrats negotiated off the table from the Liberals' platform was a \$4.5-billion expenditure on mental health for Canadians. How is that the one thing that the NDP negotiated off the table when it had the power at the table?

It is interesting because as we are talking about the fiscal challenges in the country, with respect to the Liberal confiscation regime, experts have taken a look at this plan and, quite frankly, there is no real plan around this. Some experts have said that it could cost billions of dollars and up to perhaps \$6 billion and some have said maybe more than that. I asked the question: Where could that money be better spent?

It is a rhetorical question because it is very obvious that the money could be spent on, for example, a Canada mental health transfer that the Liberals promised on page 75 of their own budget when it was time to get elected in 2021. The money could be spent on tightening up our borders so that illegal guns do not come in across the borders. The money could be spent on tackling organized crime. We talk to police officers across the country and a continuing and growing problem is gang violence in our country. The Liberals could get serious about that.

Most important, as we are talking about firearms, they could forget getting serious about increasing penalties; they could at least stop decreasing penalties for violent crime committed by guns here in Canada. That is what the Liberals have done. That is what their record is over eight years. It is a record of decreasing consequence. Before someone on the Liberal side gets up and makes accusations of misinformation, the objective fact from Statistics Canada is that violent crime has increased by 32% under the Liberals' watch and yet, in this entire debate, no Liberal has stood up to talk about the real impacts of that violent crime on Canadians.

Therefore, here we are. The Liberals are pitting one group of Canadians against another once again, as they have done for years and years and years. Just to close this off, here we are ramming this through once again with two late-night sittings before we pass it.

They got it so wrong in the first place that it took them five months to even get it back to this place.

I welcome questions and comments, hopefully from Liberals who will do something other than accuse us—

• (2245)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Questions and comments.

The hon. member for Fleetwood—Port Kells.

**Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I guess I would like the hon. member to comment on the fact that back in the Stephen Harper days the Conservatives cut the CBSA by, I heard, up to 1,000 people. The Liberals have restored that and added to it.

To the member's knowledge, would the Conservatives, if they formed government, go back and cut the CBSA again?

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Madam Speaker, I am thankful to get a question from someone other than the member for Winnipeg North today. I will point out that even the question itself highlights the Liberal incompetence on this issue, because what the member praises is basically an increase in spending that corresponds to a 32% increase in the negative effects and violent crime, despite the Liberals' spending and spending. I guarantee members that the answer next year, or whenever the next budget comes, is going to be more Liberal spending with worse results for Canadians.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I like the member. We remember the CBSA cuts from the Harper regime. We also remember the Harper regime ending the crime prevention centres across the country, which effectively did a very effective job in reducing the crime rate before the crimes even happened. As we know, for every dollar invested in crime prevention, we save six dollars in policing costs, court costs and prison costs. It made good sense, and the Harper regime absolutely ended it. Unfortunately, the Liberals have not revived the crime prevention centres that were so effective in fighting crime.

However, the point I want to come back to is on Bill C-21. The focus of Bill C-21 now, because of NDP pressure, is on ghost guns used by criminals and criminal gangs across the country. We have seen an exponential increase in some parts of the country, including a tenfold increase in the use of untraceable ghost guns in the region of the Lower Mainland, so I do not understand why Conservatives have been blocking for weeks and weeks through filibusters the adoption of these important measures law enforcement is calling for.

*Government Orders*

Can the member explain why Conservatives blocked a bill that would take action against criminals and against criminal gangs and their use of ghost guns?

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Madam Speaker, if the hon. member wants to deal with that one specific issue, he can use his clout in his partnership with the Liberals and move that as a stand-alone bill that we can have a stand-alone conversation on, but the member talks about crimes being stopped from being committed before they are committed. Do members know what would go a long way toward that? It is keeping repeat offenders in jail. Do members know what else would go a long way toward that? It is not giving bail to violent repeat offenders.

That is not the conversation we are having right now, unfortunately. This is a conversation that targets firearms owners who are hunters, farmers, sport shooters and collectors and would do absolutely nothing to reduce crime in this country.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my friend, colleague and neighbour from the class of 2006, the member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, and I have been here the same amount of time. A lot has been said, and he would feel this too, representing some of the constituents I used to represent, about the divisiveness that is happening in this country. The one thing that the government has managed to unite this country on is that all 10 premiers had to write a letter to the justice minister asking for bail reform.

The issue is violent crime. Can my colleague please expand on the only thing the government seems to have united the country on, which is how lousy it is at keeping Canadians safe?

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Madam Speaker, this is an issue that comes up time and again at my constituent round tables. I have four of them again next week, so I am looking forward to seeing my constituents and hearing more about what we can do if we form government after the next election. One of the things I assure members would be a top priority for our Conservative government if we form government would be to seriously tackle criminal justice issues in this country, because it has been eight long years that they have been ignored.

• (2250)

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour to be able to rise in this House once again to speak on behalf of the great people from southwest Saskatchewan, which is obviously one of the largest rural areas in the entire country.

It is really important to remember that we talk about the differences throughout the country. There are rural areas all across Canada. However, it seems that when we talk about this particular issue there are a lot of urban versus rural perspectives. It is important that we bring our own unique perspectives, because somebody from urban Canada would have a different perspective from somebody from rural Canada.

The job of the government is to build trust with people from both portions of society, not to pick one side or the other but to deal with both aspects of it. All my colleagues here on the opposition side represent both urban and rural ridings, and we do a fantastic job of

making sure that we represent both perspectives as we talk about this topic tonight.

One thing I want to do right off the top is really delve into what it is like growing up in rural Saskatchewan. At times the government forgets just exactly what that is like. If one was to talk to many of the rural members here or go back home and talk to a lot of the people who live in a lot of the small towns and even in some of the cities in Saskatchewan, and ask them what was one of their favourite gifts they ever got for Christmas as a youngster, one of the top items would be a Daisy Red Ryder BB gun.

It was a beautiful thing, a lever-action BB gun. I remember getting one when I was six or seven years old. I spent countless hours out in the backyard of our farm shooting pop cans or some birds in the yard, things like that, and learning the proper mechanics of how to properly handle and properly store a firearm, obviously one that was safe for a young person to handle. Many people all across this country do that.

As I grew older, of course, I moved to a .22 and started to see some larger calibres. The most important part was when I was 12 years old, the age I was able to go and get my hunter safety course. It is a course of several meetings in the evenings. We took it at one of the schools in one of the small towns. That was where we went through the very important elements of, again, proper handling, proper usage, proper storage and transportation of firearms, the different classes of firearms, the different species that people were allowed to hunt in Canada, species that one has to be licensed to hunt, and species that could be hunted in open season. That was a very formative and important part of culture in rural Canada. It is almost like a rite of passage of sorts.

Later on in life, as regulations advanced and changed, we went from having things like a firearms licence to having a possession and acquisition licence. It is extremely important that we talk about that process as we go through this debate here tonight.

If all we heard was what the Liberals and the NDP wanted to talk about, they would have us believing that everybody has unfettered access to all kinds of firearms that could do all kinds of different things. The reality could not be any further from that.

The reality is that we do have a very stringent, legal and regulatory system that people have to abide by if they want to be able to acquire, possess and transport firearms. It is a very good system. It is a long process to go through, but I do think it is very fair. When we look at the way our system is, it is a privilege to be able to have a firearm in this country. It is important that we do have a strong but fair legal system around that.

Nobody here is objecting to the system that we have in place, because, for the most part, it is a good system. It is important for people who do not have firearms or people who are not necessarily interested in firearms but might be interested in the debate here tonight to know and understand that we do have a very robust and comprehensive legal system around firearms.

### *Government Orders*

Let us get to the next part of the debate tonight. One of the fundamental things that we always have to talk about in the House of Commons is trust. Does the government trust the people? Do people trust the government? What has the government done to earn people's trust when we talk about firearms?

● (2255)

Well, we know the Liberals had the massive debacle with the long gun registry. In the 2019 election, one of their next failed ideas was to have a big, expensive buyback program. They said the buyback program was going to cost between \$400 million and \$600 million. Given that the long gun registry program, which was only supposed to cost \$1 million or \$1.5 million, turned into an over \$1-billion program, people have a right to be skeptical of them.

In 2019, the Liberals rolled out another plan for a buyback program for all the types of guns the Liberals do not like. However, lo and behold, nobody out there was interested in participating in this program and was willing to administer it, so the government had to back away from it. Fast-forward to 2021, and that is where we see the original proposal of Bill C-21.

It is important to note that the original part of it was about having a buyback program for barred firearms. The Liberals were maybe going to allow municipalities to ban handguns, and they were going to supposedly increase criminal penalties for gun smuggling and trafficking. There have been various legislative attempts by the government around sentencing. That is an issue for another time. I may be able to get to it tonight, but we shall see.

We are still waiting for details of the buyback program from that original announcement in 2021. The Liberals floated a few ideas out there. There were a few different things that happened, but ultimately nothing really came of it. We are currently going through the budget again, and there is still no allocation in the federal budget for a buyback program, yet that was part of the original intent of Bill C-21.

What we saw after the budget was announced is that the Liberals came up with a bit of a buyback program, but it is not for firearms that have already been lawfully acquired by citizens of Canada. Instead, they are looking at purchasing firearms back from dealers. Supposedly it will cost \$700,000. We are still waiting to see how that program is going to be implemented and what it is going to look like. It will most likely have to do with the list of firearms that will come through Bill C-21.

Again, we have talked about trust. What has the government done to earn the trust of Canadians? As we look at the way Bill C-21 has unfolded not only before the House but also in committee, we have Liberals dropping big amendments with big comprehensive packages of firearms that are going to be banned, and all different kinds of styles.

That is another thing the Liberals have done. They have talked about this made-up term “assault-style firearm”. It is important to note one of the key terms in there, the word “style”. Based on what the Liberals described, it is about the way a firearm might look. That leads to the issue at hand: Do people trust the government with whether or not it is going to ban hunting rifles? We hear about that a lot, and it has been brought up a lot in this debate tonight.

Based on the way the Liberals have described the “assault” style, it could be a gun with a black stock on it or a camo pack on it, and it looks like it could be an assault-style gun. However, the Liberals are not concerned about the function of it. It could be a hunting rifle. It may fit perfectly within the parameters of what is acceptable as a hunting rifle. The Liberals have sowed a lot of fear and distrust in people who like to go out and hunt as part of their culture and way of life, and simply because of the colour of a gun, they may be looking at banning it.

The Liberals have created this committee program that is going to go ahead with a fixed date. It will decide whether a firearm should be banned or not. The bill we are debating tonight is going to set a date and it will be everything after that. That is where the problem lies.

When the Liberals use made-up terms like “assault-style firearm”, it leaves the door open to a vague description that does not have anything to do with the reality of how a firearm functions but is rather about how it looks. Then we will have a committee, which will obviously be hand-picked by the Liberals, with people who will not necessarily be acting in the best interests of these lawful Canadians, who are among the most vetted citizens in this country.

The Conservatives want to see a fact-based approach that takes into consideration people from rural Canada and urban Canada and that looks at what our professionals and experts are actually saying, not just what a bunch of activists are saying.

● (2300)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is interesting that a number of members have talked about border controls. I have referred to the fact that, last year alone, over 1,200 guns were confiscated at the border. We have invested in border controls.

I have posed this question to other members and would like to see if the member can respond to it. Is he aware of any guns that were confiscated, any sense of the number, while Stephen Harper was prime minister, because he did cut back on that?

With respect to the bill itself, concerns have been raised not just by the Liberal Party but by all opposition parties regarding the Conservative Party's desire to spread misinformation in order to achieve fundraising goals. I would like the member's thoughts on that.

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer:** Madam Speaker, when the Liberals are in trouble, they like to refer to Stephen Harper rather than talk about the issue at hand. The facts on the ground and the reality from 10 years ago are different than they are today. Ten years ago, violent crime was down 20%. Despite all the money the Liberals have spent, violent crime is up 32%, but even worse, gang-related crime is up 98%. All this comes from the Statistics Canada website, a government website that has that information. That is extremely important.

*Government Orders*

We talk about the illegal guns coming across the borders and the ones being used in the commission of crimes, and the vast majority of them are falling into the hands of gang members, who are not law-abiding citizens. They are not legally and lawfully obtaining these firearms. We want the Liberals to continue to focus on illegally obtained firearms, but we are not seeing that approach when we talk about Bill C-21.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's calm demeanor tonight. That contrasts with some of his Conservative colleagues, who have simply been losing it throughout the debate this evening.

The point the member raises is very clearly contradicted by the facts. Amendments G-4 and G-46 have been withdrawn, so the concerns he raises about the bill's impacts on existing firearms are non-existent. Those amendments have been withdrawn. No Conservative tonight has been able to point to a single firearm that is impacted by Bill C-21.

On the issue around criminality and criminal gangs, I would agree with the member that we need to take action. What law enforcement has been calling for is action against ghost guns, which are being used by criminal gangs and criminals across the country, although perhaps not in his region. However, in my region, there has been a tenfold increase, and the Conservatives have been steadfastly blocking legislation that deals with ghost guns and provides support for law enforcement.

Why would they filibuster a bill that makes a difference in combatting crime?

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer:** Madam Speaker, what is important is that when we are trying to focus on and deal with a very serious issue such as ghost guns, it is being tied in with something else. That is the problem. If we want to focus solely on ghost guns, then let us focus solely on ghost guns, but that is not what is happening here.

As for current firearms, I mentioned in my speech that it is not necessarily about what is going to be happening today; it is what is going to be happening after the set date the Liberals are proposing for this new committee to come in. That is the opportunity and the window for hunting rifles and already lawfully and legally obtained firearms to be seized by the government. That is what we are concerned about. We do not know who the Liberals are going to appoint to that committee to be the ones deciding what kinds and types of firearms are going to be included, and we know that the definition the Liberals keep trying to tell us about is not based on any kind of science or reality.

**Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the Liberals and the NDP have asked the same question. I have contact with one of my good friends in the firearms community, who said the SKS rifle, which is traditionally used by first nations hunters, is one of the rifles that will be caught up in this ban. The Liberals and NDP can make this up all they want. I will not believe what the member for New Westminster—Burnaby says because, quite frankly, he has not been telling the truth the whole night.

To my friend from Cypress Hills—Grasslands, would you be willing to say that more guns will be caught up in this ban than—

• (2305)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** There is a point of order by the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Madam Speaker, the Conservatives have tried this numerous times. When they are not able to fabricate or respond to questions, they engage in personal insults. The member should withdraw them.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** This is a point of debate.

I would remind the member for Regina—Lewvan that he is to direct his questions and comments through the Chair and not directly to members.

The hon. member's time is up, so I am going to allow the hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands to answer.

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer:** Madam Speaker, this gets to the whole point about what the function of the firearm is. The SKS, to the member's question, is quite clearly a hunting rifle. It is used for hunting, yet we see it repeatedly come up with Bill C-21 as a constant problem.

We want to make sure that firearms legislation is actually based on reality, on real facts and on the function of the firearm. We are not seeing that from the Liberals. This is a great question, because many people are concerned about it. It is a very popular gun because it is accurate, it is reliable and it works fantastically for hunting.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to rise on behalf of the residents of Kelowna—Lake Country, including, in this very late hour, to talk about an important piece of legislation, Bill C-21.

I would like to express my concerns about this legislation and the potential consequences of it. While the intention of this bill may be to address issues of public safety, it is crucial that we critically examine its provisions and the implications they may have on our society as a whole, especially for law-abiding citizens.

It is important to prioritize public safety. However, this bill fails to acknowledge that attacking responsible law-abiding firearms owners is not a solution to the 32% increase in violent crime we have seen since the Liberals took office. Casting a wide net and imposing bans on firearms owned legally infringes upon the rights of law-abiding citizens, who use firearms for legitimate purposes such as sport shooting and hunting.

This firearms legislation, Bill C-21, is one of the biggest topics I have heard about during my time as a member of Parliament. There is so much about this bill that does not make sense. It treats law-abiding firearms owners as criminals, undermining the principles of due process and fairness. The overwhelming majority of firearms owners in Canada are law-abiding citizens who have undergone thorough background checks and are responsible in their use, transport and storage of firearms.

### *Government Orders*

This bill has wide-reaching effects on law-abiding farmers, sport shooters, hunters and indigenous peoples. Instead of going after illegal firearms used by criminals and street gangs, the Liberals are focused on going after law-abiding farmers, hunters and indigenous peoples.

This is from Blane, a resident from Kelowna—Lake Country who reached out to me:

The gun buy back and focus is a bad idea and I reject it. I would hope that you would too. The program targets people who are not the typical culprits in violent crimes. Go after the criminals. And the cost to implement and maintain the proposed program is outrageous! I protest the Liberal program and even its intent because it will neither alleviate nor change violent crimes with guns. Criminals, as a reminder, don't follow the rules.

This bill does not adequately address the root causes of gun violence in our society. Instead of focusing on addressing mental health issues, improving law enforcement and strengthening border controls to combat illegal firearms trafficking, Bill C-21 targets legal firearms owners. No one believes that going after hunters and legal firearms owners will reduce violent crime across the country. This is part of the Liberal plan to distract and divide Canadians.

The Liberals' approach on firearms fails to address the core issues and instead burdens law-abiding citizens with unnecessary restrictions. The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police pointed out that restrictions on legal firearms would not “meaningfully address the real issue” about gun violence, as it is illegal weapons that have led to gun violence.

Recent reports have shown that about 85% of handguns used in crimes are imported from the United States illegally. Criminals do not adhere to laws or regulations, and they will continue to access firearms through illicit means regardless of the restrictions imposed on law-abiding citizens. In essence, the bill penalizes responsible gun owners while doing little to address the criminal elements driving gun violence.

A comprehensive approach to reducing gun violence should involve measures that address underlying causes, such as poverty, inequality and mental health issues, while also targeting illegal firearms trafficking and strengthening law enforcement efforts. While the goal of enhancing public safety is important, the Liberals' Bill C-21 misses the mark by imposing ineffective measures that infringe upon the rights and freedoms of law-abiding citizens.

If we are truly committed to addressing the issue of gun violence, we must invest in comprehensive solutions. They include strengthening mental health services, focusing on addiction treatment and recovery, getting tough on criminals through bail reform and securing our borders against firearms smuggling. By focusing on these efforts, we can address the root causes of violence and ensure that firearms are used responsibly and safely by law-abiding citizens.

Since the Prime Minister took office, violent crime has increased by 32% and gang-related homicides have nearly doubled. The Liberals are making life easier for violent criminals by repealing mandatory minimum sentences for gun crimes with Bill C-5. They have also made it easier to get bail with Bill C-75 and are failing to stop the flow of illegal guns across the U.S. border.

• (2310)

If the Liberals were serious about addressing public safety, they would listen to Canadians. Recently, I sent out a survey in my community in Kelowna—Lake Country, and the results were astonishing. More than 91% of people said that living in Kelowna—Lake Country had become less safe in the last eight years. This is not due to law-abiding local firearms owners.

Canadians are no longer feeling safe in their own country. There is a demand to get tough on crime, and these Liberals refuse to. Ninety-four per cent of people who filled out my survey said that our bail system is broken, and the overwhelming majority of respondents called for stronger sentencing, the return of minimum sentences and no bail for repeat offenders. A legacy of these Liberals will be disorder and a crime wave on Canada made worse by the Liberal, revolving door bail system.

Here is another part of the firearm legislation that will continue to evolve into the future with no debate in Parliament. There will be a firearms advisory council that will continue to add firearms to the banned list, and this group will be set up by the Liberals. That is the order in council list from May 2020. Regardless of what may be in this legislation, the list will continue to grow with no public consultation.

This firearms legislation has been a disaster from the beginning. It created so much uncertainty from the very moment the order in council occurred in 2020. Then there was the legislation and the dropping of last minute amendments at committee. There was public outcry, government backbenchers speaking out, and many law-abiding residents in my community and across Canada getting involved. This is how the Liberals govern: It is always a mess.

There are so many people that the government did not even consider when it was initially putting this legislation together. A resident reached out to me very concerned as he stated he was a local elite athlete competing in the sport of target shooting. Another issue that has been brought up to me by my local fish and game clubs is that law enforcement officers use the local ranges to train. If these local clubs are not able to sustain themselves because this legislation is making it just too difficult for residents to continue with their sport shooting and training for hunting, this could put in jeopardy the ability for law enforcement members to train. This is a real concern for the clubs and RCMP members I have spoken with.

*Government Orders*

I have heard from law-abiding firearms owners in Kelowna-Lake Country, who are licensed and follow all the rules. They are concerned with turning in firearms they have collected, and in many cases they have said that they have never used, as they may have been passed on from a deceased family member. They have them stored properly, and they say they have not been anywhere outside of proper areas.

We must strive for a balanced approach that respects the rights and freedoms of law-abiding citizens while addressing the underlying causes of gun violence. Rather than imposing blanket bans and restrictions, we should focus on comprehensive solutions that promote responsible firearm ownership, address mental health concerns, strengthen law enforcement efforts and combat the illegal trafficking of firearms. Canadians are suffering, and everything feels broken.

Conservatives support common-sense firearms policies that keep guns out of the hands of dangerous criminals and secure our borders rather than spending billions confiscating firearms from law-abiding citizens.

• (2315)

**Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I noted that handguns tend to represent the largest share of homicides by firearms in Canada, close to 60%, in fact. Does the hon. member believe that firearms are necessary in the hands of civilians anywhere, at any time, in Canada?

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Madam Speaker, I am not sure where the question from the member is coming from because that is not at all in this legislation and it is not at all what I spoke about.

What I spoke about during my intervention was law-abiding firearms owners who, right now, have to go through extensive training and extensive ongoing processes while they have their firearms, including proper storage and proper transport. They are going out to fish and game clubs. These are the people I was talking about in my intervention. I also talked about farmers and sport shooters. These are the people who are extremely concerned with this legislation, and they are not the ones who are causing the gang violence and the rise in crime in our major cities' downtown areas.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I always enjoy listening to the member. I think it is very clear that with the withdrawal of amendments G4 and G46, which the NDP forced, no existing firearm is impacted by Bill C-21. The fact is that the Conservatives have been unable to name one firearm that is impacted. They are throwing out names and models, but those amendments have been withdrawn. They are not part of the bill. Careful reading of the bill by any Canadian shows that there is no impact.

At the same time, the whole issue around criminality and criminal gangs and the use of ghost guns is something that is profoundly disquieting for many people across this country. There has been a tenfold increase in some regions of the country. We saw the Biden administration in the United States cracking down on ghost guns and seizing more than 20,000 of those illegal, untraceable firearms that are used by criminals.

Conservatives have been blocking the provisions around ghost guns and filibustering this bill. The focus of the bill is on ghost guns. My simple question is: Why have the Conservatives been blocking this initiative that law enforcement has been calling for?

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Madam Speaker, first of all, we have to remember that there is an advisory council that will continue to add firearms to the list. As I mentioned, regardless of what is actually listed right now, the council will be continuing to add firearms. This is different from the process that we are going through now in Parliament. We saw the amendments that were dropped at the eleventh hour at committee. That will not be occurring anymore because the bill will be out of Parliament. Rather, it will be up to the advisory council, which can just add whatever firearms it chooses. The council can just keep adding them to the list. That is a big concern, because there is so much uncertainty.

**Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the member from the NDP keeps bringing up that they had these two amendments. This simply changed the definition but changes nothing in the act.

As well, my colleague is completely right. The second part of it is that it will leave a backdoor registry open that has no oversight whatsoever from committee, and the advisory council can put any gun they want on it. That is what Conservatives have been talking about all night. If there is one thing that we are not going to trust, it is the NDP coalition with the Liberals protecting law-abiding firearms owners.

What does my colleague think about that?

• (2320)

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Madam Speaker, this is exactly how the Liberal government governs. It will have legislation where the title sounds great out there in the public, but once one digs into it, there are a lot of concerns. The government will also add in something so that a lot of it will be determined through a back door or through regulation. We have seen this with many different pieces of legislation where, again, the title sounds good, but once the practicality of it plays out, one does not know what is actually included, because it is all in another process.

**Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is of grave concern to me that the government has chosen to spend so much time on a piece of legislation that would do so very little to actually deal with the issue of crime in this country. Members might be asking why I am making that assertion. The reason I will make that assertion is that violent crime in this country is up 32%. Many members have talked about this and I think the government realizes this, so what the Liberals have decided to do is to say that they are taking action with this bill. The problem is that this bill actually would not take action where we need to take action. I will explain that a bit.

### *Government Orders*

At the public safety committee, the Toronto deputy police chief said that 86% of guns used in crime are illegally smuggled from the United States. Therefore, what would this bill do with respect to the 86% of guns that are being smuggled across the border? If we were debating today what to do about that, I would say that it is something exceptionally worthwhile and something that Conservatives would be 100% behind. However, instead, we are debating a bill that would do absolutely nothing about it.

When we are facing this surge of crime across the country, including violent crime, gang crime and gun crime, how are we not focusing on the source of that gun crime? Eighty-six per cent of those guns are illegally smuggled across the border.

Let us look at that by analogy. If we are on a ship and the ship is taking on water and we have this giant hole where 86% of the water is coming in, does the captain say that we should look over here at these other little holes and see if there is something we can do about that? That is effectively what the approach of the current government is. It looks at where the real crime is happening, where the real problem is, and pretends it does not exist, and then tries to distract Canadians by saying these people over here and these people over here and with these types of guns are the problem, which of course they are not.

To go through the possession and acquisition of a firearm in this country is a pretty stringent process that includes background checks. This is not where the crime is coming from and yet this is where the government chooses to focus its attention. I would like to say I find it disappointing, but disappointing does not go nearly far enough.

What the government should be focusing on is how to stop these guns from coming across the border. That would be something on which I think every member on this side of the House can agree; though perhaps not the members from the government coalition on this side. They think that this bill is also the panacea to gun violence that is going on in this country: to crack down on legal firearms owners who have to go through a rigorous process to acquire those guns and are actually not the ones who are committing crimes. This makes absolutely no sense to me. It is a government that is saying it is not going to do the hard work because the hard work is hard.

It would be hard. It would take incredible investment in resources, in guns and gangs task forces, in border security and in border control to make sure that we stop these guns from pouring across the border and being used to commit violent crimes. That would take a large strategy, a large investment and a lot of moving parts. One thing we know about the current government is that it is not good at dealing with complicated situations in this country. All we have to do is look at how the Liberals are handling the cost of living crisis in this country to know how they would handle this crisis. Why have the Liberals taken this approach?

• (2325)

They have taken this approach because it is an easy-sounding answer. They are going to crack down on guns. That is their slogan. They are cracking down on guns, and that is going to make Canadians safe.

It is a great sound bite, and we all know now that sound bites matter in the fast-paced world of news, the world of social media. It sounds good. They are cracking down on guns. Why are they not cracking down on the 86% of guns that are pouring across the border? I could ask my colleagues across the way that question all night long, and I doubt I would get anything that even resembles an answer.

The problem of their approach in not dealing with the guns coming across the border is that we end up with this surge of violent crime, with a 32% increase. When we break that down, that is 124,000 more violent crimes every single year as compared with 2015, the last time there was a Conservative government.

What they are doing with respect to violent crime and violent offenders is not working. That is a product of a whole bunch of things. It is a product of the Liberals' soft-on-crime approach. It is the product of reforming bail so that it is so easy to get out on bail. We know the disastrous consequences that we have seen as a result of that across this country.

Whether we look at police officers who have been killed in the line of duty or a family that had some of their members stabbed in a violent stabbing, this is the result of people who are out on bail. Why are they out on bail? It is because the government chose to reform bail in its soft-on-crime approach. It has led to a surge in violence across the country.

We might say that cannot be true. In fact, a study was looked at, and in Vancouver, 40 offenders committed 6,000 crimes in one year. We can think about that for a second. If all they did was keep those 40 people in jail, how many fewer crimes would be committed in Vancouver? However, the Liberals will not do it. I have no understanding of why they will not. It is their catch-and-release justice system.

With respect to guns, how on earth can they say that the answer to gun violence in this country is to try to take away firearms from farmers, hunters and indigenous people? It defies logic. It defies explanation. Quite frankly, it will do absolutely nothing to solve the problem. What we need is a massive change in how guns are dealt with in this country.

The border should be the focus. Guns and gangs task forces should be the focus. The focus should not be law-abiding firearms owners in the country, who have to go through an extensive process to acquire those firearms, to transport those firearms and to store those firearms. These are not the people who are the problem.

The repeat violent offenders who are getting their weapons smuggled across the border are the problem, and these folks are just pretending that problem does not exist. It is a huge problem for me that we are taking up the time of the chamber and of the government to deal with a non-issue, not the real issue.

*Government Orders*

Why is the government not moving on guns and gangs? Why is it not moving on sealing the border to stop the avalanche of guns that are coming across?

● (2330)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member is just wrong.

He makes an assertion but does not care about the facts. He says that we are not doing anything at the borders. Last year, alone, there was 1,200 guns that were confiscated at the border and over 73,000 weapons. The member knows this because I raised this issue earlier. He just closes his eyes and pretends it did not happen, and he says something that is not true.

That is a theme in regard to this legislation. The Conservatives try to give the impression that we are going out and taking all the guns away from hunters, farmers and indigenous people. It is just not true.

Does the member not realize that espousing misinformation does a disservice to Canadians? Why does the Conservative Party continue to do it?

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** Madam Speaker, if espousing misinformation is something that should not be done, the member should probably choose not to rise to ask questions.

Just because some guns were seized at the border does not mean the problem has been solved. Did the member not listen to the deputy police chief who recently said that 86% of the guns used to commit gun crimes in the city of Toronto were smuggled across the border?

You seized a couple of guns. Good for you. There are 86% more. Why are you not focusing on that instead of hunters?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I would remind the member that he is to address questions and comments through the Chair and not the individual member. He has been here long enough to know that.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I was going to compliment the member on his demeanour, and not being crazy like some of the Conservative inter-venors have been this evening, but I think he is on the edge.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I would remind the hon. member that we had a conversation about putting labels on individuals, so I think it best not to raise issues on a personal note but related to the debate itself.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Madam Speaker, you are absolutely right about interventions and to make no inference to individuals.

The reality is, as the member well knows, there are no firearms that would be taken away as a result of Bill C-21. This has been a repeated question to the Conservatives tonight, and they have not been able to mention one firearm that is impacted.

They talk about what could happen one day. We are dealing with legislation, and we are dealing with facts. There is absolutely nothing to the Conservative allegations around that because those amendments, thanks to the NDP, were withdrawn, both G-4 and G-46.

He talked about criminal gangs in Vancouver. We have seen a tenfold increase in the Lower Mainland. He talked about the use of ghost guns, the untraceable weapons that law enforcement have been unable to combat because they do not have the legislation, the legal tools.

The Conservatives have been stalling by filibustering this bill. If the member is really sincere about combatting criminals, why will the Conservatives not adopt the provisions around ghost guns to combat these gangs and criminals?

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** Madam Speaker, if the member, in his power as the junior partner in the coalition, wants to carve all those sections out of this bill and bring it back to the House, we might be able to have a conversation.

What the member does not address in any of his questions is why the junior partner in this coalition is not pushing the government to deal with the 86% of guns that are smuggled across the border. Why does the member not use his influence with the government to get that done?

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, there have been a great number of things said in the House tonight about Bill C-21 that would have applied at one point or another in the evolution of the bill, but which are no longer true, so I think it is very important to stress that the airsoft gun issue is resolved.

The list of guns and the list of various types of weapons that were introduced midway through the process, and later aborted at clause-by-clause, as well as the work that has been done to resolve other aspects and the fact this bill deals with ghost guns are all things that need to be emphasized at this late hour.

● (2335)

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** Madam Speaker, I think the challenge is that the Liberals are going to be able to classify other prohibited weapons as they go. This is from the government that said it would not raise the carbon tax above \$65 a tonne, so I am not sure how we can trust what it is going to do with this firearms committee.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure tonight to speak to Bill C-21. Even though I represent an urban riding, I can say there is a lot of interest in that bill. Saskatchewan firearms owners are respectful; they are law-abiding citizens and many feel that the bill is simply an infringement on their rights.

When Bill C-21 came forward last fall, I was kind of hopeful it would include measures that would be tough on crime and crack down on illegal smuggled handguns, which are part of the 32% increase in violent crime since the current government took office eight years ago.

### *Government Orders*

First off, I want to thank the grassroots movement in this country, like hunters, sport shooters, indigenous groups and farmers, who really are concerned about their livelihood. They are concerned about their sport, their culture and, above all, their public safety for pushing back against the Liberal Party's agenda.

Many amendments, as we know, came forward. Many were pushed aside by the government, as Conservatives on the public safety committee listened to the testimony and recognized the many flaws in Bill C-21. A major concern with the legislation, and we have heard it a lot tonight, is that it would target competitive sport shooters in such a way that it could lead to the demise of the sport.

The legislation would effectively mean that those who use lawfully obtained handguns to participate in internationally recognized sport would no longer be able to do so. The bill would outlaw competitive sport shooting, except for individuals who are already training for the Olympics. The amendment that was put forward by our party would have allowed members of the International Practical Shooting Confederation to continue to participate in their sport, but it was voted down.

I want to talk about my province of Saskatchewan, and I want to thank the leadership of the provincial government, because it is well ahead of the federal Liberals. Back in September 2021, the Province of Saskatchewan appointed its own chief firearms officer, proactively getting ahead of the Liberal government. Saskatchewan has several concerns with respect to Bill C-21, and the ability for the new legislation to be effectively implemented while supporting impacts on public safety.

I consulted with Robert Freberg. Many members know Mr. Freberg. He is the chief firearms officer for Saskatchewan, and I think he is nationally recognized as the expert in this field. Many of the initiatives in the legislation before us would rely heavily on both law enforcement and the ability for chief firearms officers across Canada to issue prohibitions, revocations and refusals of licence, and to be the primary resource to investigate public safety concerns related to firearms.

Mr. Freberg has told us that the Province of Saskatchewan has been so successful in this area, since the province has not only designated its own provincial chief firearms officer, but it has also established the provincial firearms office, which is currently supporting law enforcement efforts to deal with the illegal use and possession of firearms. This includes mental health; domestic abuse; criminal activities; and enhancing overall education, which is a big one, around safe storage and proper licensing.

The Firearms Act clearly states that Canada should negotiate a federal contribution agreement with the provincial CFOs, which has not occurred since Saskatchewan and its neighbouring province to the west, Alberta, actually took over CFO positions back in 2021.

• (2340)

The Province of Saskatchewan is currently funding 100% of the work currently being performed not only by Mr. Freberg, who is the chief firearms officer, but also by the entire office. It has also provided significant additional funding for the establishment of a new provincial firearms ballistics lab to assist with law enforce-

ment on firearms involved in criminal investigations. This, I might add, is with no financial support, again, from the federal government.

Currently, it can take two years for results for exhibits that have been submitted by police to the federal ballistics lab for testing. This actually occurred after the RCMP closed several provincial labs, including the one in Saskatchewan, which previously supported those important law enforcement needs and initiatives. How could Bill C-21 be successful if the agencies responsible for the overall implementation and enforcement are not adequately funded and are now being asked to do much more with much less? I would say my province has spent over \$9 million and is waiting for even a dime from the federal government to help it out. Let us keep in mind that we started a chief firearms office nearly a year and a half ago, because Saskatchewan did not trust the federal government.

Many of the announcements around the May 2020 order in council handgun ban and Bill C-21 have severely impacted the focus on the Canadian firearms program and its performance in the critical public safety investigations required, as they are now negatively impacting managing the fallout of excessive call volume from licensed firearms owners due to the hastily announced legislation that was put in place with absolutely no consultation or input from them. Many law-abiding firearms owners continue to experience lengthy delays, some actually over a year now, trying to simply renew or acquire a firearms licence. How can they stay in compliance or be properly licensed if they cannot even communicate with the Canadian firearms program due to the program now being fully inundated with call traffic?

The current handgun freeze and subsequent inability for law-abiding firearms owners to acquire or even transfer a handgun has significantly impacted not only public safety but also the financial investment and loss in value that these individuals in my province are now experiencing. If an individual should become deceased or even experience a health or financial issue that creates a situation where they would like to initiate a legal transfer to another licensed individual, today, they simply cannot do that. This results in the individual having to surrender the restricted firearms to the police for destruction, or having to engage the extremely limited scope of services for a very specialized licensed dealer or exporter.

Dealers can purchase, as we know. However, given that there is an extremely limited market for resale, they are unlikely ever to participate. There is no buyback program, as currently stated in the May 2020 OIC. Given that there would be no current provisions to ever grandfather the existing owners, as there previously were under the regulations in 12(6), which allowed for the transfer to still occur between licensed grandfathered individuals, there is a high likelihood that these current firearms could become diverted in some circumstances rather than staying registered and managed as they presently are.

*Government Orders*

• (2345)

**Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member could comment on the fact that firearms-related incidents in northern Saskatchewan went up by 75% from 2017 to 2021, or the fact that the shooting in The Danforth in Toronto was done with a gun that was stolen in Saskatchewan.

I guess it really comes down to a fundamental question: Who on earth, in this country, other than police or the military, needs a handgun?

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Madam Speaker, most of these, if not all, are illegal firearms in northern Saskatchewan. We know that. A lot of the “tough on crime” that the Liberals have not done over the last eight years is now paying massive dividends in northern Saskatchewan, as the member talked about.

We are in trouble in northern Saskatchewan for a very good reason. It is because they are not tough on crime. We have seen many people, day in, day out, go into court who should be sentenced and are not. They get out and do the same tactics they did a week before, and this is part of the problem we have right now in northern Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his speech. He does a very effective job as vice-chair at the Canadian heritage committee, and often chairs our meetings. I appreciate his work. However, there are some things that need to be corrected from his speech.

First is the fact that there are no guns being removed as a result of Bill C-21. He knows that. Both the G-4 and G-46 amendments, because of NDP pressure, were withdrawn. That is fact number one.

Fact number two is that the emphasis of Bill C-21 is on ghost guns. Ghost guns have been a scourge of many parts of this country, with a tenfold increase in the lower mainland of British Columbia. This is something that law enforcement needs additional powers to combat. These are criminal gangs and criminals who are using these untraceable firearms. That is the focus of the bill, and that is something that he should be in favour of.

Third, he did mention sport shooters. This morning, I was surprised to see the Conservatives table an amendment to remove an exemption for sport shooters who are in the Olympics or the Paralympics. That is an exemption that we believe in because the NDP did table the amendment.

On the International Practical Shooting Confederation, we believe—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** We have a point of order.

The hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin.

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Madam Speaker, the hon. member knows that it is against the rules of the House to mislead the House. The hon. member knows that he was approached by a hard-working, Conservative staff member, who asked him personally to understand that there was an administrative error made—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** That is debate.

Order. The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby and the hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin know these are points of debate, and it is not proper to be debating while I have the floor.

I would ask the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby to finish up.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Madam Speaker, why did Conservatives table this motion to remove the exemption—

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I would ask the hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin to not speak while someone else has the floor. If he continues, he can either leave the chamber or be asked to leave.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Madam Speaker, the Conservatives have tabled this as Motion No. 12. It removes the exemption for sport shooters, for Olympic and Paralympic competitions. Conservatives have filed this. Why did they file this?

• (2350)

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Madam Speaker, let me talk about ghost guns after three hours in the House. The respected member for Kootenay—Columbia, who is a former RCMP officer of over 30 years, brought it up to the government over two and a half years ago. It did nothing at that time.

Then the member for Kootenay—Columbia asked a very important question: Where is the education in this law? Where is the education? I have to thank the Saskatoon Wildlife Federation for all the great work it does. With this bill, the federal government has done nothing on the education process going forward on Bill C-21. It should be ashamed.

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Madam Speaker, there are a lot of issues that come with this type of debate. I appreciate my colleague talking about the reality in urban Saskatchewan versus rural Saskatchewan. Does he want to elaborate?

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Madam Speaker, believe it or not, even though I am an urban MP, I get a lot of calls. In my province, people want to be outdoors. They want to shoot guns and sport shoot. I have to thank the Wildlife Federation that does a wonderful job in my community.

The one thing I will say is that I am so proud of Bob Freberg and the Province of Saskatchewan. They are still owed \$9 million by the federal government because it has not paid for the officer or the office.

**Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I join this debate. I am going to speak for a bit and then I will take some questions because I have some answers I would like to give to a few of the questions that were asked in the chamber this evening. I hope members will stay and have the courage to ask me the same questions they asked other members.

*Government Orders*

I am really standing up for the law-abiding firearms owners in Saskatchewan this evening, because despite what the junior coalition partner NDP and the Liberals say, we all know that the two amendments that were brought forward with members kicking and screaming were about, with one, trying to create a backdoor registry and, with the second, a minimal change to the definition, which really did not affect the legislation at all.

When we talked about amendments, several times this evening my colleagues tried to put forward a unanimous motion to change an amendment that had a clerical error. Years ago, this would not have happened. Years ago, under Tom Mulcair or Jack Layton, they would have been honoured to accept that unanimous consent motion and it would have been changed because it was simply a clerical error. Time and time again, the House leader stood and mischaracterized what happened, which is a sore spot for Conservatives because we do like to try to work together in this House. What we have seen tonight was complete disrespect for how this chamber is supposed to work.

I will go back to standing up for law-abiding firearms owners across Saskatchewan. Regina—Lewvan is an urban riding that has sport shooters, hunters, people who go to the range to trap-shoot and the Regina Wildlife Federation, good, salt-of-the-earth people who just want to keep their traditions alive. Earlier on in this debate about law-abiding firearms owners, we learned that it really was not about decreasing crime. It was really about going after something that people do not understand.

I have some quotes by people who are not traditional Conservatives. One is from Chief Heather Bear from the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations. Chief Heather Bear stated:

When guns are confiscated from sustenance hunters, it impacts them and their families when they have merely been trying to put food on the table.

When guns are confiscated it may also impact the whole nation, especially those who hunt for ceremonial purposes, in that sometimes we only need traditional food for ceremonies....

If there are no safety issues and there is no issue of domestic violence or any kind of violence, then taking away a gun impacts our nations and our citizens' ability to assert our inherent, and treaty and constitutional rights. We also view our guns as a tool of our first nations sustenance hunters.

That is not a traditional Conservative supporter. I would also say that I do not think she would be a conspiracy theorist. I think she has some genuine concern about what is going to happen with their traditional way of life and how they will feed their families. I dare any member in this House to stand and say that is fearmongering, as has been said so often tonight about Conservatives who have brought forward concerns from their constituents.

We all represent our constituents and it is being boiled down by some in the NDP who are terrified by this debate right now because they know they are going to lose seats in rural Canada due to being on the wrong side of history on this. We need to remember when Liberals, in the 1990s, brought in the long gun registry. I remember that they were going to drop crime and crime statistics were going to plummet because they were going to take long guns away from our hunters and farmers. This is just rinse and repeat.

We see right now that violent crime has gone up 32% in our country, with the Liberals doing nothing with their hug-a-thug poli-

cies. We are seeing gang violence increase by over 90%. Do we think this legislation is going to prevent that?

I have my PAL. I know how long it took to get my possession and acquisition licence. I know that every morning my name goes through CPIC, and the Liberals and NDP are trying to take advantage of people who do not know what the regulations are around this. Every morning my name goes through CPIC, like every other person who has a PAL, to make sure they have not done anything wrong. If they go through, police officers know that people have firearms in their possession because of our PAL and that there could be dangerous situations, which does not happen with law-abiding firearms owners.

● (2355)

Robert Freberg came and talked to the Saskatchewan caucus. Do members know how many crimes in Saskatchewan have been committed with a legally owned firearm? Fewer than a handful, he said. If people in this chamber think voting for the bill is going to drop crime rates in our country, either they are lying to themselves or they do not understand what the bill would actually do.

We know that with the so-called NDP standing up for these amendments, there is going to be a firearms advisory committee. This committee is going to then use it as a back door to bring through more legislation and take guns away from law-abiding hunters and farmers.

I just got off the phone with the Agribition CEO, Kim Hextall. She asked why they would want to take away firearms from people who use them for protecting their livestock and for removing varmints. These are the people none of these members in this chamber are standing up for, and I think it is something that should be taken very seriously. If they are going to take gun crime seriously and try to get gang members to not have illegal firearms, perhaps they should not have voted in favour of Bill C-5, which lessened the penalties for all these crimes.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to read from a news article: "The final report of the Mass Casualty Commission (MCC) investigating the April 2020 mass shooting in Nova Scotia that left 22 people dead makes several recommendations to meaningfully change Canada's gun laws." The headline reads, "MCC report calls for stricter gun laws".

Is there any situation in which the Conservative Party would support stricter gun laws?

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** Madam Speaker, there absolutely is.

The Prime Minister said on December 19, 2022, that “there are some guns, yes, that we’re going to have to take away from people who were using them to hunt.”

[Translation]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** It being 11:59 p.m., pursuant to order made Tuesday, May 9, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the report stage of the bill now before the House.

[English]

The question is on Motion No. 1. A vote on this motion also applies to Motion Nos. 2 to 6, 9 and 12.

[Translation]

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.

• (2400)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, we request a recorded vote.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The question is on Motion No. 10. A vote on this motion also applies to Motion No. 11. 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.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, again, I would request a recorded vote.

[Translation]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The recorded division on the motion stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motion No. 11.

[English]

The question is on Motion No. 13.

[Translation]

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.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, again, I would ask for a recorded vote.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The recorded division stands deferred.

Normally, at this time, the House would proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions at the report stage of the bill. However, pursuant to order made Thursday, June 23, 2022, the recorded divisions stand deferred until Wednesday, May 17, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader has a point of order.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I suspect that if you were to canvass the House, it would be okay to call it 12:20 so we can begin the late show.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I have received notice from all recognized parties that they are in agreement with this request.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

### CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, at the outset of the pandemic, a number of very young adults graduated out of foster care. Of course, in the first summer of the pandemic, there was no employment because the economy was effectively shut down for public health reasons. Normally, kids graduating out of foster care, if they did not have employment, would apply for social assistance with the provincial government. The Government of Manitoba told them that it would not even entertain their applications unless they had applied for every other possible source of revenue. Of course, at that time, CERB had just been made available, so the provincial government gave those kids the link and said they should go and apply. The provincial government knew full well that it was a no-fail application process. Those kids did what the government told them to do. They applied for the CERB and started receiving CERB because they were not eligible for social assistance.

Then, much later, they were told by the federal government that they were not eligible for social assistance and that they had to pay all the money back. Of course, the provincial government was not going to give them back pay on the social assistance that they otherwise would have been entitled to. These are some of the people who are now struggling to pay back that CERB debt. To insist on these kids' paying that debt back to the federal government is a surefire way to undermine them as they try to get a start in life after a difficult childhood.

The federal government says it is going to deal compassionately with these cases using a case-by-case approach, but the evidence is that a lot of people are getting the bills in the mail. They are having a hard time getting through to the CRA. They are not getting the debt relief they require. The compassionate thing to do would be to have a general policy of debt amnesty for low-income Canadians who got CERB but were not eligible. That is the compassionate approach, but the government refuses to do it and, instead, insists on this case-by-case approach.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Let us contrast that with the treatment of companies under the Canada emergency wage subsidy program. As early as December 2020, the Financial Post was reporting that at least 68 companies that got the wage subsidy were paying out dividends to their shareholders. Some of those companies include Imperial Oil and Suncor, which would go on to make record profits. I mean that they made more profit than they have ever made, ever in their entire history, over the course of the pandemic. Do members know how much the government has asked them to repay? It is zero dollars.

Let us talk about the Ottawa country club that got the Canada emergency wage subsidy. It actually ended up having a banner year because it had a way for people to play golf in a socially distanced manner. It decided to advance its capital plan to repave its parking lot by about three years with the money it got from the emergency wage subsidy program. Do members know how much it has been asked to repay? It is zero dollars, not a cent.

In Edmonton, Cessco Fabrication and Engineering Ltd. locked out its employees and used the wage subsidy to hire scab labour to come in behind the picket line and perform the work of unionized employees who were exercising their legal and constitutional right to strike. Do members know how much it has been asked to pay back? It is zero dollars.

Why is it that foster kids graduating out of care in Manitoba during a global pandemic, who were told by government to apply for the CERB and just did what they were told, cannot get any compassionate relief policy out of the government, but giant corporations that got money they were not entitled to, which then went on to abuse workers, spend money on parking lots or pay it out to wealthy shareholders, are not being pursued by the government in the same way? Where is the fairness in that?

• (2405)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I believe our government's approach during the pandemic was compassionate, fair and responsible.

[*English*]

I listened tonight to my colleague, and I mentioned before the respect I have for him. He continues to raise such matters, as is his right, but he neglects to mention what the Canada emergency wage subsidy, or the CEWS, a signature pandemic emergency response program, was all about. Yes, wage subsidy support did go to large corporations, but the vast majority of the funds under the program went, in fact, to small businesses. It went to medium-sized businesses as well, but, in the main, it was small businesses, mom-and-pop shops, restaurants, retailers, those in manufacturing and entrepreneurs who had started businesses and had put their blood, sweat and tears into those businesses. They were the ones getting the support.

Failing to mention that, in a way, takes us down a path that would misunderstand what the CEWS program was all about. It was about keeping employees on the payroll. It was about making sure those employees who had been laid off as a result of the pandemic could be rehired. By and large, it was an enormous success.

If my colleague is looking for perfection, he will look a long time. There is no perfect policy, but I go back to the fact that in the context of a pandemic, where one had to fly the plane and build it at the same time, so to speak, this proved to be an enormously successful program.

My friend does not have to take that only from me; he can talk to the business community. He will note that unions have spoken about the importance of the wage subsidy. Again, it is not a perfect program, but it is a program that did help enormous numbers of Canadians, businesses and their employees, by the thousands.

In my own community of London, Ontario, I saw it at work. It was quite successful there as well. Whether it is on the street or in the constituency office, I continue to hear about the role it had.

On CERB, the Canada emergency response benefit, my colleague has not mentioned it here, but he has raised in the past the idea of a blanket CERB amnesty. I get where he is coming from on that, but he fails to mention here, too, that, as a general fairness principle, one has to be very open to the obligation of the government to ensure eligibility. That is, in fact, what the Canada Revenue Agency is doing now. It is going back and ensuring that those who actually received the CERB were eligible for it. If that effort is not made, it really goes against the whole idea of a social safety net. One has to, in principle, always be open to the idea that in order to receive program support under any social safety net, and the CERB is an example of that, one needs to be eligible for it.

The government is taking that approach. It is also putting in place an approach that says to those individuals that they have the ability to have a repayment plan offered through the CRA, so that, if they cannot afford to pay the lump sum of the amount owing, they can have a repayment plan to pay incrementally whatever they can afford on a monthly basis.

• (2410)

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Madam Speaker, I think my friend needs a slight history lesson. He will recall that it was actually the NDP that called for the wage subsidy program in the first place. The Liberals proposed a 10% wage replacement rate, and New Democrats argued for a 75% replacement rate because we understood that this was an important program.

This is not to take away from the good work CEWS did, just as the CERB did a lot of good work, but the difference is that in the case of the wage subsidy the people who abused it, who should not have received it, were big corporations making a lot of money. In the case of CERB, there is a whole bunch of people who did abuse that program by committing identity fraud and through other ways of getting it. The New Democrats have been very clear that this money should be pursued.

However, for the folks who applied in desperation and who continue to have low incomes, New Democrats believe compassion has to be shown. Why is there compassion for giant companies and not compassion for the poor?

*Adjournment Proceedings*

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos:** Madam Speaker, there certainly is compassion for the poor. I could mention the number of policies that this government has introduced from the Canada child benefit, now the Canada dental benefit to the grocery rebate that we have introduced through budget 2023. However, to the substantive point, individuals do have the option of a repayment plan instead of an amnesty program that I know my colleague favours. That is a fair approach. It still ensures eligibility criteria are verified.

If individuals were not, in fact, eligible, I think the vast majority of Canadians would expect repayment but they would also expect a compassionate approach on the part of the CRA. That is why if individuals, as I said before, are not able to pay in one lump sum, they can do so on a periodic basis. Again, in setting that up with the CRA, they can find a plan that works for them.

Finally, an appeals process exists for all cases where an individual is dissatisfied.

## HOUSING

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the Liberals do not understand the housing crisis in this country. The Prime Minister said this week that “we have taken significant steps on supporting low-income renters, including a \$500 housing benefit top-up”. Five hundred dollars is supposed to end the housing crisis in Canada? I could not believe my ears. I have some news for the Prime Minister, the price for an unfurnished one-bedroom rental home in Metro Vancouver has climbed to \$3,000 a month. Families, persons with disabilities, single mothers, students and seniors in Vancouver can no longer afford to live there. The housing crisis has only gotten worse under the Liberal government.

A study out of UBC this week says that B.C. renters are the most likely to be evicted, 10.5% of B.C. renters have been forced to move in the last five years due to sales of their rental home and reno-ovictions. That is compared to 5.9% in the rest of Canada. The Prime Minister said, “We are introducing measures to end rent evictions.”. News again to the Prime Minister, whatever those measures are they are not working and they are doubly not working in B.C.

At Winsome Place apartment building in Surrey, the low-income residents got a surprise in their mailboxes this month. The landlord delivered them a document labelled “agreement to above guideline rent increase”. The landlord said that if they did not sign and accept a \$400 increase in their rents their units would be sold in the next few months. These were seniors who have lived in that apartment building for a very long time. This is the reality in the rental housing market right now.

The government is more than halfway through its 10-year national housing strategy, with more than \$31 billion spent, yet the costs of housing are not going down. More people are going homeless and CMHC says that we need more financialization of housing to solve the problem. Really, more financialization of housing? They want more investors to use the luxury condos as investment vehicles? The government is subsidizing developers and corporate investors with its low-interest loans. This is not a solution to the rental housing crisis for mid- and low-income Canadians.

What the Liberal government continue to not understand is that this is a housing crisis and it is causing other social crises in our

communities. It is causing homelessness. It is causing opioid overdoses and it is increasing social problems in the lives of Canadians. The lackadaisical attitude of the Liberals to truly fix this crisis and instead hold on to their market-driven solution of trickle-down “condo-nomics” is hurting people. Just consider the disgusting comments in QP today from the Conservative leader in regards to ending clinically proven safe supply. If the government does not get serious about creating affordable housing and getting Canadians into homes, more people will die.

When are the Liberals going to take the housing crisis seriously and make housing truly affordable for all Canadians?

• (2415)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. Housing affordability is one of the most important challenges in the country today, especially for the most vulnerable people.

[*English*]

Everybody needs and deserves a place to call home. It is why we have made housing a priority since the beginning of our mandate. It is why we launched Canada’s first-ever national housing strategy in 2017, and it is why we have continued to add new programs, new approaches and new adjustments in subsequent budgets since then.

One of our newest programs, the housing accelerator fund, is designed to reduce the turnaround time on new housing. It provides incentives to municipalities to cut red tape and streamline their processes. Applications are being accepted as of this month, but as a former mayor and former councillor, I say we have to work with municipalities.

I was incredibly disturbed to see the Conservatives’ demands toward municipalities, with respect to what they needed to do for housing funds. That is not the correct approach. We need to work with our municipal partners.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

What we need is a systematic change to how housing is built in this country and to introduce changes that will pay off long into the future. The program I am talking about is built on collaboration with our municipal partners, and we are continuing that collaborative approach with a new co-operative housing development program. We are working directly with the Co-operative Housing Federation Of Canada and others in this sector on this initiative, and we are backing that work with \$500 million in contribution funding and \$1 billion in loans. That amounts to the largest investment in building new co-op housing in this country in more than 30 years.

These are just a couple of examples of activity happening now through the national housing strategy, and adjustments are being made to build on its success. I can stand here tonight and throw out numbers that show that the plan is succeeding, numbers that show that, generally, we are ahead of schedule on most of the strategy's metrics.

I would rather stand here though and tell members about lives that have been touched through the strategy's programs. I would rather talk about Canadian Forces veteran Bill Beaton, who went from being homeless to living in a veteran's house, a supportive housing facility constructed with funding from the national housing co-investment fund, or Krystal in Surrey, British Columbia, who experienced poverty as a child. As an adult, she is helping the next generation of indigenous people in Surrey through the Skookum housing solutions project.

There are real people who have benefited from the government's work on housing across the country. We will continue this work in partnership with our friends in the NDP, in pursuit of housing affordability for all, and I hope we can count on the support of the other parties in the House to do that.

• (2420)

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:** Madam Speaker, certainly, my colleague across the aisle and I can agree that some of the language we are

hearing from the Conservative Party right now is harmful to Canadians.

I just wanted to mention that, last night, there was an opportunity to speak for almost four hours on housing. The housing accelerator fund came up by the Minister of Housing tens, if not hundreds of times, last night, yet at the same time the government continues to talk about the housing accelerator fund, more and more people are going homeless in the country. Really, what we need is some real investment in social housing and in low-income housing for Canadians. It has been almost 40 years since there has been investment.

I am going to close by just following up on something that the member just mentioned, co-op housing. I cannot get a meeting confirmed with the minister and a co-op housing organization in my riding. It was promised to me 19 days ago. Can the member reply as to whether the minister will make this meeting that he agreed to?

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Madam Speaker, I will close with this thought. First of all, we absolutely share the desire, the hon. member and myself, as well as, I think, people from all of our parties, to make sure that everybody in this country has a home, that everybody in this country who is vulnerable is given the chance to have affordable housing. That is what we all need to strive for.

As to the question from the hon. member, I will be very happy to go back to check with the minister's office on the status of her request. I will come back to her tomorrow at question period, when I can find out the answer to that question.

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until later this day at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12:22 a.m.)





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