



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

43rd PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION

---

# House of Commons Debates

Official Report  
(Hansard)

Volume 150 No. 061  
Thursday, February 18, 2021

---

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



## **CONTENTS**

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

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, February 18, 2021

The House met at 10 a.m.

---

*Prayer*

---

- (0905)
- [*English*]

## POINTS OF ORDER

### SAFE AND REGULATED SPORTS BETTING ACT

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. Yesterday, the House voted on Bill C-218, an act to amend the Criminal Code, sports betting, at second reading. The government has also introduced a bill on the same issue: Bill C-13, an act to amend the Criminal Code, single event sport betting.

Page 568 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, 2017, respecting the rule of anticipation, states, “If a decision is taken on the first bill”—as was the case with Bill C-218—“then the other”—in this case, Bill C-13—“may not be proceeded with.”

Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if you could please inform the House of the impact the second-reading vote on Bill C-218 has on Bill C-13.

- (1000)

**The Speaker:** I want to thank the hon. member for his question. We will be getting back to the House with an answer as soon as possible.

- (1005)

### ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

**Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise a point of order with respect to the Adjournment Proceedings last evening.

During the Adjournment Proceedings, the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, in responding to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, referred very explicitly to my absence from the House of Commons. That is an egregious break of parliamentary procedure. It breaks the rules of the House of Commons.

There are times when members of Parliament, including you, Mr. Speaker, need to be away from the House of Commons, and it is a

long-standing parliamentary tradition that this is respected. That is why we are indeed called “honourable” and are able to use that title for each other with respect, and it is very important. The member broke that tradition by referring to the fact that I was not in attendance in the House last evening. I was not able to be in the House last evening. As many members of Parliament will recognize, there are often times when we are not able to be in attendance. Our responsibility, and my responsibility as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, is to ensure that a question would be answered, and it was ably answered by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health.

I would like the Speaker to consider this and to recognize that this is not a new member of Parliament. He is someone who has been here for over five years. I would expect that an apology would be forthcoming and that it would be understood that this is way the House needs to operate.

**The Speaker:** I want to thank the hon. member for his intervention and point of order. As he was speaking, I saw what was said and, yes, I want to remind the hon. members that referring to someone's presence in the House or lack of presence in the House is not permitted. We rely on individual members' honour to respect that code so that we can keep civility in this chamber and continue to do our jobs so that Canadians can be proud of what goes on in their democracy.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge the point. I believe that what I said last night was that the parliamentary secretary could not be bothered to be here to answer the question. I acknowledge that I misspoke. What I intended to say would have been that the government could not be bothered to send a person who was responsible for the file. A range of individuals are responsible for the file. I apologize for misspeaking. I should have framed my response more carefully to get at the point I intended to convey, and I hope, in the future, somebody who is not the parliamentary secretary of—

**The Speaker:** I will interrupt the hon. member there before he digs even further. I just want to remind the hon. members that the apology is accepted, but they cannot say indirectly what they cannot say directly in the House, regardless of how they say it.

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I have extraordinary respect for the Speaker, and I just wanted to clarify that this whole issue is over the fact that the member for Don Valley West made all of Canada know that he was not in the chamber. I think he might have done this in a more subtle manner, so that he was not drawing attention to the fact that he was not in the chamber.

*Routine Proceedings*

**The Speaker:** I am not sure that is a point of order. That is more argument, but I am not going to go any further on that. I will just continue.

---

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### CRIMINAL CODE

**Hon. Marc Garneau (for the Minister of Justice)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-22, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.

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

\* \* \*

● (1010)

### INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**Hon. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.):** Pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, a report of the delegation of the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union respecting its participation at the 206th session of the governing council, which was held virtually from November 1 to 3, 2020.

\* \* \*

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the following seven reports of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts: the fifth report, entitled “Immigration Removals”; the sixth report, entitled “Student Financial Assistance”; the seventh report, entitled “Request for Government Response to the 65th Report from the 42nd Parliament, First Session”; the eighth report, entitled “Request for Government Response to the 66th Report from the 42nd Parliament, First Session”; the ninth report, entitled “Request for Government Response to the 67th Report from the 42nd Parliament, First Session”; the 10th report, entitled “Request for Government Response to the 69th Report from the 42nd Parliament, First Session”; and the 11th report, entitled “Request for Government Response to the 70th Report from the 42nd Parliament, First Session”.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to each of these seven reports.

\* \* \*

### PROTECTION OF FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE ACT

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC):** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-268, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (intimidation of health care professionals).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to introduce my private member's bill, entitled the “protection of freedom of conscience act”.

I have introduced this legislation to ensure in plain language those rights guaranteed to all Canadians in the charter. This bill seeks to enshrine in law a minimum national standard of protections for the freedom of conscience of medical professionals, while respecting the jurisdiction of my provincial colleagues to expand on this bill. It would ensure that medical professionals who choose to not take part in, or refer a patient for, euthanasia or medical assistance in dying would never be forced by violence, threats, coercion or loss of employment to violate the sovereign rights we all enjoy by virtue of our citizenship in this nation.

I encourage all my colleagues in this place to ratify my bill, thereby stating unequivocally that the right to free conscience expressed in the charter applies equally to all Canadians, regardless of their chosen profession.

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

\* \* \*

● (1015)

### FISHERIES ACT

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-269, An Act to amend the Fisheries Act (prohibition — deposit of raw sewage).

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill would make it illegal to dump untreated waste water into any body of water that contains fish habitat. This bill would remove the power of the federal minister to grant permits to municipalities to dump raw sewage into waterways, as happened when the former environment minister gave permission to Montreal to dump eight billion litres of raw sewage into the St. Lawrence River.

When it comes to the environment, the Prime Minister acts completely phony. He talks a good game, but when the City of Montreal asked to be allowed to dump its raw sewage into one of Canada's most important waterways, he told them to go ahead. This bill would remove the power of federal ministers to grant permission to municipalities to damage vital fish habitats.

The Liberal government has a terrible record on the environment. It has not planted a single tree out of its promised two billion. Its carbon tax is neither revenue neutral—

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the member knows, and you just indicated, that when members introduce a bill, they are supposed to give a brief description of it, not provide political commentary that might not necessarily be accurate.

**The Speaker:** I thank the member. I will let the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle continue, but I will remind him to be succinct and that this is not a time for debate.

Please proceed.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** Mr. Speaker, this is a very succinct explanation. As members know, private members' bills are often accompanied with a rationale. In fact, usually members talk about the need for their bill. Of course, the need for this bill is to take meaningful action on the environment.

I am almost finished my remarks. I know we have always given the government House leader great latitude when he has the floor in the House, and I promise him that I will not be but a few more moments.

**The Speaker:** Please proceed. I will not interrupt the discourse that is going on, but I will let the member continue, very succinctly.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, the Liberal government has a terrible record on the environment. It has not planted a single tree of its promised two billion, and its carbon tax is neither revenue neutral nor lowering emissions. It has damaged more lakes, rivers—

**The Speaker:** I am sorry, but I am going to have to interrupt. We have a number of points of order coming in. The hon. member for Winnipeg North has the first point of order, and I am not sure of the other one.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I believe it is the former leader of the Green Party for the second point of order.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to reinforce the ruling you just made. We all know that providing political commentary is debate, and this is not a debate. The member should be giving a brief description of the bill. He knows full well that this is the case and I would ask him to respect the rule.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** Mr. Speaker, I am, of course, speaking to the bill. The irony here is that the parliamentary secretary—

**The Speaker:** If the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle can hang on, we have two more points of order. The first one is from the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, and then we will move on to the second one.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I rise with some trepidation to support the point of order just made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

The former leader of the official opposition knows full well what he is doing. As a former speaker of the House, he must know this is a violation of our rules. By the way, I agree with him entirely about the terrible record of the current Liberal government. It is not as bad as that of the former Conservative government, but the introduction of a private member's bill is not a time to deliver a partisan speech.

**The Speaker:** I believe we have slipped into the same thing we were talking about.

The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the point of order raised by members who are not in our political party.

[*English*]

There is only one judge in this situation, Mr. Speaker, and it is you. Obviously these members do not accept what you have said.

### *Routine Proceedings*

They disagree, but this is what democracy is all about. We have debates in Parliament. If the member who tabled the bill has something to say, you are the one who will judge if it is too much, not others.

**The Speaker:** Usually what happens, though, is that it is brought back on a point of order and then it is up to the Speaker to decide. I want to thank the hon. members for bringing that up.

I will let the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle continue, but I remind him that anything more than just the bill itself or the motion itself really borders on debate and it is not the time for debate right now.

The hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

• (1020)

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** Mr. Speaker, I will absolutely respect the guidance there.

Out of the interests of allowing the House to proceed to orders of the day, I will briefly touch upon the aspect of this bill that allows municipalities some time to upgrade their systems. The coming-in-to-force component of this bill is designed to allow municipalities across the country that may not yet have the capacity to fully treat the water they admit into waterways to do so in due course.

I thank the indulgence of members. I think it is very telling that when the Conservatives propose meaningful measures to improve the environment, the Liberals get pretty squirmy.

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

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. You asked the former speaker numerous times to stay on the issue at hand. I find it deplorable that on a Thursday morning when we are trying to get to important issues, he continued, even to the end, to turn this into a circus. I ask you to reflect on that and ask him to reflect on his actions.

**The Speaker:** I will reflect on it and I am sure the hon. member will as well. Thank you for that intervention.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### EXCISE TAX ACT

**Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-270, An Act to amend the Excise Tax Act (school supplies).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to introduce in both official languages a bill to amend the Excise Tax Act to exempt school supplies from the GST.

The bill seeks to promote children's success in school, provide financial assistance to families during the back-to-school season, and encourage students to pursue their studies.

I thank the legislative counsel and House of Commons analyst for their contributions.

*Business of Supply*

[English]

I would like to thank my hon. colleague, the member of Parliament for Lac-Saint-Louis, for supporting my private member's bill.

[Translation]

For promotional purposes, this is also known as the “Dubourg discount”.

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

\* \* \*

[English]

**PETITIONS**

## SEX SELECTION

**Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I table this petition on behalf of Canadians calling on Parliament to prohibit abortions based on gender. In Canada, the abhorrent practice of sex-selective abortions is legally permitted, but I believe a broad consensus exists among Canadians to end it. A National Post opinion poll reported 84% of Canadians believe it should not be permitted to end a pregnancy if a family does not want a child based on gender. I hope this consensus will be reflected in Canada's Criminal Code by our Parliament.

## AIRLINE INDUSTRY

**Mr. Jaime Battiste (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I present a petition signed and supported by over 8,000 Canadians. The impact of COVID-19 has been harshly felt by our local regional airports, including the JA Douglas McCurdy Sydney Airport. The petitioners call on the House to provide urgent financial support to our air industry so that our air carriers can re-establish commercial air service to airports across the country and reconnect our communities as part of a strong cross-country recovery.

• (1025)

[Translation]

## FALUN GONG

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise this morning to present a petition concerning a crucial issue that is of particular importance to our debate today.

[English]

Petitioners are asking the House of Commons to look at the situation in the People's Republic of China, particularly in regard to the campaign of eradication of the practitioners of Falun Dafa, or Falun Gong.

Petitioners point to the issue of organ harvesting and the torture of practitioners of Falun Gong. They point to particular individuals, against whom they ask our government to apply Magnitsky sanctions.

\* \* \*

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Lead-**

**er of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

## OPPOSITION MOTION—RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN CHINA

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC)** moved:

That,

(a) in the opinion of the House, the People's Republic of China has engaged in actions consistent with the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 260, commonly known as the "Genocide Convention", including detention camps and measures intended to prevent births as it pertains to Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims; and

(b) given that (i) where possible, it has been the policy of the Government of Canada to act in concert with its allies when it comes to the recognition of a genocide, (ii) there is a bipartisan consensus in the United States where it has been the position of two consecutive administrations that Uyghur and other Turkic Muslims are being subjected to a genocide by the Government of the People's Republic of China, the House, therefore, recognize that a genocide is currently being carried out by the People's Republic of China against Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims and call on the government to officially adopt this position.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

On a warm night in June of 2009, two Uyghurs were killed by a Han Chinese mob in Guangdong province. Uyghurs are an ethnic Muslim minority in China, making up some 12 million people in a country of 1.4 billion ethnic Han Chinese. These two Uyghurs were among the thousands of Uyghurs who had migrated from their homes in impoverished western China to the bustling manufacturing plants in the south. This influx of Uyghurs created ethnic tensions with the Han majority, which exploded that night.

In response to these two killings, thousands of Uyghurs took to the streets in their home province of Xinjiang, some violently. According to reports, several hundred ethnic Han Chinese were killed. In response, Chinese authorities rounded up thousands of Uyghurs. Unknown numbers were killed.

Ethnic tensions continued to mount, and after President Xi came to power in 2012, a series of terrorist attacks by Uyghurs took place across China. Hundreds of ethnic Han Chinese were killed and wounded. One of these attacks took place in Tiananmen Square, the heart of the Chinese state.

None of this justifies what happened next. According to secret documents obtained by The New York Times, in 2014 President Xi ordered the full force of China's authoritarian state to be unleashed on the Uighurs, as well as on Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and other Muslim minorities. He criticized the approach of western democracies in their war on terrorism for putting "human rights above security" and instructed authorities to "show absolutely no mercy."

Uighurs living abroad suddenly lost contact with family in China. Parents disappeared. Neighbours went missing. Children were told their parents had gone to training school, a school they could not leave. These children were told their behaviour would influence the length of time their parents had to stay at school.

• (1030)

[*Translation*]

The disappeared have been sent to hundreds of detention camps that were built by the Chinese government as quickly as the COVID-19 hospitals were built in Wuhan last year.

Some estimate that more than two million Chinese Muslims have been detained in these camps. Some experts have called this the greatest mass incarceration of an ethnic group since the Holocaust.

[*English*]

Chinese authorities first denied the existence of these camps, but when presented with satellite evidence, they said they were educational training centres. Just a year ago, authorities said that everyone had been released from these camps, but the evidence says otherwise.

A growing body of evidence, which is based on satellite imagery, survivor testimony, leaked documents, smuggled videos and many other sources, document these atrocities. We can no longer ignore this.

Documents obtained by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists highlight what is going on in the camps, including indoctrination, torture and forced labour. Women, men and children are being imprisoned with no chance of escape. Women are subject to sexual violence, mass sterilizations and forced abortions. Birth rates for Uighurs dropped 60% in the three-year period beginning in 2015. Last month, China's embassy in Washington celebrated this in a tweet.

Outside the camps, Xinjiang has turned into an open prison for Uighurs. China has combined the power of an authoritarian state with leading-edge technology to create a surveillance system that is beyond Orwellian. Every single Muslim is tracked. Muslims who do not meet the algorithmic standards are flagged for arrest and detention in camps. Any Uighur who does not follow the direction of authorities is flagged for arrest and detention. There is no procedural fairness, just the brute force of an authoritarian state.

Surveillance cameras are everywhere, but these are not just cameras. These are the gateway to a vast information-gathering system that analyzes every single ethnic Uighur's facial bone structure, expressions and behaviours. Every Uighur is tracked, classified and rated.

### *Business of Supply*

Reports indicate that in 2017, the Chinese authorities required every one of the 12 million Uighurs to go to their local police station to submit biometric data such as DNA samples, voice imprints and facial scans. Uighurs must also have tracking apps on their smart phones. Everything on the phone is tracked. Anything suspicious leads to arrest and detention in the camps.

Digital bar codes are found on the front doors of many Uighur homes allowing the police to check in through smart phone applications. Uighurs must swipe identity cards multiple times a day just to go about their daily lives, for example while shopping or visiting friends. In essence, Uighurs are not only being persecuted, they are being treated as human guinea pigs in the development of surveillance technology for China's new model of an authoritarian system of governance.

There are an estimated 1,400 technology companies working in Xinjiang province, many working closely with state authorities. One of these companies is Huawei. According to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Huawei is extensively involved in state security projects in Xinjiang. This is the same Huawei the Liberal government cannot say no to and which it is in a partnership with, with a \$5-million grant.

Last December, a report from the Center for Global Policy concluded that more than half a million Uighurs are being forced to pick cotton through a coercive state-run system. This is in a region that produces more than a fifth of the world's cotton.

• (1035)

[*Translation*]

China is in the process of eliminating an entire religion and culture. Satellite images show that about twenty Islamic religious sites, including mosques, have been destroyed. Uighur children are not allowed to learn their language or culture.

[*English*]

The state is perpetuating a genocide and committing crimes against humanity through its systematic population controls, sexual violence and mass detentions. These constitute elements of a genocide. These crimes have been documented in numerous reports from think tanks, such as the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, and from reputable news organizations, such as The Wall Street Journal, Associated Press and BBC World Service, which was expelled from China just last week for documenting exactly that.

*Business of Supply*

Two consecutive U.S. administrations have concluded a genocide has taken place, as has the Subcommittee on International Human Rights and numerous MPs in this House on both sides of the aisle. Think tanks like the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights and the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center have also come to the same conclusion, as has Irwin Cotler, the former Liberal minister of justice.

The genocide convention codifies the crime of genocide. It was the very first human rights treaty adopted by the United Nations in December of 1948. It signified the international community's commitment after the Holocaust to never allow it to happen again.

Canada is a state party to the convention. Article 1 clearly establishes Canada's obligation to prevent genocide, even if it is extraterritorial. Article 4 clearly establishes Canada's obligation to take action to punish genocide, including punishing the perpetrators. These obligations are binding and are the norm of international law.

No one pretends the recognition of a genocide will lead to an immediate stop to that genocide, but it is an essential first step. It is a clear call to the world for action, just as Canada's stand on apartheid was so many decades ago.

The evidence is clear. A genocide is taking place. Canada should not evade its responsibility under the convention simply by avoiding the recognition of a genocide. We must show leadership. We must take a stand. This motion must pass.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, there is no doubt a great deal of concern and reflection on Canadian values when we talk about this really important issue.

In his comments, the member made reference to the United States being in favour of calling it a genocide. Can he provide the House some thoughts on Canada being in the Five Eyes with Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States, and indicate whether or not these countries have already stated it is a genocide?

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Madam Speaker, the United States is the only country in the world that has formerly recognized that this constitutes a genocide. It was first recognized by the previous administration. It has since been confirmed by two secretaries of the current administration, both the current secretary of state and secretary of the treasury.

We are calling on the government to work with our allies, particularly our closest ally, the United States, in formally recognizing this Uighur genocide and to take action in order to prevent the continuation of this genocide.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, as a member who was on the Subcommittee for International Human Rights and heard the testimony from former Liberal members of Parliament, human rights groups, international legal experts, and survivors of the genocide, whose testimony of course had the most impact, I recognize and have declared that I see this as a genocide. I will support the bill.

The word "genocide" comes with serious responsibility. If the House of Commons passes this motion today, what actions would the member opposite like to see the government take to ensure an end to the ongoing genocide of the Uighur people?

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Madam Speaker, I believe the government should work closely with our allies and everything should be on the table for consideration when working with our allies. We should be considering Magnitsky sanctions on the perpetrators of this genocide and the officials responsible for these gross human rights violations. We should be formally asking the International Olympic Committee for a relocation of next winter's Olympic games.

Canada has been a world leader in human rights and dignity on the world stage. We took a principled stand on apartheid in South Africa when many of our allies would not. We took a principled stand on the liberation of Europe some 75 years ago from the tyranny of Nazism. It is time for the government to play to the best tradition of this country, recognize this genocide and take commensurate action to stop it.

● (1040)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills and all members in this House who have taken a stand on this issue, particularly through an open letter initially coordinated through the hon. member from the Bloc Québécois, with members from all parties signing it.

I want to put a difficult question for the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. I obviously agree with him that we are seeing a genocide in the Uighur population, but sometimes when I speak to retired senior members of our foreign civil service, there is a tremendous concern that being more aggressive in our communications about the People's Republic of China could result in more difficulty in gaining the release of Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig.

Could my hon. colleague for Wellington—Halton Hills reflect on this?

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Madam Speaker, we are very concerned about the wrongful detention of Mr. Kovrig and Mr. Spavor, as we are with the arbitrary decision to put Mr. Schellenberg on death row, as we are with Huseyin Celil and other Canadians who are the target of China's belligerence.

That said, we strongly believe that being passive in the face of these threats is clearly not the way to respond to China's belligerence. It is time for Canada to join with allies, to stand up for our interests and our citizens, and to stand up for our values. We believe that is the best way to counter the rise and ever-increasing belligerence of this increasingly powerful authoritarian state.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is not only a great pleasure for me to rise in the House today to speak to this motion, it is also a duty. All parliamentarians in the House of Commons should feel that sense of duty.



I will reread the motion for everyone tuning in. It says the following:

That, (a) in the opinion of the House, the People's Republic of China has engaged in actions consistent with the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 260, commonly known as the "Genocide Convention", including detention camps and measures intended to prevent births as it pertains to Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims; and

(b) given that (i) where possible, it has been the policy of the Government of Canada to act in concert with its allies when it comes to the recognition of a genocide, (ii) there is a bipartisan consensus in the United States where it has been the position of two consecutive administrations that Uyghur and other Turkic Muslims are being subjected to a genocide by the Government of the People's Republic of China, the House, therefore, recognize that a genocide is currently being carried out by the People's Republic of China against Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims, and call on the government to officially adopt this position.

The plight of the Uighurs in China is not something that people in Quebec and Canada know very much about. If truth be told, the media in Quebec rarely address the subject. We rarely see an article about what is currently happening in China.

The Uighurs are a people who live in northwestern China. There are 11.5 million Turkic Muslims who have been living in that area for centuries. Hundreds of thousands of Uighurs are sent to deradicalization camps and used for forced labour. What is more, a number of organizations, including Canada's Subcommittee on International Human Rights, and two American administrations have now found that the Chinese government was committing acts of genocide and other crimes against humanity.

These acts of genocide include systematic population control, sexual violence and mass detention. We are deeply concerned about the genocide of the Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims in China. These reports demonstrate in detail the extent of the abuses perpetrated by the Chinese government against the Uighurs. They show the Chinese government's growing contempt for human rights and international law, including in Hong Kong, as well as for Tibetans, Christians and other ethnic and religious minorities.

This situation is very serious, especially when it is a major world power like China that commits these acts of violence against its own citizens and its minorities. That is why we, like so many others, are sounding the alarm against these crimes.

History shows us that our country, Canada, was built by people from all over who, one way or another, came to settle in Canada. Canada has a reputation for being a welcoming country, even though our record is not perfect.

Let us not forget that in 1939, Canada refused to accept certain refugees because of their race. The *MS Saint Louis*, a German ocean liner carrying Jewish refugees, travelled to Cuba where it was refused entry even though the passengers had visas. They then went to the United States, where they were turned away. Canada also refused entry to this ship with Jewish refugees on board. The ocean liner returned to Europe and the passengers were imprisoned in Nazi concentration camps, where 254 of them died.

I think we have since learned that we need to do as much as we can to speak up and help people who are in abusive or life-threatening situations. Today's motion calls on the Prime Minister and his members of Parliament to open their eyes and face the facts. As my colleague from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan has pointed

### *Business of Supply*

out, independent investigations have already been conducted. The investigations relied on testimony from survivors, satellite images and leaked Chinese government documents. The evidence is clear, and the government needs to believe it.

The Prime Minister seems to have some doubts. His response this week was to say that he was not sure. I suggest that he consult his Minister of Foreign Affairs, who recently said, "The mounting evidence of a systematic campaign of repression cannot be ignored."

The United States, Canada's Subcommittee on International Human Rights and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, just to name a few, have all confirmed the point we are making today. The Prime Minister seems to be the only one who does not want to believe it.

• (1045)

Even his good friend Bob Rae, Canada's ambassador to the United Nations, said that there is no question that aspects of what the Chinese are doing fit the definition of genocide set out in the UN Genocide Convention.

We are calling on the Liberal government to do four things: to officially recognize the Uighur genocide, as the Biden administration did; to encourage the other allies to recognize this genocide; to work with our allies, including the United States, in order to take coordinated action in response to this genocide; and to impose Magnitsky sanctions on those responsible for the heinous crimes against the Uighurs.

We are also calling on the government to take any action necessary to keep Canadians safe. That includes updating travel advisories to reflect the potential threat for Canadians travelling to China and stopping the foreign influence and intimidation operations being carried out by the People's Republic of China here in Canada. We will certainly use various parliamentary tools and every other tool at our disposal to ensure that Parliament recognizes this genocide as soon as possible.

I would like to remind the House that Canada's Subcommittee on International Human Rights has already examined the facts and found that the actions of the Chinese Communist Party constitute genocide. We know that the Uighurs are being systematically detained in camps, violated, sterilized and forced to become labourers on a mass scale. The time for debating semantics has passed.

I have often spoken in the House about the dangers of Huawei, a Chinese company controlled by the Chinese Communist regime.

Huawei applied for a patent for a facial recognition system. This system uses cameras to conduct facial recognition in order to determine whether the person belongs to the Uighur minority. Once the analysis is complete, the person is tracked, registered and identified. Then they are sent to jail or a forced labour camp. In China, this system is being used to identify Uighurs specifically. However, Huawei asked China's government patent authorities to remove the word "Uighur" because it knows full well that it is unacceptable. That is what is happening right now, but they are still trying to hide the truth.

*Business of Supply*

When we talk to the Chinese government, they claim that the camps that the Uighurs are in are educational camps and that attendance is voluntary. That is what Beijing would have us believe, but we know what is going on. There is evidence. There are witnesses. Satellite images confirm what is happening on the ground. We can see the camps. We can see what the problems are.

We have often said that Canada needs to become a leader. In 2015, five years ago, the government said that Canada is back. That is what we heard, but we have yet to see it. Canada must support the United States and publicly and officially confirm the existence of the Uighur genocide by supporting the motion. Canada must publicly say that it is prepared to do everything in its power to ally with every democratic country that is willing and speak forcefully to the Chinese Communist Party. If Canada does not, then it is complicit in everything going on over there. If the Government of Canada turns a blind eye and says nothing, it is complicit in what the Chinese Communist Party is doing, and that is unacceptable.

● (1050)

**Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles for his speech.

Obviously, we learned quite a bit from the subcommittee. I am absolutely stunned by the Liberal government's indifference and its failure to act on this issue.

Of course we know that what is happening to the Uighurs meets the definition of genocide. We even have proof of that.

In my colleague's opinion, what are the reasons behind the Liberal government's failure to act?

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. As the saying goes, that is the million-dollar question.

Why do the Prime Minister and his government refuse to admit the facts and acknowledge that China is committing acts of genocide? That is the question that needs to be answered. From what I understand, the NDP and the Bloc Québécois will be supporting our motion. At least we will win this one. The advantage of having a minority government in the House is that the opposition can sometimes be stronger if it works together. We can send a message to Canadians that, even if the Liberals vote against it, we will have prevailed and sent a message through the House of Commons, telling China that enough is enough.

[English]

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I know a previous question was asked about our Five Eyes partners and the answer was that only the United States had declared what was going on as a genocide.

Following up on the last question from the member for the Bloc about why Canada had not taken this position, could the member comment as to why he does not think that the other Five Eyes nations have taken this position at this time and that perhaps they are considering it as well?

There is always an opportunity for Canada to lead. I am not suggesting that we do not, but I am inquiring as to why the member

thinks that some of the other countries may have not already followed suit with the United States?

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased that my Liberal colleague is asking this question.

At present, four of the Five Eyes countries have said no to Huawei. Only Canada has not yet taken a position. With regard to the Uighur genocide, the United States was the first country to take a position, and Canada could be the second. The other countries will follow our lead. That is what it means to be a leader.

Must Canada wait until the other four members of Five Eyes take a position? Must it be last once again? No, it must be proactive and show leadership on this issue.

● (1055)

[English]

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, we have seen overwhelming evidence of a systematic attack against the Uighur people and, quite frankly, the Chinese Communist Party has not hidden from that reality. In 2019, a Communist official stated with respect to the Uighurs, “break their lineage, break their roots, break their connections, and break their origins.” Then we saw the shocking tweet from the Chinese embassy in Washington that said with respect to Uighur women that they were “no longer baby-making machines.”

The Chinese Communist regime has all but admitted that it is committing genocide. Could the member speak to that?

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I believe that we have all the information and that it is all clear. Canada must now act and take a position against China.

**Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to the motion moved by my colleague, the member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

[English]

I want to first start by saying unequivocally that Canada will always advocate and stand up for human rights around the world. We are deeply concerned by reports of human rights violations in China against the Uighur minority and other ethnic minorities, and we will continue to voice our grave concerns regarding the situation in Xinjiang.

I welcome today's debate and the opportunity to discuss our actions to date.

*Business of Supply*

[Translation]

We know that our relationship with China is an important and complex one, which is why we go into it with our eyes wide open. Although China is a key economic player and could be a major partner in, for instance, the fight against climate change, we need to see China as it is now and not how we want it to be. Indeed, China has changed a lot over the past five years.

I know that Canadians share our government's serious concerns about Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor being arbitrarily detained and Robert Schellenberg being arbitrarily sentenced to death. Furthermore, the ongoing crackdown on fundamental political freedoms in Hong Kong and the widespread human rights violations happening in Xinjiang and Tibet are inconsistent with Canadian values and interests and with China's international obligations. The Government of Canada continues to raise these issues with the Chinese government at all levels, and we are not alone. A growing number of members of the international community are calling on China to make changes.

China must recognize that its actions are damaging its reputation in the eyes of the whole world. Defying long-standing international standards and principles sends a negative message to the international community and undermines the trust that is essential to any relationship.

Our government's top priority is to safeguard and protect the rules-based international order. We will continue to work with our international partners to defend fundamental human rights and freedoms, as well as the guiding principles that shape our international political relationships. To that end, promoting and protecting human rights is an integral part of Canada's foreign policy and will continue to guide the Government of Canada's engagement with China. We will vigorously defend Canadian values and the fundamental rights and freedoms of people around the world in all their diversity.

- (1100)

[English]

As Canada's new Minister of Foreign Affairs, my top priority is securing the release of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, who are being arbitrarily detained. Our government is working tirelessly to secure their immediate release. These men have been detained for more than two years now, two years that have been stolen from them, their families and their loved ones. They must be brought home.

Canada will continue to advocate for their release at every opportunity both directly with Chinese authorities and with our friends and allies on the world stage. In fact, on Monday, I stood with nearly 60 countries at the launch of the Declaration Against Arbitrary Detention in State-to-State Relations. This illegal and immoral practice undermines the rule of law and it needs to stop. Though this declaration is not aimed at any particular country, it is in fact practised by too many. The message to our Michaels and others around the world was clear: They are not alone.

[Translation]

The promotion and protection of human rights is an integral part of Canadian foreign policy and it will continue to guide the Government of Canada's engagement with China.

Canada is deeply concerned about the repression and ongoing targeting of ethnic minorities, religious groups and vulnerable groups in China, including Tibetan Buddhists, the Uighurs and other Muslims, Falun Gong practitioners and many others.

Canada has expressed its concerns about the shrinking space for civil society in China. The continuing increase in actions against human rights defenders, including lawyers, journalists and civil society actors, is also worrisome. We have consistently called on China to honour its international commitments to protect and promote the freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of assembly and association, and freedom of religion or belief of all Chinese citizens. Canada will continue to raise these issues at every opportunity.

In recent years, Canada has observed a steady and significant decline in the fundamental rights and freedoms that the people of Hong Kong should have. China's inability to implement a more inclusive political system has led many Hong Kong residents to revolt. Unfortunately, the authorities have continued to suppress rights and freedoms in Hong Kong.

On July 1, 2020, the Chinese central government imposed national security legislation on Hong Kong without the participation of Hong Kong's own institutions. This legislation was enacted in a secretive process, without the participation of Hong Kong's legislature, judiciary or people, and in violation of international obligations. This process demonstrated a lack of respect for Hong Kong's basic law and the high degree of autonomy promised to Hong Kong under the one country, two systems principle.

On July 3, shortly after the law was imposed, Canada announced a series of measures: We suspended our extradition treaty with Hong Kong; we are now treating exports of sensitive goods to Hong Kong in the same way as those destined for China; we will not permit the export of sensitive military items to Hong Kong; and we have updated our advisories for travel to Hong Kong due to the risks of arbitrary enforcement of local laws and civil unrest.

On November 12 my colleague, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, announced new immigration measures to attract young people from Hong Kong to Canada by offering them a new open work permit and making it easier for them to obtain permanent resident status. On February 4, 2021, he announced that residents of Hong Kong could apply for a new open work permit and he indicated that the Government of Canada was committed to implementing two other avenues for accessing permanent residency for young residents of Hong Kong.

As a committed friend with a lasting interest in the prosperity and long-term well-being of the people of Hong Kong, Canada will continue to work with its foreign partners to—

*Business of Supply*

• (1105)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I apologize for interrupting the minister. The hon. member for Manicouagan is rising on a point of order.

**Mrs. Marilène Gill:** Madam Speaker, I have been listening to the minister, and it seems to me that he is not talking about the matter before us. Most of his remarks pertain to the situation in Hong Kong, but today we are talking about the Uighurs. I just wanted to bring that to the Chair's attention.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I thank the hon. member for her comments. As she knows, we grant a certain degree of latitude during these discussions. I am sure the hon. minister will take note of the member's comments and ensure that his remarks are germane to the motion we are debating today.

[*English*]

The minister's speech is relevant to the motion that is being debated.

The hon. minister.

**Hon. Marc Garneau:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. My speech is relevant to what we are debating today, and I would ask my colleague to be a bit patient. We will get there.

[*Translation*]

As a loyal friend with a long-standing interest in the long-term prosperity and well-being of the people of Hong Kong, Canada will continue to work with its foreign partners to persuade China to respect its international obligations in relation to Hong Kong.

[*English*]

Canada has called on China to respect, protect and promote freedom of expression, assembly and association, as well as freedom of religion or belief, for all individuals. The restrictions of these freedoms for Tibetans living in China as well as the destruction of historic buildings and temples are cause for great concern. Canadian officials regularly discuss concerns regarding the treatment of Tibetans in China, and in Canada with our Chinese counterparts.

As I said at the beginning, the Government of Canada is gravely concerned about the human rights situation affecting Uighurs and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang. I would like to acknowledge the work by the Subcommittee on International Human Rights on the human rights of the Uighurs, including the brave testimony from survivors and civil society representatives on this issue.

We have already been very clear: Canada takes allegations of genocide very seriously and I take these allegations very seriously. This includes testimony from survivors, leaked government documents, and credible allegations and reports of mass arbitrary detention, repressive surveillance, forced labour, forced sterilization, torture and other mistreatments affecting Uighurs and other ethnic minorities.

As I have repeatedly stated, China must provide unfettered access to the region without delay. We continue to call for an international investigation in response to serious and deeply concerning allegations of genocide. Regardless of whether that access is provided, the international community has to work together in order to in-

vestigate the egregious human rights abuses taking place in Xinjiang. It is clear from the available evidence that serious and credible human rights violations are occurring in Xinjiang. The nature and scale of these abuses are alarming.

That is why this government has taken and will continue to take action. We will do this with single-mindedness working with our international partners. We have raised these issues bilaterally with the Chinese government at all levels. Canada has also raised on numerous occasions the specific human rights situation in Xinjiang. In October 2020, Canada, along with 39 other countries at the U.N., expressed its grave concerns regarding the situation in Xinjiang.

On January 12, we announced that the Government of Canada is adopting a comprehensive approach to addressing human rights abuses in Xinjiang, including measures to address forced labour. We announced a robust suite of measures that have placed Canada at the forefront of the global response to human rights concerns in Xinjiang, including the prohibition of imports into Canada of goods made in whole or in part with forced labour, and a business integrity declaration for Canadian exporters.

Global Affairs Canada will continue to work closely with Canadian firms doing business in or with China to make sure that their officials understand and mitigate the risks of doing business with entities possibly implicated in forced labour. We will also continue to work with our international partners and raise our concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang, and to call on China to live up to its international obligations.

In closing, I would like to emphasize that we must and we will continue to coexist with China. We will compete with China, using our innovative businesses, people and abundant resources. We will co-operate on global challenges like climate change, and we will challenge China when human rights are being violated.

• (1110)

As the ground beneath us shifts, this government will continue to evolve its approach to China. As we do, we will always put the safety and security of Canadians first and be firmly guided by our interests, our fundamental values and principles, as well as global rules and strategic partnerships.

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I disagree with a lot of what the minister said on the government's response on the China file more broadly. However, this debate, as he should know, is about a specific issue, namely a legal finding of genocide corresponding to the data, the opinion of experts and the testimony of survivors. Our partners are already moving, including two U.S. administrations. Canada would not be the first, but we do not have to be the last. Working multilaterally should not be an excuse to do nothing and act last.

I have some specific questions for the minister on issues that he should have addressed in his remarks, but did not. Has the minister been briefed on the existing reports and legal findings by experts with respect to genocide? Does he agree with their conclusions and will he support this motion?

**Hon. Marc Garneau:** Madam Speaker, I want to say again very clearly, and I have stated this on many occasions, that we are gravely preoccupied with the host of egregious reports and allegations made with respect to the treatment of Uighurs and other ethnic minorities. We have urged China to allow impartial, independent experts to go in and look at it. If there is nothing to worry about, then there should not be a problem with looking at it.

Finally, as I said a number of times in my speech, we are working with our international partners. We have a body of evidence here in Canada and are working with our international partners to understand fully the extent to which the allegations are justified and correct.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, we were just treated to quite a string of words that were meant simply to evade the question of whether the Minister of Foreign Affairs supports the motion.

The minister's Liberal colleagues who sit on the Subcommittee on International Human Rights have used the term "genocide". Three of his Liberal colleagues have signed an open letter that was released on February 6 entitled "The Games of Shame" that also uses the term "genocide". To make this as clear as possible, does the Minister of Foreign Affairs support the position of his colleagues who are calling the treatment of the Uighurs in Xinjiang "genocide"?

• (1115)

**Hon. Marc Garneau:** Madam Speaker, to answer my colleague's question, our government has a responsibility to make decisions and to make certain determinations. That is what we are doing right now and, as I have mentioned, we are deeply concerned about all the information we have received from credible sources.

We are currently studying and analyzing the situation, and doing so with our international partners. Before coming to any conclusions, it is particularly important to draw upon all the expertise that exists in Canada, as well as expertise in other countries, which is what we are doing. Meanwhile, we encourage China to open up and provide access to a group of independent observers to examine the situation in Xinjiang.

[*English*]

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it is very important for us to discuss human rights in this chamber. When I heard the minister talk about Canada's commitment to human rights and to keeping Canadians safe, I was thinking of the people of Eabametoong First Nation this morning, who are living in tents. It has been -45 degrees and they are living in shacks and homes overrun with mould and bugs. They have gone 20 years without access to safe water. I am sure the hon. minister knows that under the United Nations commitments Canada made, access to water is a human right, as is access to safe housing.

Given the fact that people are going to die in Eabametoong/Fort Hope if we do not get emergency housing in there, why has the Liberal government done nothing to help this community?

**Hon. Marc Garneau:** Madam Speaker, I reject the allegation that this government has done nothing. We are the first government to commit not only to reconciliation but also to correcting many of the wrongs that exist with respect to indigenous peoples, and we did so as soon as we came to power in 2015. Incidentally, this is something we could have started about 10 years earlier if the NDP had not blocked our motion when the Kelowna accord was being discussed.

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Madam Speaker, does the minister worry that equivocation in response to China's belligerence and threats, its detention of Mr. Kovrig and Mr. Spavor and condemnation to death of Mr. Schellenberg, sends a message to China that these threats and this belligerence works?

**Hon. Marc Garneau:** Madam Speaker, I very much appreciate the question from my colleague, which is complex and one that I assure him our government is seized with.

We are examining all of the evidence that has been provided, and we will continue to do that in concert with other countries. I believe that my colleague for Wellington—Halton Hills said that, yes, we should be working with other countries, and that is precisely what we are doing at the moment.

This file will not go away. We will continue to deepen our knowledge of exactly what is happening, and we will do it in partnership with other countries.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the minister's comments, and I want to pick up on the point of international partners and just how important that is.

Canada alone has a voice, but in working with other countries, that voice is enhanced. Could the minister provide his thoughts on why it is so important that we have those international partners and how that gives further strength to Canada's voice?

*Business of Supply*

**Hon. Marc Garneau:** Madam Speaker, I would point out that earlier this week, the declaration against arbitrary detention in state-to-state relations, a Canadian initiative, was brought forward. We, as a country, feel that it is better for us to approach issues on a multilateral basis on certain issues, and that is why we are working in concert with international partners on this very legitimate point that has been brought up today in debate.

We are happy to participate in this debate on this extremely serious subject, but it is also important for Canada to work with its international partners to move this particular issue forward to arrive at a final determination.

● (1120)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I recall back in 1996 when former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien signed a deal to sell nuclear reactors to the People's Republic of China, and we gave it the money to buy our reactors. The prime minister at that time said that engagement with China would help our values rub off on them. However, I have been concerned ever since that its values have rubbed off on us: We are more secretive now, and the former government under Stephen Harper signed, in secret, the Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement with the People's Republic of China, which means that we could be being sued right now in secret tribunals about which this Parliament knows nothing.

By the way, I congratulate the minister on his new role as Minister of Foreign Affairs, but I would ask if he would undertake to allow a full debate in Parliament and review of how much sovereignty we have lost under the foreign investment protection treaty with the People's Republic of China, which operates entirely in secret.

**Hon. Marc Garneau:** Madam Speaker, I will answer the point generally by saying that the China of 1996 and even the China of 2016 is not the China of 2021, which is why our policies with respect to China, whether these apply to foreign investment, trade or human rights, is evolving.

As I have said on many occasions, we must coexist with China, and in some areas we will co-operate, but in some areas we will challenge them and in some areas we will compete with them. This is part of our evolving policies with respect to China, and in all matters, as times change, these can legitimately be reviewed.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ):** Madam Speaker, first I would like to state that I will be sharing my time with my esteemed colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean. I would also like to congratulate him today for the leadership he has shown on this file at the Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development and also for spearheading an open letter entitled “The Games of Shame”, which was published a few days ago in certain media across Canada.

I know that my colleague is greatly concerned about this issue and has worked hard to have members of the subcommittee unanimously recognize that a genocide is actually taking place in China and to bring about this cross-party gesture which transcends the House. In fact, representatives of all stripes at Quebec's National Assembly and also people from civil society, such as the former

Liberal justice minister and founder of the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, Irwin Cotler, were also brought in. None of this could have happened without the efforts of our colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean, and I believe he will have a place in history for it.

What is a genocide? I think that is the first question we need to ask. What makes this a genocide?

I am sure that when my colleague speaks in a few minutes he will share some of the horrific testimony heard by the members of the subcommittee studying what is going on in Xinjiang, in particular.

Witnesses have spoken about concentration camps euphemistically referred to as re-education camps. This reminds me of the inscription over the entrance to Nazi concentration camps, “Work sets you free”. In other words, if people worked hard, they were eventually freed. This is the kind of euphemism used to describe concentration camps. There was also talk of rape, children being separated from their families, slavery, surveillance and mass sterilization. These facts have been reported around the world.

I want to get back to the meaning of genocide. I remind members that in the aftermath of the Second World War, the world was shocked to learn what had happened in Nazi concentration camps, where Jews, gypsies and gay people faced mass extermination.

One of the first conventions, if not the very first, adopted by the newly founded United Nations after the Second World War was the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which Canada ratified in 1952.

Article II of the convention explains what is meant by the term “genocide”. It reads, and I quote:

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

It is important to note that not all of the criteria need to be present to constitute genocide; rather, only one criterion needs to be observed for acts to constitute genocide within the meaning of international law.

The convention goes even further. In article I, it states, and I quote:

The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish.

● (1125)

I remind you that Canada signed that agreement.

Since the early 2000s, the international community has been concerned about human rights violations against a number of religious minorities in the People's Republic of China, including practitioners of Falun Gong, Uighurs, Kazakhs, Uzbeks and Tibetans, among others. Several reports, including those from Amnesty International, point to flagrant violations.

I heard the minister talk about the need for consensus among international partners, or at least agreement with a certain number of them, in order to conclude that genocide is indeed taking place in the People's Republic of China. The minister claimed that he did not have enough information to reach that conclusion and that it would take an international observer mission to obtain evidence that genocide is indeed happening in the People's Republic of China.

Curiously, that reminds me of what Global Affairs officials said to members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development about the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. Officials were unable to say what was happening on the ground. However, we learned after the fact that the former minister was well aware of what was going on in the region.

I am respectfully of the opinion that the government knows full well what is happening in the People's Republic of China. In addition, when it comes to relying on international partners, which seems to mean so much to the minister, I would like to point out that the European Parliament published a declaration in 2016 stipulating that “[t]here have been persistent credible reports on systematic, state-sanctioned organ harvesting from non-consenting prisoners of conscience in the People's Republic of China, primarily from practitioners of Falun Gong peaceful meditation and exercises but also from Uighurs, Tibetans and Christians.”

The members of the United States Congress are also aware of this. Both the current and the former administrations refer to this as genocide. A BBC news story reported that genocidal actions are definitely being committed in the People's Republic of China, and the Chinese government responded by prohibiting the network in its country.

I think that the minister cannot bury his head in the sand forever and claim that he is unaware of what is going on in the People's Republic of China just to avoid taking action. As my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean pointed out, some Liberal members on the Subcommittee on International Human Rights signed an open letter entitled “The Games of Shame”. What is the government waiting for to follow its MPs' lead and recognize that there is a genocide taking place in China?

It is important to point out that this Conservative motion is very welcome. However, I feel I have to mention in passing that its author, the Conservative Party critic for foreign affairs, who just yesterday made all sorts of statements asking that the next Olympic Games be moved to another city, failed to sign the open letter. Moreover, Stephen Harper's Conservative Party was happy to participate in the Beijing Olympic Games, which took place while it was in power. As the former leader of the Green Party was saying earlier, the Conservative Party even negotiated an investment agreement and collaborated with China on the expulsion of Chinese nationals. This being said, they say that is never too late to see the

### *Business of Supply*

light. We were therefore pleased to see the Conservatives put forward this motion today.

To answer the Minister's arguments, I would say that the People's Republic of China is certainly an important partner, but that in no way justifies turning a blind eye to such abuses of Chinese citizens' most inalienable rights, which unfortunately seem to have been proven to be true.

• (1130)

If Canada has even the slightest desire to continue positioning itself as a leader in respecting human rights, it will have to walk the talk.

[*English*]

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I heard the member talk about the systemic nature of what is going on in China and all the different criteria.

Could the member comment further on the necessity for the government to respond specifically to the question of genocide and to answer to all the points that he made in his speech and that the motion addresses?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Madam Speaker, during his speech, the minister spent a lot of time telling us about the situation in Hong Kong. We understand and agree that the situation there is extremely worrisome. It has even been the focus of work by the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

However, I would have liked to hear the minister talk about the various criteria in the genocide convention. I would have liked him to tell us why the evidence that has been available internationally for years now, evidence gathered from our partners, is not sufficient for us to say that at least one of the criteria has been met. That would enable Canada to take action and recognize that this is genocide. It must do so because of its commitment under article 1, which I discussed. That commitment requires action and reprisals on the part of the government.

• (1135)

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I appreciated the intervention from my colleague in the Bloc. He delivered it with great passion and he is clearly well informed on this topic.

I did take exception to the member saying that the minister was pretending that he does not know what is going on in China. I did not hear that from the minister. What I heard the minister say was that there are a lot of moving parts, that things have to be considered holistically, that Canada was working and is working with other countries throughout the world on this very important file, and that Canada was going to continue to do that moving forward.

Would the member at least acknowledge that the minister is clearly aware of what is going on and that he has said he is working on this issue?

*Business of Supply*

[Translation]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Madam Speaker, perhaps my colleague knows something we do not.

If the minister is actually aware of what is going on in China, he should have said so. In his speech he was very careful not to acknowledge that he is aware of what is happening in China.

If I am to believe my colleague and the minister is aware of what is going on, it is even more unacceptable that he refuses to call it a genocide. Either the minister knows what is happening and is being complicit by remaining silent, or else he claims to not be aware, even though his partners, whom he loves to mention, have clearly acknowledged this as a genocide.

We went through this with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Global Affairs was telling parliamentarians that they did not know what was happening there because Canada did not have any representatives in Azerbaijan and Armenia. A few days later, the former minister testified in committee and told us that he was well aware of what was happening over there.

We want the government to tell us the truth.

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I was much younger then, but I remember hearing about the Rwandan genocide and about how the government did not listen to General Dallaire. He suffered terribly knowing what he did when no one would listen.

What can the government do today to avoid repeating its mistakes of the past, which are many?

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question, which is likely the most important question today. What did we learn from the Second World War? Despite the convention, we turned a blind eye to the Rwandan genocide. Despite the convention, we turned a blind eye to the genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Are we going to turn a blind eye to yet another genocide by reacting after the fact and saying that it is unfortunate? We see what is happening. It is time to take action.

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Montarville for his speech. Since he paid me a compliment, I will reciprocate by saying that his speech was powerful, eloquent and sound, and I congratulate him.

I am extremely thankful to be here in the House for what may be a historic debate. For this reason, it is especially important that we ask ourselves the following question: what side of history do we want to be on? It is not often that we are fully aware we have this choice, but today, in the House, we are faced with a unique opportunity.

We are here in Parliament, exactly where many politicians have stood before and either failed or succeeded. It is not up to me to judge what happens today. History will decide. I will limit myself to judging my and my colleagues' ability to convince every member of the House that what is going on in Xinjiang is genocide. My only power over my colleagues is to convince them to stand on the right side of history.

The facts are troubling, and members from every party could cite them, so I, too, will do so. Regardless of what the House does with the motion put forward by my colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills, at least no one will be able to plead ignorance, which happens to be the greatest ally of totalitarian regimes, after willful blindness. Let us be neither ignorant nor blind.

This summer, the Subcommittee on International Human Rights, on which I sit, studied the human rights situation of the Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang after documents were leaked that strongly suggested that there was a system of mass detention and oppression in this region of China. Numerous experts consulted by the subcommittee estimated that millions of people are being held in what Chinese authorities despicably refer to as “vocational training centres,” surrounded by walls, barbed wire and guards.

For some people, just hearing this is not enough, and that is where the increasingly troubling satellite images and photos of huge complexes, factories and lines of prisoners and forced labourers come in. These images reveal the scope of the operation that has been under way for several years in Xinjiang and that is now unfolding before our very eyes. This operation needs to be called by its name: genocide. There were witness accounts, but they were eclipsed by the western world's complacent attitude towards the Communist Party and its secrecy. Suddenly, these stories were corroborated by the missing physical evidence. I can say that members of parliaments around the world have taken notice.

As we speak, a veritable cultural obliteration is taking place. In Xinjiang, wearing a beard, praying or quitting smoking can get a person sent to a concentration camp. There, people are prohibited from practising Islam or even speaking their own language. They are forced to eat pork and to praise the Communist Party and President Xi Jinping.

It is not easy to hear Uighur expatriates tell their story. It is very hard to remain indifferent when human beings are telling stories of children being taken away from their families and placed in state-run orphanages or schools. It is even harder when we know that they will be robbed of their language and culture so they can be indoctrinated and ultimately assimilated.

Unfortunately, it gets worse. We were disgusted, to put it politely, to hear that many women had been raped in these camps. When we heard the unproven allegations of organ harvesting, we could not decide what horrified us most, that this was possible or that we were not surprised because it had happened before to Falun Gong followers and other religious minorities.

That is not all. We were deeply troubled by the stories of mass sterilization in Xinjiang. It was revealed that the authorities hoped to sterilize 80% of all women of child-bearing age. The methods used include forced insertion of IUDs and forced surgery. It was reported that people are being forced to take drugs and receive injections.



If anyone does not trust the stories, all they have to do is look at the figures. Between 2015 and 2018, the population growth rate in the mostly Uighur areas of Xinjiang dropped 84%. I recently heard members of Parliament, including our Prime Minister, who were reluctant to use the word “genocide”. They claim that “genocide” is a loaded word and that we need to think hard before using it.

• (1140)

With all due respect, it is because it is such a loaded word that we must use it. The first nations of Quebec and Labrador are not reluctant to use it. Representatives of the Ukrainian community are not reluctant to use it. Representatives of the Jewish community are not reluctant to use it. Irwin Cotler, Canada's special envoy on preserving Holocaust remembrance and combatting anti-Semitism, is not reluctant to use it, and he was appointed by the Prime Minister. We should not be reluctant to use it, either. It is our duty to denounce it and to take action.

We may not realize it, but we are involved in this genocide. Without knowing it, we are benefiting from the situation. More and more evidence is coming to light directly linking western companies' supply chains to forced Uighur labour. I will not name names, but I would bet that each one of us very likely has items in our possession that were fully or partly made by Uighurs.

In any other situation, we would not hesitate to call taking people out of their regions to make them work as forced labourers modern-day slavery. I submit to the House that the situation in China should not be considered any more leniently than if it were in any other country. We realize, at a time when the entire planet is facing the worst health and economic crisis in more than a century, that human rights are not front and centre. We are talking about genocide, the most horrible example of man's inhumanity to man. We cannot remain silent.

That is what prompted me to find a possible solution, because I believe that we have to start somewhere. Following our allies and declaring that genocide is taking place is an important step that I hope to take with every other member in the House, and we can do more. We can and must hit the Communist Party regime where it hurts the most: in its arrogance and pride. In 2022, Beijing is set to hold the winter Olympic and Paralympic Games. It is a prime opportunity to act and to unite humanists and democrats the world over around a very simple idea: refusing to participate by not allowing this world sports event to be used as a platform for the self-aggrandizement of a regime that is committing the most heinous crimes against its own people. We cannot reward the Communist Party for its nefarious schemes by going to Beijing, and neither can the rest of the world.

On February 6, 13 members of the House signed an open letter along with human rights organizations and a number of Quebec MNAs. In fact, my colleagues from Montarville and Longueuil—Saint-Hubert both signed the letter. We are not asking our athletes to give up their Olympic dreams. We are very aware of the considerable efforts they have put into following that dream. We believe that there is still time to demand that the International Olympic Committee move the games if the Chinese government continues its genocidal spree.

### *Business of Supply*

Some have said that we should not mix politics and sports. We are not taking our elite athletes hostage. We cannot hide behind politics when a genocide is taking place. My answer is that we are facing a genocide. As I just said, we are not talking about politics, but about human rights and crimes against humanity. We need to make sure that the medals athletes win in 2022 are not tainted, because history will undoubtedly remember these games as the games of shame, much like the 1936 Olympics in Berlin. We cannot accept the status quo. I know that my 12 colleagues and I are not alone in the House.

That is why I am proposing an amendment to the motion moved by the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, which I hope will garner the support of a majority of members of the House. I move:

That the motion be amended by adding after the words “against Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims,” the following:

“call upon the International Olympic Committee to move the 2022 Olympic Games if the Chinese government continues this genocide.”

• (1145)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** It is my duty to inform hon. members that an amendment to an opposition motion may be moved only with the consent of the sponsor of the motion. Therefore, I ask the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills if he consents to this amendment being moved.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Madam Speaker, I consent.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The amendment is in order.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean. I believe that he obtained the consent of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills for his amendment and that we are working in a non-partisan manner precisely because of his efforts and leadership in this matter. I sincerely thank him. It is an honour for me to work with him.

• (1150)

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Madam Speaker, it is an honour and a pleasure to work with the member for Saanich-Gulf Islands.

I also want to thank her, as well as her colleague from Nanaimo—Ladysmith, for signing that letter. We can prove to this House that we are capable of working together, across party lines, on international human rights issues.

[*English*]

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to let the member comment further on his amendment.

*Business of Supply*

There is a long and shameful history of despots and dictators using the Olympic Games as propaganda to the rest of the world and as a domestic policy distraction to oppressed peoples. He mentioned the 1936 Olympics, the Olympics of shame. Sadly, that is not the only time a despotic regime used the Olympics for this purpose. As we saw shortly after the Sochi Olympics, the site of those games was a staging ground for the expansion and invasion launched from Russia.

I ask the member to comment on his amendment and the importance of not letting the Olympics be used as propaganda by dictatorships.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I think this is a situation that will occur more and more often. The International Olympic Committee has an obvious problem when it comes to choosing where to hold the Olympic Games. We know that it is becoming increasingly expensive to host the Olympics and that the countries that want to host them are often those led by a tyrannical government looking to boost its image. These countries use the Olympics as an opportunity to glorify their own regime and to show their own people that they are strong and powerful.

That is a problem we need to consider. I believe that the amendment we are proposing today is a strong gesture. I think that, if the House votes in favour of the amendment and the motion, we will be better off and we will become leaders on the world stage. I am convinced that this will snowball in many of the world's free parliaments.

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ):** Madam Speaker, let me paraphrase the late Pierre Mondy and the brilliant Alexandre Astier who believed that a great leader, a hero, always fights for the dignity of the weak. With that sentiment in mind, I would like my colleague to comment on Canada's actions, or lack of action, in response to the genocide of the Uighurs.

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Madam Speaker, I will try to reply quickly and to the best of my ability, and I will do so with the following quotation: "A politician thinks of the next election; a statesman, of the next generation."

[*English*]

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it is very troubling to speak about the Conservative opposition day motion. It is a very serious matter.

The motion calls on the House to recognize that a genocide is being carried out by the People's Republic of China against Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims and it calls on the government to adopt this position.

We are in a legislative forum in the House of Commons, but it is also a political forum, and all actions are under that umbrella in this chamber. It would be easy therefore to treat this as a political motion, to see it as an attempt by the Conservatives to demonstrate that the government is not strong enough on China or on human rights internationally, and members may well seek to do that in this debate.

It is evident that this is part of the Conservatives' challenge to the Liberals as the governing party, but it is far too serious a matter to treat as a political event. It is a matter of fundamental human rights and the obligations of countries like Canada to call out the actions of states whose actions and practices of widespread and systematic abuses of human rights are of such enormity that they require international opprobrium and action. This is a matter on which we need to work together to seek to bring about an end to these practices and to deter other nations that may follow the lead of China if they are ignored and allowed to be carried on with impunity.

It has been said that the term "genocide" is a loaded word and therefore we should not use it. The Prime Minister has used that expression himself in the House. Yes, it is a loaded word, loaded with the freight of horrors of the past, a word that was not coined until 1944 to describe the implementation of Nazi policies in occupied Europe and mass killings of the past. Other words were not strong enough for the actions of the Nazis: the mass murders and executions carried out against the Jews, the Roma and other peoples as well as homosexuals, persons with disabilities, mental illness, political enemies or anyone who did not meet their standards. These horrors have cast a long shadow to this day in the minds and memories of mankind. These atrocities were deserving of a new name and it came to be called genocide.

The term was later incorporated in the United Nations genocide convention established in 1948, which was more broadly defined as "any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group." These acts included the killing of members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; and forcibly transferring children of that group to another group. That was the convention definition. They are broad and any one of them would meet the definition.

In Canada, the term "cultural genocide" has been used by no less an authority than the former chief justice of Canada, the Hon. Beverley McLachlin, in a 2015 speech in reference to the policies and practices of assimilation of indigenous people adopted by Sir John A. Macdonald's government in the early years of Confederation and continued as part of our colonial history. She called cultural genocide the language of the 21st century, replacing what was then called assimilation.

The same phrase, "cultural genocide", was used by former prime minister Paul Martin a few years before that in reference to the residential school system in testimony before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, saying he needed to call it what it was. Indeed, the report of the National Inquiry into the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls used the term "genocide" to describe its findings, a term that was accepted by the Prime Minister.

When we are dealing with the actions of the Government of China with respect to the Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims, we must look to the material that was presented to the Subcommittee on International Human Rights that heard testimony this summer from many groups and individuals.

• (1155)

The committee heard from Amnesty International, for example, that China's unrelenting repression of the Uighur people went back decades and that other governments, including Canada, failed to make it clear to China that this was unacceptable and that it had to stop. It talked about authorities in Xinjiang being engaged in a massive campaign of intrusive surveillance, arbitrary detention, torture, political indoctrination and forced cultural assimilation targeting the regions of Uighurs, Kazakhs and other Muslim people since 2017. More than one million people were being held in what they called "transformation through education" or "vocational training centres", which are actually detention camps. We saw visual evidence this on CBC in 2019, evidence of the surveillance and detention camps. We have undeniable evidence of mass internment, arbitrary punishment and torture, the true scope and nature of which is not yet fully known.

We need to recognize that the mass detention, forced labour, surveillance and population control measures, which have been described by other speakers today, being directed against the Uighurs and Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang fits the definition of genocide. If we are dealing with mass detention and population control through various measures such as sterilization and abortion, mass internment and labour camps, those measures must be called out by Canada, by Parliament and by the government. We have to recognize that we have an obligation to call out these practices as crimes against humanity and seek international action.

Further investigations are required as is international action by the government and other governments, but we need to see that there is no impunity for that type of behaviour, that it is called out. Other nations have an interest in what is happening in China for the sake of the future of humanity. If these actions go unnoticed, unnamed, unchecked or not acted upon, we endanger not only the people who are affected by this today in China, who are concerned and fear the continuation of further actions of this nature, but people in other parts of the world.

China cannot be allowed to operate with impunity in the world. Otherwise it could engender other nations following suit. This is an example of how a nation can treat the people it wishes to assimilate or take actions against, by indicating that these practices are acceptable and may be repeated. By not acting, we endanger the future of mankind. We see the future of humanity potentially being changed if this kind of action is allowed to continue in China and is followed by other nations that feel they can do the same thing with impunity. Action must be taken.

It is incumbent upon us to follow and support this motion because it calls out the practices of China for what they are, which are included in the definition of genocide under the convention against genocide. Action needs to be taken. Hopefully, the government, by adopting the motion, will also encourage other nations to do the same and continue to put pressure on China to end those practices

### *Business of Supply*

and ensure they are not continued either in China or elsewhere. It requires some example by this Parliament, first, and by the government, to hopefully encourage other nations to follow suit.

• (1200)

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last month, the Government of Canada announced measures with respect to the importation of goods from Xinjiang in response to human rights concerns over violations that are taking place in that region. Does the member believe there is a better way to put in place these trade sanctions on that region of China?

For example, does he believe it would be better to put a blanket ban on all imports from Xinjiang because of the evidence of mass forced labour and instead require companies to seek an exemption to that ban if they want to import products from that area, an important area to the world in particular because it produces more than 20% of all the world's cotton?

• (1205)

**Mr. Jack Harris:** Mr. Speaker, it is a situation where the government has chosen perhaps not the best way of doing this. The member's suggestion is one worthy of consideration.

I attended a briefing from the government on its policies and I was very concerned about the onus that was put on importers to have a very high degree of surveillance and diligence as opposed to the government playing a role in identifying either those particular products that needed to be embargoed and banned or, as the member points out, the region itself or companies themselves which were engaged in using forced labour. There needs to be a better method than we have now. A blanket ban on all imports may not be the right tool, but we need better measures than we have right now.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's comments, but it is important to recognize that tangible actions have been taking place as the government recognizes and has a better understanding of what is happening in China. We have been working very closely with our international partners. When we look at the Five Eyes countries, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada, there is a great deal of concern as we try to move forward on the issue.

Is the member concerned at all that we might be undermining in any fashion the potential? The motion is that Canada, in essence, say that China is committing genocide and that Canada is not going to participate possibly in the Olympics or, at the very least, see the Olympics change its venue? Does the member believe that maybe we could have had this go to a standing committee to have the discussion before we got to this type of a vote?

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Jack Harris:** Mr. Speaker, yes, Canada has expressed concern, and there is no doubt that we have concerns, but we need to do more than that and recognize it for what it is. Perhaps we could have done this a week or two weeks from now after the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development had dealt with the report of the subcommittee, but we are aware of the essence of it.

It is important to call it what it is. Yes, we should seriously seek a change of venue of the place for the Olympics as a part of this motion.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, what is very concerning right now in the situation with China is that we see the horrific human rights abuses faced by the Uighurs. We see the attack on democratic rights in Hong Kong. We see the arbitrary detention of Canadians who are being held hostage in order to intimidate Canada. However, I do not see a coherent strategy at the international level of how we actually hold China to account.

I listened very closely to my hon. colleague as he laid out some of the issues and the problems, whether it is trade sanctions or the Olympics. Being the 21st century, how can Canada as a middle power play a stronger role of holding the Chinese regime accountable for the abuses that are taking place under its jurisdiction?

**Mr. Jack Harris:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague's question is a very good one. Canada is only one country and obviously not the biggest country in the world, but we have a strong commitment to human rights and international human rights. I think we have a role to play in helping to start these things with other countries, and we have. I give credit to the government for the statement made earlier this week regarding the arbitrary detention declaration. It has the potential ultimately to become a new norm, which it is already in some form, or a new thrust on that point. That is one way Canada played a role. Even though it did not mention China, the clear intention was to get international support for the problem we have of the serious, totally uncalled for and outrageous detention of Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig in China for more than two years. That is something that has to change.

We have a role to play in developing more international recognition. To start with, naming it a genocide tells other countries and the people of China how seriously this is being taken by Canada and should be by other nations.

• (1210)

**Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for St. John's East for his well thought out speech and for presenting in such a convincing manner that the actions of the Chinese Communist Party against the Uighur minority do in fact fit the definition of genocide. He also showed in a very convincing manner that other nations must act.

My question for the member is this. How beneficial would it be for Canada's reputation, in the community of nations, if this motion from the opposition party were to pass and get the support of the Prime Minister and his party?

**Mr. Jack Harris:** Mr. Speaker, I think it would be beneficial. Obviously, we know the United States has taken a position, through the administration, of recognizing that what is happening meets the definition of genocide, but it requires further action by other na-

tions. There has to be action by the United Nations. We support the investigation being proposed through the United Nations. That should take place, but we also need to have support from other nations in calling it what it clearly is, and putting it in that category. That gives rise to the continuation of that investigation and the expectation that China should respond to that, so the government's support for this would be extremely beneficial.

**Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more with the member. Does he think this could be one of those watershed moments, where the Prime Minister has an obligation to step up? For example, I am thinking about when the MS *St. Louis* was turned back by William Lyon Mackenzie King, whose government was famous for the statement, "None is too many." Does he think, if the Prime Minister does not take a stand, that this could be a situation where a future prime minister would be apologizing for his actions?

**Mr. Jack Harris:** Mr. Speaker, the prediction of what might happen in the future is not within my powers, so the member is asking a hypothetical question about how history might look back on this day. I do not know whether it meets the test the member puts forward, but I think it is a serious question regarding a position that has a significant moral implication for Canada as a country: to call this what it is and describe it as it is. We do not know the full scope and extent of this, but we know the actions meet the definition. That is a starting point for a full recognition by the community of nations that this has to be taken seriously. We hope the Prime Minister and his government support this motion and take that step.

• (1215)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, doing what is right is rarely easy but it is often simple. Today, we are calling on the House of Commons to do a simple but hard thing: to recognize the reality that the Government of China is committing genocide. In this speech, I will seek to make the case for that reality, for greater certainty and for the benefit of those who have not heard the evidence before. I do so knowing that among scholars and experts, as well as among members here who have reviewed the facts, there is no serious basis for disputing them.

What makes the 1936 Olympics different from the 2022 Olympics is that in 1936, we did not know about the Nazi concentration camps. We had not seen the piles of children's shoes, the mounds of human hair or the bodies of victims being bulldozed. In 1936 we did not know, but today we do.

My sister and I went to Berlin a couple of years ago to discover, up close, the stories of members of our own extended family who were sent to concentration camps. We visited a site of deportation and we visited Sachsenhausen concentration camp on the outskirts of the city. What struck me, visiting those places, was that these were not in isolated locations. The deportation site we saw was surrounded by tall apartment buildings. Even the concentration camp had three- and four-storey buildings at a reasonable proximity, such that everyday people could have come to an understanding of at least some of the horrors that were taking place there simply by looking out their windows.

I thought about the people in those buildings who were neighbours to such horrors. What were they thinking? What action did they take or not take as they saw their neighbours, friends and fellow human beings taken away and massacred? I say to my colleagues today that they are the people in those apartment buildings.

All of us can see a genocide taking place in China, as we speak. Thanks to satellite imagery, we too can look down and watch people being loaded up and taken away. Thanks to survivor testimony, we now know about systemic rape and torture in these concentration camps. Thanks to published or leaked Chinese government documents, we can see an abrupt turn and plunge in birth rates following the commencement of a policy of forced abortion, forced sterilization and forced insertion of IUDs.

Anyone who says that there is not enough evidence is simply too cowardly to look through the window of their computer screen. Some here have drawn the curtains so they do not have to see the march of desperate humanity outside their windows, but for them there is still no excuse.

Imagine having been a member of Parliament in the 1980s who opposed taking action against the apartheid regime in South Africa. Imagine having opposed sporting boycotts targeting that regime, saying that athletes should not be political pawns. Imagine having claimed that there was not enough evidence of violations of human rights, or that we should wait for our allies, and then imagine someone having to explain that decision to their grandchildren 40 years later in terms of why they failed to do the right thing. I say, for every member of the House, that in the decades to come we will have to explain our votes to our children and grandchildren. They will likely not be satisfied if we tell them that we had not familiarized ourselves with the issue or we were just following our party whip.

So that there shall be no excuse, let me lay out again the clear case for the simple motion whereby Parliament would make an official declaration of genocide.

Canada is a party to the U.N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which provides a clear legal definition of genocide and outlines our obligations in terms of response. As a definition, the convention says:

...genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

As my colleagues have mentioned, only one of the criteria needs to be established to necessitate a determination of genocide. The Government of China's treatment of Uighurs likely involves all five of the above, but in particular, the evidence that the government's actions respond to criteria c and d, "Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part"; and, "Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group", is now completely irrefutable.

### *Business of Supply*

In the summer, the all-party Subcommittee on International Human Rights heard two full days of testimony from experts and survivors. Upon hearing the information, all members of all parties who had heard the evidence unanimously agreed to recognize that the actions of the Government of China constitute genocide.

● (1220)

Leading researcher Adrian Zenz told the committee the following:

Starting in 2018, a growing number of female internment camp survivors testified that they were given injections that coincided with changes in or cessation of their menstrual cycles. Others reported that they were forcibly fitted with intrauterine contraceptive devices...or subjected to sterilization surgeries.

Also in 2018, official natural population growth rates in Xinjiang plummeted. In Kashgar and Hotan, two Uighur heartland regions, combined natural population growth rates fell by 84% between 2015 and 2018.... For 2020, one minority prefecture set a natural population growth target of near zero....

New evidence shows that drastic declines in population growth are not merely linked with the campaign of mass internment but also related to a systematic state policy to prevent births in minority regions....

Further down, he continues with:

A stunning 80% of all newly placed IUDs in China...were fitted in Xinjiang, even though the region only makes up 1.8% of the country's population. By 2019, Xinjiang planned to subvert over 80% of women of child-bearing age in the southern four minority prefectures to birth control measures with "long-term effectiveness". This refers to either IUDs or sterilizations.

The subcommittee heard that this campaign of sexual and reproductive violence including placing non-Uighur men to live in the homes of Uighur women after their husbands had been taken away. This community is subject to systemic sexual violence, which includes the rape of women inside and outside of concentration camps.

The subcommittee heard from many survivors, including Ms. Sayragul Sauytbay. She told us:

In the concentration camps, the Chinese Communist Party guards rape the women and girls they want. It's daily....

In one of the examples I remember, I was giving a lesson at a class on the Chinese language when they brought back a young lady. When she entered the class, she couldn't even sit on the chair. She just fell down on the floor. They started calling everyone by number. Every girl has a special number. They don't call them by their names; they call them by their numbers. When they called that girl by her number, she said, "I'm not a girl anymore, because they raped me."

She further continues that one day,

[The guards] brought 200 prisoners to the hall, and they picked out one young girl, about 20 years old, and they forced her to accept the guilt for something that she never had done. She was crying and she was saying that she was guilty even though she was not guilty. She accepted it in front of the 200 prisoners. Then the Chinese guards—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. I would ask the hon. member to stop there momentarily. I see the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills on his feet.

*Business of Supply*

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It is with great hesitation that I interrupt another member's speech, but I was wondering if the member planned on speaking for the full 20 minutes or just for 10 minutes.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I was wondering that myself. I have stopped the clock here momentarily. We are getting to the end of the first 10-minute segment and we would be starting into a 10-minute question and comment period here fairly soon if we did not get some indication from the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan. I would ask him what his intentions are in that regard.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Then we will go back to the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, I will restart the quote I was reading. She said that one day,

[The guards] brought 200...[women] to the hall, and they picked out one young girl, about 20 years old, and they forced her to accept the guilt for something that she never had done. She was crying and she was saying that she was guilty even though she was not guilty. She accepted it in front of the 200 prisoners. Then the Chinese guards started raping her, one by one, in front of all these 200 prisoners. They went down the line and raped her one by one in front of all the people.

If some of these 200 prisoners showed pain on their faces or in their eyes, or hesitation or any negative emotion...they will pick these prisoners from the crowd and later they will start torturing them because they didn't change.

That is what is happening right now. Where is our feminist foreign policy? Ms. Sauytbody is just one of many who told this to the subcommittee.

Irwin Cotler later told the following to the subcommittee:

Genocide obliges us all—internationally, domestically, governments, parliaments, civil societies...to call out genocide. It's a responsibility under the genocide convention to both prevent and punish acts of genocide.

It would be first and foremost a responsibility for Parliament to define these acts targeting the Uighurs as constitutive of acts of genocide, as the witness testimony has so eloquently and compellingly conveyed before this committee...

The Prime Minister says that “genocide” is a loaded term and he is right. It is a loaded term. It is a term that should only be used to describe instances where genocide is clearly taking place, such as this one. The Prime Minister says he wants more evidence and he wants to send a fact-finding mission to China. This is disgraceful obfuscation. The facts have already been found. The evidence has been exposed and the experts agree. The Prime Minister knows that the Chinese regime will never allow unfettered access to do the required investigation.

If I could see through my window that my neighbour was being violently raped and killed by an intruder, would it really be okay for me to knock at the door and wait to be invited in to investigate?

The Prime Minister's reluctance to call out these crimes is all the more striking given the fact that he has previously accused Canada of committing a 21st century genocide. He said in 2019 that his government accepts that murders of indigenous women and girls in recent decades amount to genocide. Experts at the time, including Irwin Cotler, criticized this use of the term “genocide” saying, “I think we have to guard against using that term in too many ways because then it will cease to have the singular importance and horror that it warrants.”

Is it not then ironic that the Prime Minister of Canada is prepared to accuse his own country of genocide, even when some experts say otherwise, but unprepared to accuse the Government of China of genocide, even when the experts say otherwise? Far from having some natural filial attachment to his own country, the Prime Minister is willing to accuse his own country while unwilling to recognize a genocide in China when it is clearly taking place.

There can be no doubt that the Prime Minister's denial of the Uighur genocide has nothing to do with the evidence. I will not pretend to know his true motivations, but I hope that members of his caucus will be prepared to press him on the point, if not in public, then certainly in private.

• (1225)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know from the member's other speeches in this House that he is fully aware of this issue and is very well connected with it. He follows it closely. He advocates very strongly, and I appreciate that, but I want to pick up on one of the last sentences in his speech. In it, he said that he does not attempt to understand why the Prime Minister would be against it. However, he said so much about that previous to making that comment. The member must, for some reason, assume something, and I am curious to know what it is.

Is it the fact that a situation like this is very complex, as the minister said earlier? What leads someone in the Prime Minister's position to make the decision that he made? Could the member try to comment on that, as he did on everything else leading up to it?

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, respectfully, it is a bit curious for a member of the Liberal caucus to ask me, a member of the Conservative caucus, to speculate about his own leader's motivations for failing to recognize this genocide. The member might be better disposed to do that.

The evidence is very clear, as has been stated. The Prime Minister's reluctance to act, to call it a genocide in this case, in response to the experts, is very troubling, very concerning.

If I were to speculate, I might read from a tweet from a gentleman named Steve Ricketts, who veers a little more to the left than I do. He is active on Twitter in my riding. He said:

While I detest what is happening to the Uyghurs in China, I'm hesitant for Canada to declare it a genocide, as that requires taking action.

If I were to speculate about the Prime Minister's motivations, I wonder if Mr. Ricketts said what the Prime Minister is thinking: that he is reluctant to call it a genocide because recognizing a genocide necessitates, under international law, a proportionate response.

*Business of Supply*

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the long-standing commitment of the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan to the plight of the Uighurs. The speech he just delivered conveys the passion that drives him, but it also shows how urgent the situation is, considering what is happening in Xinjiang.

Canada has not always been on the right side of history. Let us not forget that Mackenzie King refused entry to a ship full of Jewish refugees in 1938. He said at the time:

[English]

“None is too many.”

[Translation]

However, our country has also been on the right side of history. One has only to think of Mr. Mulroney, who showed real leadership fighting apartheid in South Africa.

On what side of history does my colleague think this Prime Minister will be?

[English]

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, in response to that acknowledgement, I do want to acknowledge the excellent work done by the member for Lac-Saint-Jean on these issues as well. It has been a pleasure to work with him and members from all parties on these important issues.

The member will appreciate the reflection that although many of us came into those subcommittee hearings with our party hats on, they were long gone as we started to hear this compelling evidence. That is how we came to the unanimous conclusion that this is indeed a genocide.

The member asks an important question. As I said in my speech, we will all have to give account, to future generations at least, of the choices we made as members of Parliament. Our careers are fleeting and the memory of history is long. This is one of those profound historic moments when not just the Prime Minister but every single member of this House who has the power to vote on this motion will be called on to give an account of what side they were on. Were they on the side of justice, on the side of victims, or did they use “it is complicated” as an excuse?

• (1230)

**Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned about my colleague's brush-off and minimization of the current crisis of murdered and missing indigenous women and girls.

My question, however, is this: Does the member feel that the UN genocide convention also applies in real time in Canada to the forced sterilization of women that is occurring right now, as stated in article II(d), “imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group”, and also to the events that occurred in residential schools, as stated in article II(e), “forcibly transferring children of the group to another group”?

Is the member committed to applying definitions of genocide to our own backyard when acts of genocide are occurring?

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, just to be very clear, my comments were in no way a brush-off. I simply pointed out the reality, which is that the Prime Minister has described events in Canada as constituting genocide but refuses to say that events taking place now in China are genocide. That is an observation that the Prime Minister has to be accountable for.

As for the appropriateness of applying the term “genocide” to other policies in Canadian history, I am interested in hearing from experts and hearing the evidence on that. The debate we are having today, and certainly the debate I am prepared for, is that we have heard overwhelmingly from expert legal opinions that clearly a genocide is ongoing in China and necessitates a response.

**Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, famed Holocaust survivor and scholar Elie Wiesel said:

We must [always] take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.

I take these words to heart. As someone who has studied the Holocaust throughout my life, I understand the importance of the reality of man's inhumanity to man. It can sometimes be difficult here in Canada to understand the lengths to which human beings can go to advance their own self-interest.

We have our own issues of social justice in Canada, to be sure, but the realities of the Holocaust and the shock of the Holocaust, outside the lived experience, is for some just too much to bear. However, we must bear it. When we say “we must never forget” and make our solemn promise of “never again”, it means not only for the purposes of honouring those who were murdered by the Nazis but also to make sure this never happens again to anyone or any group.

This is one of those moments in history when we have not only an opportunity but an obligation to speak out and take action. People are dying and being persecuted, for no other reason than their faith, by an authoritarian regime that cares not. To not speak up leaves us in a moral vacuum, and history will not judge us well if we fail to act.

Let us look at the facts of what is actually taking place in China right now as we debate this motion.

There are about 12 million Uighurs, mostly Muslim, living in northwestern China in the region of Xinjiang. The Chinese government has reportedly arbitrarily detained more than a million Uighurs in detention camps. The existence of these camps has been confirmed by government documents, witness testimonies and satellite imagery. The majority of people in these camps have never been charged with crimes, have no due process and have no legal avenues to challenge their detentions. Often, their only crime in the eyes of the Communist Chinese regime is being Muslim.

*Business of Supply*

It is only their closely held faith that may be sealing their fates. I say “may”, because we here in the House have a role to play.

The Chinese government has implemented measures against Uighurs, such as forcibly transferring children away from families, restricting the use of their national language, banning cultural activities, destroying schools and religious institutions and many other things we have heard about here today.

Since 2016, thousands of mosques, graveyards, and other religious sites have been desecrated and destroyed. The Uighur language has been banned in Xinjiang in schools. Practising Islam has been discouraged as a sign of extremism. Between 2017 and 2019, it is estimated that more than 80,000 Uighurs were transferred out of the far eastern Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region and forced to work in factories across China, some directly from detention camps. Researchers and rights groups say the labour transfer programs are part of the Chinese government's system of control, indoctrination and forced assimilation.

Both China and Canada have ratified the genocide convention, which defines the crime of genocide, establishes obligations of prevention and punishment, and recognizes the possibility of establishing state responsibility for a campaign of genocide. According to the genocide convention, genocide is a crime that can take place in times of war as well as in times of peace. The definition of genocide set out in the convention has been widely adopted at both national and international levels, including in the 1998 Rome statute of the International Criminal Court.

The crime of genocide is defined by the genocide convention with respect to three elements.

The first is that the victims form part of a protected group, i.e., a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, and in this case we have the Uighur Muslims as this group.

The second is that the perpetrators committed one or more enumerated acts against members of the group. These acts are the killing of members of the group, causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group, deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part, imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group, or forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. We have seen multiple instances of these acts in the case of Uighur Muslims in China.

• (1235)

Third, the perpetrators acted with the intent to destroy the protected group in whole or in part.

With respect to the third element of genocide, the intent in this case by the Chinese Communist regime could not be more clear: It wants to destroy the culture, faith and existence of the Uighur Muslims. Canada's Subcommittee on International Human Rights has already studied the facts and has concluded that the actions of the Chinese Communist Party constitute genocide. We know that the Uighurs are being systematically detained in camps, abused, sterilized and forced to become labourers on a mass scale.

The time has passed for debating semantics. The government must join our U.S. allies and the Biden administration in officially

recognizing the Uighur genocide. It must encourage the recognition of a genocide by our allies around the world. It must work with these allies, including the U.S., to take coordinated action in response to this genocide, and it must impose Magnitsky sanctions against those responsible for these heinous crimes being committed against the Uighurs.

The Prime Minister can dodge questions about this as much as he wants, and that might work in the short term, but I implore him and Canada's government to do the right thing. History never fails to be the final arbiter of the performance of world leaders on the foremost human rights issues of the era in which they served. When it comes to the action or lack thereof taken by the Prime Minister, how does he want to be remembered?

In 1957, former prime minister Lester Pearson received the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in resolving the Suez crisis through the United Nations. The selection committee argued that Pearson had saved the world, and he is considered one of the fathers of the modern concept of peacekeeping.

In 1988, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney stood virtually alone in the world against the tyranny of apartheid in South Africa and is revered to this day in South Africa.

In 1939, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King and his government said, “None is too many” when it came to allowing the German transatlantic liner *MS St. Louis* to bring its passengers fleeing Europe onto Canadian soil, callously turning away that ship and sending over 900 Jewish souls back to the Nazis to be exterminated.

I ask the Prime Minister this: Does he want to be remembered like Pearson and Mulroney, as a champion, or like Mackenzie King, leaving himself to have to apologize for his lack of action when it comes to one of the true human rights abuses of our generation?

Any prime minister of this great country must have the courage and foresight to be among the first to condemn evil when they see it and have the determination to take steps that stop it from continuing. My colleague, the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills, eloquently said in the House that in Canada, our foreign policy begins with who we are. I therefore ask members this: Who are we?

I alluded to this before, but this is truly our time, as legislators and political leaders in a country that stands for freedom and human rights, to take action, to speak out and to stand up for what is right. Let us call out the Chinese Communist regime's heinous acts for what they truly are: a genocide.

I urge each and every member to do the right thing and support this motion. Let us vote yes for freedom, vote yes for human rights and vote yes for never again.



• (1240)

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his speech. It was very eloquent. Like him, I have deep concerns about the genocide that is happening against the Uighur people, and I appreciate his comments.

One thing we have an obligation to do as a country and as parliamentarians is to recognize and acknowledge genocide wherever it occurs, whenever it occurs. However, we are seeing a reluctance by the Prime Minister to acknowledge the genocide that is happening against the Uighur people, and the member spoke to some degree about what he would like to see the government do in response to that genocide.

In Canada, the government has acknowledged that we have a genocide against indigenous peoples. Could the member also talk about the implications of that genocide and what he would like to see the government do with regard to it?

**Mr. Marty Morantz:** Mr. Speaker, as a first step, I think the government needs to get its act together on this. The Prime Minister's hand-picked ambassador to the United Nations is saying that what is going on with the Uighurs fits the definition of "genocide" and the hon. chair of the finance committee has indicated concerns about our relationship with China. However, the Prime Minister says "genocide" is a loaded term. It is a loaded term for good reason.

It is really time for the Prime Minister to stand up. What we need to do is work to create an international coalition of like-minded countries. They should come together and come up with a strategy to deal with genocide, not unlike what happened during the Holocaust. Magnitsky sanctions could be a very effective tool, and the Olympics, of course.

On social justice issues around indigenous Canadians, I am very sympathetic to arguments on that. I did not come prepared to debate that issue today, but I am certainly open-minded and would love to have a debate about it and hear arguments around those issues—

**The Deputy Speaker:** We will go on to the next question.

Questions and comments, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member referenced like-minded countries. There has been a great deal of discussions and dialogue among international partners. Issues have been raised with regard to the Five Eyes and Canada is one of four that is still in the same position today. Conservative members and others have made reference to the fact that we have this outstanding foreign affairs subcommittee that is doing fantastic work.

My question for the member is the same question I put to the New Democratic member, who, with hindsight, said maybe we should have done it that way. Maybe we should be saying that this is a very important question that all members are asked to vote on. Why would we not allow the foreign affairs subcommittee to review having that vote? Would the member not think this would better inform all members of the House about the fine work it has done

### *Points of Order*

to date? Maybe we could bring that work to a conclusion by having a recommendation like this come before the House.

• (1245)

**Mr. Marty Morantz:** I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that I find the question very concerning because it tells me that the member is blind to the facts that are before him. We do not need the foreign affairs subcommittee to tell us what we already know. We need to be working with our international allies, but we should be first out of the gate, not in the middle of the pack and not last.

We should do, for example, what Brian Mulroney did. He stood virtually alone, as I said in my speech, on the world stage to seek the freedom of Nelson Mandela and end apartheid in South Africa. That is the leadership this country needs, not months from now after the foreign affairs committee has studied it, but today, this afternoon. I urge the member to vote for this motion when it comes up for a vote.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### POINTS OF ORDER

#### CRIMINAL CODE

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the government asked for unanimous consent to withdraw Bill C-13, which is still on the Order Paper, at second reading.

This request was made in response to Bill C-218 being passed at second reading. Since both bills propose similar amendments to the Criminal Code, it makes sense to withdraw one bill and move forward with the other.

Unanimous consent was denied, which means that not all members agreed.

[*English*]

A point of order was raised today to ask the Speaker to rule on the matter of the rule of anticipation, which forbids the same question from being decided twice within the same session. While Bosc and Gagnon supports this argument, it also claims, "past attempts to apply this British rule to Canadian practice are inconclusive."

The sponsor of Bill C-218 has indicated to the Speaker and to me that he wants to weigh in on this important point of order since it involves his bill. He plans to do so as soon as the House resumes tomorrow.

Bill C-13 cannot be called for debate today since, as we know, opposition motions on allotted days take precedence over all other business. In addition, except for today, the government has the prerogative to schedule this bill any day it wants, and last I looked, it has other bills to debate, including the bill to implement the economic statement, normally a priority bill for a government.

*Business of Supply*

Mr. Speaker, I urge you to respect the member's right to defend his bill and make his own representations regarding the rule of anticipation before you make your ruling on this matter.

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank the House leader of the official opposition for his additional comments on this matter. His comments will certainly be taken into consideration.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

## OPPOSITION MOTION—RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN CHINA

The House resumed consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, is the hon. member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley not allowed questions and comments?

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for raising the point. We were down to the last 20 seconds of his time, which is not sufficient time to start another round with both a question and a response, as sometimes happens. Sometimes members go over the five minutes by a bit and sometimes they are a little short. On any day, we hope it will average out to about the same.

I appreciate the hon. member's point and I am sure the hon. member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley also appreciates her additional thoughts in that regard.

**Mr. Marty Morantz:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I would gladly take the 20 seconds.

● (1250)

**The Deputy Speaker:** No, it is a discretion the Chair will exercise from time to time in the course of managing the timetable that is available to all members.

We will proceed with the hon. member for Saint-Jean.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Pierrefonds—Dollard. I cannot wait to hear his speech, even though I expect we have somewhat different views. I look forward to potentially asking him a question afterwards.

The matter before us today, recognition of the Uighur genocide in China, has come up in a number of committees, at times indirectly. I am a member of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, which is currently studying the situation in Hong Kong. I have often seen the similarities when questioning our witnesses about whether Canada should speak with a strong and consistent voice to help all groups that are currently experiencing repression in China. They were unanimous. The witnesses all told us that focusing solely on immigration measures, which is currently the suggested approach for Hong Kong, is ineffective if not backed by assertive diplomatic action. Yesterday, a witness even told us that if we tackle the underlying causes that lead to people becoming refugees, immigration measures would be unnecessary. That is what should be done. Everyone said Canada should take a stand

against this international bully, against China, in support of human rights.

As for the technicality of recognizing genocide, since that is what I want to focus on, the definition comes to us from the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which Canada ratified in 1952. As many of my colleagues have done before me, I think it is important to look at the criteria set out in article II of the convention. The first point refers to the act of killing members of the group. A number of media sources have reported on the disappearance of several million Uighurs without any—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I apologize, but I have to ask the member to check whether her microphone is connected properly. It seems that the sound quality is not very good.

Perhaps the member could try again.

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Okay, Mr. Speaker.

Can the interpreters hear me a little better now? I think I selected the right microphone on my device. Is the sound okay now?

**The Deputy Speaker:** No, it seems the same. Perhaps the hon. member could double-check the channel selected on her monitor.

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Mr. Speaker, it seems that was indeed the problem. I am terribly sorry.

I was talking about the first criterion for recognizing genocide, that is, killing members of the group. A number of physicians have reported that as many as several million Uighurs have gone missing, and there is no documentation of their whereabouts. At least two years ago, some actors, including Nury Turkel of the Uighur Human Rights Project, were suggesting that several million Uighurs had disappeared. To date, China still has not acknowledged the concentration camps. The fact that so many people are missing could lead us to believe that there have been mass murders of this group, although that is harder to prove, since few people have escaped from the various camps to report their existence and the conditions inside.

The second criterion for recognizing genocide is causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group. In this regard, several witnesses reported to the committee that forced organ harvesting may have been carried out in the Uighur community. Sadly, there is no shortage of accounts from women who were raped in the camps. Women have reported the sexual, psychological and physical abuse they have experienced, which leads us to believe that the second criterion has been met.

The third criterion is that of deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part. We know that many Uighurs have been taken from their homes by force, sent to concentration camps and then moved to factories, mainly located in Xinjiang, in order to help to reduce the Muslim population in that part of China. We know that the working conditions in those factories are inhumane and unbearable. Given that the workers are paid little or nothing, this is a form of modern-day slavery.

With regard to psychological destruction, we need only think of China's mass surveillance. As has been mentioned many times, particularly in relation to the issue of Huawei, China has an extraordinary surveillance capacity. The Beijing regime invests huge amounts of money in security and technology. We know that there are security cameras installed everywhere and that as a result of facial recognition technology, Uighurs can be specifically targeted in a crowd. There is therefore a feeling of ongoing persecution both in China and abroad. We have heard reports of intimidation, harassment and spying from the Uighur diaspora abroad, which leads us to believe that the third criterion is being met.

The fourth criterion in the convention is imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group. We know this is happening. Witnesses have told us. The Chinese Communist Party engages in eugenics, practising a form of mass sterilization on Uighur women to reduce the population. Leaked documents show that the government has even set a target and intends to forcibly sterilize 80% of Uighur women of reproductive age. This approach is working. Sadly, the Uighur population's growth rate declined by 84% between 2015 and 2018.

The final criterion for a finding of genocide is forcibly transferring children of one group to another group. Once again, witnesses have testified that children have been separated from their families. Children have been taken from their families and placed in state-run orphanages, schools or camps to re-educate them, indoctrinate them and turn them into perfect little Chinese citizens, erasing their culture.

I have discussed each of the criteria, but the convention states that the presence of even one of these criteria is sufficient for a finding of genocide.

• (1255)

In this context, I believe that rather than relying solely on the technical analysis of genocide, the government should admit that there is a genocide. The Prime Minister should acknowledge that a genocide is taking place, as he did with the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

The main message that emerged from the testimony of several witnesses who appeared before the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration was that if we want to tackle the root of the problem, we must stop just treating the symptoms. We must stop implementing measures that only help people after they have been subjected to prejudice and genocide. We must tackle genocide head-on. If we are to tackle the problem, we must be able to name it. This becomes the cornerstone of the measures we can then take to stop the genocide. We must acknowledge that it exists if we want

### *Business of Supply*

to apply sanctions in response. According to several witnesses, a token acknowledgement will only lead to token measures.

Earlier, colleagues from the government asked why the other Five Eyes countries have not acknowledged the genocide yet. The answer may have less to do with acknowledging genocide and more to do with international relations and the government's willingness to do the right thing about this genocide.

Let me give an example. Foreign affairs minister Zhao Lijian said in November that if the Five Eyes dared to interfere in the government's business and harm China's sovereignty, security and development interests, those eyes could get poked and blinded. That was a direct threat against the Five Eyes.

In my opinion, that provides further justification for the government to take a leadership role in acknowledging the genocide and not be browbeaten by China. Acknowledging the genocide will allow us to have clear measures. It could also prompt governments of other allied countries, the other members of the Five Eyes, to follow suit.

Acknowledging the genocide means clear, appropriate measures could be taken. That acknowledgement would be a political move that could inform the other measures to follow.

• (1300)

**Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague for her speech.

I would like to come back to the subject of concrete measures. In her speech, she talked a lot about the various reports saying that the genocide should be acknowledged.

How does my colleague feel about asking the International Olympic Committee to move the 2022 games, which are slated to be held in Beijing?

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Mr. Speaker, it will not come as a surprise to anyone that I intend to fully support the proposal of my Bloc Québécois colleague, the member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

In my opinion, it is definitely a step in the right direction. It is a position with diplomatic dimensions that would show Canada has no intention of bowing down. It can be done in a respectful manner towards athletes, as we do not want to take away their Olympic dreams.

There are also other options we could consider, including Magnitsky sanctions. These sanctions will likely be much easier to impose once the existence of the genocide has been recognized.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

*Business of Supply*

I am very concerned about the Chinese government's position. Its attacks on human rights are unacceptable. Attacking Hong Kong's democracy is very serious. In particular, there is the issue of the Uighur genocide.

In my opinion, it is clear that Canada can play a key role together with its allies. We will have to work with the international community to implement a plan in response to the attacks on human rights.

Does my colleague believe that Canada must work with Europe, the United States and other countries to support the human rights of Chinese minorities?

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Mr. Speaker, that is the very spirit of the conventions signed by many countries. In this case, the strength of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide lies in the fact that it was ratified by many countries.

When facing a world power like China, we must present a united front, and this will also let us apply pressure with regard to other matters. We spoke about Hong Kong, the situation in Tibet and the two Michaels. I completely agree with my colleague that greater international collaboration will result in more effective sanctions against China.

• (1305)

[*English*]

**Mr. John Williamson:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This is a technical question. I am finding that some speakers are not appearing on the House of Commons' screen. During the last questioner, I could see you. I heard the question, but I was not able to see who was asking the question.

This happened earlier today during petitions. It did not seem to be as relevant, so I did not raise it. However, on debate like this I would like to be able to see the members ask questions, particularly when those questions are trying to sidestep this issue and hide behind the international community, when Canada must act.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest for bringing this to my attention. I do see the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay rising. I do not know if he has some additional thoughts on this point of order.

The hon. member.

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Mr. Speaker, certainly if people did not have the chance to see my face I am very concerned. However, I am also very concerned that my colleague thinks this is an attempt to be hidden from a discussion that I think is very important.

In the interests of being fair, if you would allow me to ask that entire question again and restart the clock, I think that might be a fair solution, if we could get unanimous consent for it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am fairly certain what the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay said is indeed on the record. We will look into the issue of why this is occurring with the video of members who are participating. I am quite certain that members would much rather be seeing the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay than me sitting here being idle as I listen to the hon. member.

We will now go to questions and comments. The hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on how the Minister of Foreign Affairs implied that China is a major economic partner and that this economic partnership outweighs the threats against the Five Eyes.

Does she think that by refusing to call what is happening to the Uighur people a genocide, the government is putting the economy ahead of human beings and human feeling?

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

There is obviously no denying that China is an economic partner. There is a lot of trade between the two countries, but that should not be a reason to completely ignore the convention. The two are not mutually exclusive. By maintaining an economic relationship with China, Canada can also exert international pressure over the matter of human rights.

Just because China is an economic partner does not mean we can ignore international human rights conventions. All of the international conventions that Canada and other countries we want as allies have signed would become meaningless. We have a chance to set an example for these other countries and be among the first to recognize this as a genocide.

[*English*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** That finishes up the time we have for questions and comments.

To follow up on the previous point of order, I am told that the issue with the wrong screen being visible to members who are tuning in virtually has only to do with a small error with the broadcast. It is not a technical issue. We will, however, certainly be attentive to that in the future. I again thank the member for New Brunswick Southwest for bringing this to my attention.

We will now resume debate. The hon. member for Pierrefonds—Dollard.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Saint-Jean for sharing her time with me.

[*English*]

I would also like to pick up on what the member said. I am speaking as a parliamentarian who has heard a lot of the testimony from concentration camp survivors, from experts, from former ministers of government, and from diplomats. I am also speaking as a deeply concerned citizen and a humanitarian and somebody who has a track record of human rights advocacy.

*Business of Supply*

The testimony that we heard at the Subcommittee on International Human Rights was deeply disturbing for a lot of my colleagues and me. We remember these stories and the human tragedies and shared in their experiences. These are things we cannot un-hear. These are things that we cannot un-experience. That is the perspective from which I am approaching this debate.

I was asked for my opinion on what is happening within Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. I pointed to the testimony that we heard at the Subcommittee on International Human Rights, which is a parliamentary committee of this Parliament. In that committee, we put aside our partisan differences to focus on a humanitarian issue. As individuals, as parliamentarians, we put partisanship on the back burner to deal with a very serious crisis. Out of that, we reached a number of determinations after hearing witnesses.

We determined that, number one, there are serious crimes against humanity occurring within Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. We learned that approximately two million people are in concentration camps, where forced labour is happening.

We heard first-hand testimony of a woman who was raped and who had witnessed rape that occurred in front of 200 people. She said that when any of the individuals witnessing those rapes by government officials flinched, they themselves were tortured.

We heard testimony of a man who was apprehended. Everybody we heard from who was apprehended said that it was done without cause and without process. The man who was apprehended was physically examined to such an extent that he thought he would be dissected on the examination table. That was the extent to which the physical examination was taking place.

We know that the BBC, approximately three weeks ago, reported that this is a system. If we read the articles published by the BBC, we know that this is systematic.

More than that, we know this is happening and being directed from the highest levels. There have been leaks of what were called “the China papers” released to The New York Times in 2019. These are 400 pages of original documentation released from the central party, showing that this is a system, that a system is in place where people are being systematically tortured, raped, sterilized and forced to abort. This was later confirmed that same year by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, of which the CBC is a member. The China papers first released by The New York Times showed what is happening and the operational directives from the top. The second leak that was published by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists showed the operationalization of what the state is doing.

As a result of all this information, we now know that the American government, our most important trading partner and ally, has named what is happening a genocide. This has been confirmed by the Biden administration, by Secretary of State Blinken, and the government is standing firm on that in America.

• (1310)

The positive thing about President Biden is that we know that he works with other countries, Canada included. I expect that any

moves that America takes on these type of files will be done in coordination with other governments, in particular the Five Eyes countries and Canada.

This determination was not only reached by America, but also by a parliamentary committee. It is true that the committee is different from government and different from Parliament, but there were a number of recommendations made by the committee. Those included that genocide is in fact occurring. We also recognized that forced labour is occurring, that Uighur people are being forced to produce products for little or no wages and are being plucked from their homes and thrown into concentration camps. We learned that when both parents are plucked out of their homes, the children who are left parentless are turned into wards of the state. The media have reported that facilities to house these children are being built in China as we speak right now. We learned that since 2014, approximately 400,000 Uighur people have been moved outside of the province of Xinjiang into mainland China, so they can produce goods. We learned about forced sterilization and forced abortion. We were also reminded that the Canadian, Huseyin Celil, has been imprisoned in China since 2006. This is why we concluded that genocide is in fact occurring.

When asked what my personal position on this is, I have to stand firm with the testimony I heard and the findings we arrived at when listening to the evidence and considering it in accordance with the definition of international covenants, namely the genocide convention of 1948, of which China is a signatory and has ratified its documents.

We know that Canada is now engaged. We have a responsibility to protect. The knowledge that we have forces us to protect. This is a doctrine in international law. Canada was a leader in creating that doctrine. This is something I would like us to reflect upon: the fact that we know, obliges us to act.

What is happening aside from what we have heard about forced labour and sterilization and abortions? We know that 20% of cotton originates from the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. That means that 20% of items on store shelves made out of cotton globally come from that region. We know that 32% of tomato products originate out of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, meaning 40% of pasta sauce. I love pizza and pasta, but want to eat pizza and pasta that does not come from forced labour. We know that 41.72% of polysilicon used to produce solar panels originates from the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. Supply chains are tainted, that is without question.

In conclusion, we need to act. I want to recognize that we have started to act. On January 21, our government issued measures that specifically speak to forced labour and to the serious abuses happening within Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. Those measures are real. They deal with importation and exportation. Those measures touch that region and our interaction as a country with that region.

*Business of Supply*

• (1315)

We know that Canada is the fifth-largest investor in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. Parliamentarians are watching this debate. People around the world are watching this debate. My message to everybody, Canadians and those internationally, is that they all have power. They have power to act. By sharing information on social media, by speaking to their friends and colleagues, and by raising the alarm, they are helping to reduce harm in this world and to prevent very serious crimes against humanity.

It is not only Parliamentarians—

**The Deputy Speaker:** We have reached the limit of our time for this intervention.

We will now go to questions and comments.

The hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove.

• (1320)

**Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague told us very convincingly that the actions in China do fit the definition of genocide, and he also said that the world is watching this debate.

What negative impact would it have on Canada's reputation among the community of nations if this motion put forward today by the opposition fails in the House? What negative impact would that have on our reputation internationally?

**Mr. Sameer Zuberi:** Mr. Speaker, I always like to take the hopeful and optimistic look. I would like to believe that everything we are doing here, this conversation included, is nudging things in the right direction. I think the decision of Parliament with respect to the motion at hand is an open question, so I do not want to speculate about what the negative impact could be, but I do understand and know that all of this, including the member raising this question, is moving things in the right direction. The fact that we are having this debate is important. It emboldens and allows other jurisdictions to also have this debate, which they are doing, including the U.K., America, Australia and many of our allies.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Louise Charbonneau (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by congratulating the member for Pierrefonds—Dollard. If I understood correctly, he is going to support this motion, which means that he has the courage to take a stand that is different from that of the government he represents.

I am wondering whether he will vote in favour of this motion. I hope that he will propose action and manage to convince his leader to support this motion. This is a pivotal moment in history and an opportunity for Canada to take a stand against this genocide.

[*English*]

**Mr. Sameer Zuberi:** Mr. Speaker, I weigh heavily every single action that is taken around this. Members have heard me speak to the findings of the subcommittee, which were unanimous, and all of my Liberal colleagues on the committee did vote for the SDIR findings, so we stand united on that. I stand by the determination that genocide is, in fact, occurring in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, as do so many parliamentarians across the line.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, that was a wonderful speech. It was very brave and very well done.

The member sat on the international human rights subcommittee with me. We heard the harrowing testimony together, and I echo his sentiment that we were deeply moved. From what I am seeing, though, from the government, I am not just concerned about the genocide against the Uighurs, but also that our whole China policy has not been effective. With all due respect, it has not helped Michael Spavor, Michael Kovrig or Huseyin Celil. I am wondering what we can do to convince the government to move faster and more ambitiously to get those Canadians released, and also to make sure that China comes back to the rule of international law and that we are standing up against the human rights against the Uighur people.

**Mr. Sameer Zuberi:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs noted at the beginning of his statement that the China of today is different from the China of not so long ago. The country has changed a lot with respect to its leadership in the last five years, and this statement alone demonstrates that there is a rethink of our engagement.

I know for a fact that Canada is doing its utmost best to secure the release of the two Michaels. That means, though, we must look at this holistically, including with the serious crimes against humanity occurring within the region.

• (1325)

**Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry.

I rise today to express my serious and heartfelt concerns with and vehement opposition to the abhorrent abuse and genocide actively being perpetrated against the Uighur people and other Turkic Muslims by the Government of the People's Republic of China. The Conservative Party stands in solidarity with the Uighur community in Xinjiang, China, and with the Uighur diaspora.

Several bodies, including Canada's Subcommittee on International Human Rights as well as two American administrations, have now concluded that the Government of China is committing acts of genocide and other crimes against humanity. These acts of genocide include systemic population control, sexual violence and mass detention. Ideally, Canada is a nation unafraid to stand on the side of freedom and human rights. We in the House have done so before, having recognized and condemned seven genocides that occurred around the world during our nation's history.

*Business of Supply*

Before I continue, I want to reflect briefly on a story I read recently that resonated with me. It is relayed by the book, *The Boys in the Boat* by Daniel Brown. It is the narrative of the U.S. Olympic rowing team and its journey to Olympic gold in the 1936 Olympics, which were held in Nazi Germany. Throughout the book, two histories play out simultaneously. The first story is about Joe Rantz and the rowing crew at Washington University. The second story revolves around the Nazi propaganda department, its desire to showcase a specific image to the world as well as some of the debate that took place in the United States prior to the Olympics, which included whether the Americans should even participate in the games.

Near the end of the book, the two storylines overlap when the rowing team explores the town of Köpenick, the location of their Olympic rowing venue. Let me quote and paraphrase from page 332 onward:

“But there was a Germany the boys could not see, a Germany that was hidden from them....They knew nothing of the tendrils of blood that had billowed in the waters of the river Spree...in June of 1933, when SA troopers rounded up hundreds of Köpenick's Jews, Social Democrats, and Catholics and tortured ninety-one of them to death....They could not see the sprawling Sachsenhausen concentration camp under construction that summer just north of Berlin, where before long more than two hundred thousand Jews, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Gypsies...would die....many of the Köpenickers the boys passed on the street that afternoon were doomed...destined for cattle cars and death.”

Throughout the book, Brown speaks about the lengths the Nazi regime took to showcase an image of Germany that was triumphant, modern and superior, all the while masking their hatred of others in the pursuit of racial purity and power.

Of course the Holocaust is one of the seven genocides that has been recognized in Canada's House of Commons, and now we are debating whether the people's House should recognize yet another.

Unlike the 1930s, however, the world in which we operate today is much different.

Last year the Subcommittee on International Human Rights released a statement regarding the situation of Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims. From first-hand witness testimony, it detailed mass instances of forced detention, where prisoners were refused the right to practise their religion and speak their own language; forced labour disguised as poverty reduction and skills training program, surveillance and control over every aspect of life, an effective police state; forced sterilization and population control, and, indeed, China's most recent statistics even show a massive reduction in the number of births in the Xinjiang region; and control and repression. The Xinjiang region is rich in natural resources and a strategic link to central Asian countries as part of the belt and road initiative.

These instances and sadly many other documented cases fulfill the United Nations definition of genocide under the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, created following the revelations of the Nazi Holocaust.

We recognize the seriousness and severity of direct comparisons to the Holocaust. Tragically, the evidence is present and plain for all to see. Dr. Adrian Zenz, senior fellow in China Studies at the

Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, testified before the subcommittee that it was in fact a Holocaust 2.0, but much more sophisticated.

We have heard reference to the chilling drone video from 2019, showing hundreds of men dressed in prison garb, stencilled with the words “Kashgar detention centre” and seated in rows on the ground in a large courtyard outside a train station. They are blindfolded, their heads are shaved, their hands are bound behind their backs and they are being guarded by dozens of police officers in SWAT-like uniforms. I ask people to please watch it if they have not yet done so.

Shortly after this clip aired on the BBC, the late Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, at the time U.K.'s Chief Rabbi, stated, “As a Jew, knowing our history, the sight of people being shaven headed, lined up, boarded onto trains, and sent to concentration camps is particularly harrowing.”

● (1330)

Australia's Strategic Policy Institute has documented 27 forced labour camps across China using forced and displaced labour for many mainstream brands.

These instances are not rumours or one-offs, but corroborated and verified accounts. We have first-hand testimony from victims who managed to survive and escape the Chinese Communist regime of oppression and torture.

Mr. Omerbek Ali testified before the subcommittee this past July. He stated:

I was electrocuted. I was hung up. I was whipped with wires. Needles were inserted. I was beaten with rubber batons and pliers were used on me.

Ms. Gulbahar Jelilova of Kazakstan was kidnapped from her hotel and transported to prison, where she was stripped, shackled, had blood and urine samples forcibly taken and unknown pills and injections administered, pregnancy tests performed and sexual violence perpetrated against her. She relayed the threats the Chinese state, stating:

They talked to me and told me that I had to remain silent, that if I wouldn't stop talking, they would reach me, because China has long arms. They said they would reach me and kill me anywhere in the world.

Legal academic and journalist Ms. Azeezah Kanji and her colleague Mr. Mehmet Tohti, long-time Uighur rights activists, have reported on these actions as the current stage of the Chinese government's “project of settler colonization and demographic change in the resource-rich territory China refers to as 'Xinjiang'.” Tellingly, this name literally means “new frontier”. The terrifying parallels to the Lebensraum and Anschlusss terminology used by the Third Reich during the 1930s and 1940s are clear.

Kanji and Tohti cite:

*Business of Supply*

...renowned scholar of settler colonialism Patrick Wolfe famously wrote that “the question of genocide is never far from discussions of settler colonialism.” In the case of China’s policies against the Uyghurs, this question of genocide is not just abstract or metaphorical, but imminent and literal.

Continuing the disturbing similarities to the meticulously organized methods employed by the Nazi state, Ms. Kanji testified to leaked official Chinese documents that prescribed mass forced sterilization and mass surveillance in the Uighur homeland.

Human Rights Watch likens the Chinese Communist Party to an “Orwellian high-tech surveillance state”. It says, “No other government is simultaneously detaining a million members of an ethnic minority for forced indoctrination and attacking anyone who dares to challenge its repression.”

Where does this leave Canada?

I was taught that being a Canadian meant our nation stood for something. Like thousands of young Canadian university students, I remember learning about the positive role that Canada’s foreign policy played in the 20th century throughout such hallmarks as the 1948 signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Lester B. Pearson’s creation of the UN Emergency Force during the Suez crisis and the role of Canadian peacekeepers. We were taught that Canada meant something internationally, that its actions were a force for good, that Canada stood above the fray as an example to the world. Canada is not only a place people want to live, it is a nation that others strive to emulate.

Now is the time for our Parliament to reflect those Canadian values, which are still par for the course in classrooms across our country. Our Prime Minister should work with his American counterparts. Canada should join the republican and democratic senators in the United States to coordinate an international response. Canada is a principled nation that believes in fundamental values, values that run contrary to the interests of the Communist Chinese government and its objectives.

Turning back to the book *The Boys in the Boat*, in 1935, the American anti-Nazi federation called for a boycott of the Olympic games in Nazi Germany. A vote was taken at the U.S. Amateur Athletic Union to send a three-man committee to investigate the atrocities. The resolution failed 58 to 55.

Unlike 1935, we cannot claim ignorance or a lack of knowledge in the broader population. We need to demand internationally that China is held accountable for its genocidal acts. Therefore, we must choose. Canada can stay silent and allow President Xi to gain international favour and superiority through the platform of yet another Olympic games hosted by an authoritarian, genocidal and repressive regime or we can work together with our like-minded allies and call out the horrendous human rights abuses being perpetrated by Beijing against the Uighur people. After all, if there is any truth to the idea of Canada as a nation that stands on guard for freedom and human rights now would be a good time to prove it.

• (1335)

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I really enjoyed my colleague’s speech.

He talked about a book that tells the story of young athletes who competed in the 1936 Berlin Olympics. As we know, today, I proposed an amendment to the Conservative motion, calling upon the IOC to move the Olympic Games if China continues its genocidal spree. That amendment was accepted.

Some members disagree because they think that we should not mix politics and sports. I would like to know what my hon. colleague thinks about that argument.

[English]

**Mr. Brad Vis:** Mr. Speaker, it was a little hard to hear the member. I am having some technical difficulties.

Generally speaking, I believe that Canada’s values transcend everything else we do. Our first and foremost priorities as Canadians must be to stand on our charter values, and those transcendent ideals transcend sport.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, evidently there is a tremendous amount of cross-party agreement that we are deeply shaken by the extent of the state-sponsored and state-run deliberate genocide toward the Uighur people. The testimony that the committee heard on this matter has horrified many members of Parliament more than any other testimony they have ever heard.

In moving this motion forward, could we also consider whether there is a similar genocide against the people of Tibet, who, based on the invasion that occurred so many years ago, are also facing, in my view, systematic genocide?

**Mr. Brad Vis:** Mr. Speaker, from the reading I have done and some of the evidence that is available, I believe the same tactics taking place against the Uighur Muslims have likely been applied against the Tibetan people as well.

**Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my question is dealing with trade with China. China is an important trading partner of Canada, and it has been suggested by some that this action by Canada’s Parliament might have a negative impact on our trade with China.

What are his comments about that?

**Mr. Brad Vis:** Mr. Speaker, again, there was a bit of a technical difficulty with the connection.

China depends a lot on Canada for its economic prosperity and on Canadians buying Chinese goods. We need to use our purchasing power and our trade as a means to perhaps work with our international colleagues to ensure that China does not get away with these human rights abuses.

• (1340)

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, would the member like to add anything about the shameful way that despotic regimes use the Olympics as propaganda to the rest of the world?



**Mr. Brad Vis:** Mr. Speaker, my big concern in general is that if the Olympics are held in China and China is not held accountable for its human rights atrocities, it is going to have the opportunity to showcase a China that does not actually reflect the realities of the citizens of China and their abuse at the hands of their government.

Canada stands up for human rights. Those values are universal, and we need to ensure that we use our position internationally to work with our like-minded colleagues to ensure that the values we espouse as a country are reflected in our interactions around the world.

**Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is a genocide happening in the world. It is happening, it is undeniable, the evidence is there, and this House of Commons is calling it out.

There are one million people in detention camps in China. Women are being sterilized. There is forced abortion and slave labour. People are being ripped away from their families, tortured and murdered simply because of their religion.

Joe Biden and Donald Trump do not agree on much, but when they do, I think we owe it to take a look. The U.S. administration, meaning the previous Trump administration and the current Biden administration, key world leaders, have agreed and said that there is genocide happening in China, full stop.

I will start my speech today by using my political science degree, which I got a few years back, and look back in history at Brian Mulroney, former prime minister, and his leadership on apartheid in South Africa.

Back at that time, there were a lot of people who said, “Who cares? Why are we involved in a situation 15,000 kilometres away in a country where we do not have much connection?” However, Brian Mulroney stood up—contrary to other world leaders, who stood quiet—and a snowball effect started to build support and effect real, tangible change in South Africa. A lot of people today credit Brian Mulroney and Canada for getting Nelson Mandela out of prison and ending apartheid in that country. The then prime minister stood up to people who said that they were not sure, they did not care, it did not matter, they needed more research. Maybe at times people thought it was not worth the effort. Today we look back at that stance and see that it formed part of our Canadian identity.

There are a few of those moments in our history. I think of Vimy Ridge and the contributions of our brave men and women in the First World War and the Second World War. They stand as defining moments of who we are as Canadians. Our leadership stance in South Africa was tough and often ran against the current, but it effected real change, saved lives and formed our Canadian identity. We do not look back today to wonder whether it was worthwhile, if it was important or not, or if it was happening or not. It helped define us here at home and around the world.

However, for as proud as we are of the circumstance and situation in South Africa, we have to be mindful of what we did not do when it came to Rwanda. The House and our country know very well of the difficult story of Lieutenant General Romeo Dallaire, a former senator and a well-known name across the country. Canada

### *Business of Supply*

took a different approach in the mid-1990s when it came to the Rwandan genocide. We still talk about that today, but not in proud terms. We committed back then, and several times since, to say that never again will we allow that to happen. A lot of speeches, commitments and talk have been made by elected officials, Canadians, military leaders and other people around the world.

I believe that right now, we of this generation are confronted with our South Africa and our Rwanda in the Uighur situation happening in China.

Some of my constituents in Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, or perhaps somebody watching in rural Saskatchewan, a lobster fisherman off the coast of Nova Scotia, somebody in an office tower in Vancouver or a middle-class family in Mississauga might ask, “What does it matter?” To them I would say that it does matter, because it is testing our identity. It is testing our value set to do what we have done before: stand up and take a stand. It is not always easy to confront and it is not always easy to solve, but we know it is there.

The Communist Party in China is not playing by the rules, and it affects us all. The Uighur situation, the genocide happening there, is a clear and prevalent example, but it is not the only one.

● (1345)

We need look no further than what we see in dealing with COVID-19, the challenges with the World Health Organization, with CanSino and the issues that happened with vaccines, the horrible and unfair treatment of our two Michaels, the spying and the infiltration of our institutions. The list goes on, and it says that the Government of China—not the people of China, but the government, the Communist Party of China—is not doing right in this world.

I commend the Bloc Québécois and support the amendment that was made today to the motion. We talked earlier this week about China not deserving the right to host the 2022 Olympics, plain and simple, and there is still time to change that.

More than anything, why this should matter to every Canadian is that when people are being raped and slaughtered simply because of their religion, their skin colour or because of who they are, we have a moral obligation here at home. I do not want to stand in the House of Commons years from now feeling sorry that another 800,000 people were murdered as we stood by and were indecisive about whether it was happening, whether we should have acted or what we could have done. We have done that before and we have the scars. I do not want that to happen again. I do not want to hear speeches in which members say they wish they had acted differently back then.

*Points of Order*

We are at a fork in the road in our country. Are we going to go down the path that we followed before? Are we going to confront this as we confronted the Nazis in the Second World War and the evil that was taking place in South Africa and make a difference, or are we going to go down the road we took with Rwanda and live with regret?

Today I am thinking of the million people detained in camps that the Chinese call “re-education centres”. The research, studies and information out there are crystal clear. Reports and first-hand accounts have been devastating. I remember watching the news several months ago and seeing a man pick up someone coming out of one of these detention centres who was trembling and barely able to walk. Frankly, the image will never leave my mind. I would describe him as barely alive. It was horrific. We owe it to them to stand up for the people who cannot stand up for themselves.

I want to close my comments today with a personal story about Tursunay Ziawudun, as told in an article by the BBC in the U.K. She tells her story as an example of what happens. She stated that some of the women in the detention camp who were taken away from the cells at night were never returned, and that those who were brought back were threatened against telling others in the cell what had happened to them. “You can’t tell anyone what happened, you can only lie down quietly”, she said. Women were forcibly sterilized, including a woman who was just about 20 years old. “We begged them on her behalf”, she said.”

Tursunay was released in December of 2018 and fled to the U.S. A week after she arrived in the United States, she had surgery to remove her womb, a consequence of being stamped on. She said, “I have lost the chance to become a mother.”

That is one story of many that we know are happening today. We know a genocide is being committed. We owe it to pass this motion, but more importantly, we owe it for this country to act again in the best humanitarian interests of the world.

I think of those people there, wondering if humanity will step in for them. I for one, the Conservative Party, other parties we have heard from today and numerous bipartisan colleagues have said we are ready. We are at a decision point. I agree that we have a lot of things going on in this country, but standing up for those who cannot stand up for themselves needs to be one of them. The question is, will we stand up for the Uighur and Turkic Muslim people when they need us? I for one say yes, and I believe this House will say yes too.

\* \* \*

• (1350)

**POINTS OF ORDER**

CRIMINAL CODE

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to provide input on a decision that was asked of the Speaker earlier today. I will make my intervention short, and I thank the Speaker for the indulgence.

I rise today to provide input on a matter that was raised by the member for Kingston and the Islands this morning and further discussed by the official opposition House leader. I would like to dis-

cuss the significant and meaningful difference between Bill C-218 and Bill C-13.

First, the member for Kingston and the Islands, when he spoke in the House on Wednesday, February 17, stated:

We also proposed to engage the provinces, territories, indigenous communities and organizations that have expressed an interest in discussing how gambling is regulated. We believe Bill C-13 is substantively different from Bill C-218, as it includes a horse racing provision and achieves its objectives through different means.

I agree with this statement. The government member is correct and is stating the facts. The bills are substantially different. This was found in an analysis conducted by the subject matter experts at the Library of Parliament in a section of a research report comparing Bill C-13 and Bill C-218.

The report looks at how Bill C-218 would repeal paragraph 207(4)(b) of the Criminal Code in its entirety. The consequence would appear to be that betting on a single sport event or athlete contest would then be permitted, since those activities would no longer be excluded from the definition of “lottery scheme”, but so would be betting on other types of activities referred to in that paragraph, notably all types of races.

By way of contrast, Bill C-13 would amend paragraph 207(4)(b), rather than repealing it, so that the following activities would continue not to be permitted lottery schemes: “bookmaking, pool selling or the making or recording of bets, including bets made through the agency of a pool or pari-mutuel system, on any horse-race”.

In other words, Bill C-13 would continue to exclude betting on horse racing as a type of lottery scheme the provinces could engage in. The governmental materials issued on Bill C-13 confirm the explanation that the regulation of single event sports betting would be up to the discretion of each province and territory, with the exception of horse racing, which would remain regulated and supervised by the Canadian Pari-Mutuel Agency.

As the experts have pointed out, there are very significant differences in both bills.

Next I would like to discuss the process. The place to decide which of these significantly different bills merits further progress is in a relevant committee, which would examine both bills in detail, hear from stakeholders and make considered determinations. The committee would then vote on these bills and resolve which one should proceed to third reading.

I trust the legislative process of the House. The procedures, evaluations and safeguards are built-in. We should trust it and allow members to carry out their duties as legislators, which will result in the most robust and thorough bill.

It is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, you have been put in this situation. This mismanagement of Bill C-13 has caused delays. It has been debated constantly, and taken on and off the calendar, which has created confusion and concern, and has led to these unnecessary circumstances.

Business workers and communities have been waiting long enough to have this substantial issue addressed. I have had the privilege of being a member of this chamber since 2002. During all these years, I have witnessed that the tradition of the House, when it is uncertain, is for the Speaker to allow the debate and the process to continue. I hope we can uphold this time-honoured practice.

I appreciate the indulgence of the House today in allowing me to speak to this issue. I did not want to want to intervene in the momentum of the debate today, but I had to, given what the government has done.

• (1355)

**The Deputy Speaker:** There are several members rising for additional points of order on this matter. Members know this is currently an open item. I am watchful of the time as well.

I see we have at least three members who wish to weigh in on this. We are also waiting for five minutes of questions and comments for the hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry.

We will first hear from the chief opposition whip, and then from others, but I ask members to please keep their comments concise.

**Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order, and I will be quite brief. I wanted to inform you that the member for Saskatoon—Grasswood would like to add to this point as well. He intends to do that tomorrow, so I ask that he be allowed to have his opportunity to comment on this prior to any ruling on it.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on an actual point of order, there is nothing you are currently considering with relation to the intervention made today. I rose yesterday on a point of order to move a unanimous consent motion, which was not adopted. There is nothing outstanding for you to rule on that.

What I raised today was for the Speaker to address the concern in the way bills will be handled. The member is actually contributing now to a point of order that has been dispensed with, so I would encourage you to consider that when entertaining further commentary on this point of order, which really does not exist.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands for his additional thoughts on the matter.

We have a quick intervention by the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be brief.

Yesterday, when this matter came forward for unanimous consent, I did confer with the government House leader's office and the hon. member for Saskatoon—Grasswood. I was concerned that I should say no to the measure for unanimous consent. It was only

### *Business of Supply*

after I was reassured by the hon. member for Saskatoon—Grasswood that I held my tongue.

I was originally convinced to support this bill by the hon. member for Windsor West, who explained to me the issue of sport betting and why this law was important. I am persuaded by him once again.

I would like to put forward my view about the recommended course. I take the point of the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands that this is perhaps not an open question. However, with the time available, and having regretted going along with unanimous consent, I now wish to be on the record supporting the idea that the right way to handle this is at committee.

I thank the hon. member for Windsor West for once again educating me.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank the members for their additional thoughts on the matter. This does trace back to the hon. opposition House leader's comments and points of order earlier in the day. As well, I appreciate the members who reflected on earlier comments along the same lines relating to this subject.

We will now go to questions and comments. The hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

[*Translation*]

It seems the Minister of National Revenue wishes to speak. I will therefore ask the member for Trois-Rivières to wait a moment so we can figure out exactly what is happening.

It seems the interpretation is not available. Could the minister explain again the problem she is currently experiencing?

**Hon. Diane Lebouthillier:** Mr. Speaker, I was saying that we are hearing both the English and the French at the same time.

[*English*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am just going to test that again. We are getting the interpretation in French now.

We have time for just one question to the hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry. He will, of course, have the remaining time when we get back to debate on the question.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

\* \* \*

### **BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

#### OPPOSITION MOTION—RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN CHINA

The House resumed consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

**Mrs. Louise Charbonneau (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as everyone knows, the Bloc Québécois will support this motion because we believe that China's measures against the Uighurs are very serious.

*Statements by Members*

I would like my colleague to tell me about the relationship between this government and generous political donors. I would like to know if he thinks the donations from supporters of the Chinese Communist Party might explain the government's dithering over the decision to get involved in countering the Uighur genocide.

• (1400)

[*English*]

**Mr. Eric Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, this is not easy for any country to tackle. China is a growing force in the world. It is a world player, and this is economically, socially and culturally complicated. We are facing a lot of different issues.

No matter how complicated it is, this is about basic human rights and human dignity. This is about a genocide that is happening, which we must stop. Regardless of financing, regardless of how complicated it is and regardless of how big any country is, no country should get away with what is happening right now. We must always stand up for human rights.

I am proud to be a parliamentarian from a party, and, I think, a House of Commons, that will call it what it is.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. colleague. What I find really, really concerning right now is the actions of China holding Canadian citizens hostage, which is well beyond the rule of law.

The attack against democracy in Hong Kong, to me, is a line-in-the-sand moment that is very, very concerning, in addition to what is happening with the genocide of the Uighurs. We also have another issue with the Olympics coming up.

How can we work internationally with our allies to actually put limits on this ongoing abuse of human rights and democracy by the regime in China?

**Mr. Eric Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, we need to work together internationally to combat this. As I mentioned, China is a powerful force. It has a lot of connections worldwide, but as I also mentioned, we have the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. There are a growing number of countries that share the same concerns. Domestically, those countries are facing the same challenges with China that we are. The member mentioned the situation in Hong Kong. That is yet another growing challenge.

My argument to Canadians is that if we do not stand up against this, against genocide, with the whole list we spoke about, what do we stand for? At some point, we have to stand up, work together with our international colleagues on sanctions, whatever they may be, and send the message that we are not going to tolerate this from China or any other country in the world. It is about leadership and values, and these are being tested right now.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry will have one minute remaining, enough time for one question and response, when the House next gets back to debate on the question.

[*Translation*]

**The Speaker:** Order.

Before we begin statements by members, I would like to remind members to choose their words carefully in our proceedings at all times. Equally important are the tone and context in which the words are used, since a disruptive intervention can quickly be deemed inconsistent with our long tradition of respecting the integrity of all members of Parliament.

[*English*]

I thank members for their collaboration.

---

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1405)

[*English*]

### AIRLINE INDUSTRY

**Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last Thursday I met virtually with over a dozen Air Canada employees and Unifor union leaders in my riding to discuss the impact the pandemic has had on them. On Friday I was informed by Air Canada that nearly 100 additional employees in my riding were being laid off. As a result, the number of people employed by Air Canada in our community has been cut nearly in half since the onset of the pandemic. The airline sector is a critical part of our local economy, and it is in a state of crisis due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. That is why I am advocating a federal support package that would ensure the long-term viability of the industry and the jobs it supports post-pandemic. Such a package must also ensure that Canadians whose flights were cancelled due to the pandemic receive refunds, and it must be implemented as soon as possible. I am working hard to ensure our government has the backs of both our airline workers and those who need refunds.

\* \* \*

### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as we continue to celebrate Black History Month and give honour and recognition to the contributions of Black Canadians, I wanted to give a special tribute to a hockey legend: New Brunswick's very own Mr. Willie O'Ree.

Originally from Fredericton, New Brunswick, Willie O'Ree has had a tremendous impact on the world of hockey. On January 18, 1958, he was called up to replace an injured Bruin to play against the Montreal Canadiens, becoming the first player to break the Black colour barrier in hockey. After his playing career was over, Willie became a champion for diversity, serving as the NHL's diversity ambassador from 1998 to this day. In 2018 he was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame. It was recently announced that on January 18 of next year, he would be honoured yet again by having his number, 22, retired by the Boston Bruins at TD Garden on the 64th anniversary of his historic entry into the NHL.

I congratulate Mr. O'Ree on this tremendous honour. I thank him for his contribution to Canada's beloved game and his continued advocacy and promotion of diversity and respect for others.

\* \* \*

#### COMMUNITY ART INITIATIVE

**Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the tradition of quilting is certainly well known here in Kitchener—Conestoga, and it has now been taken to a new level with a community art initiative created by a local University of Waterloo architecture student, Brenda Reid. She is creating *From Behind the Mask*, a project to help bring people together in spirit. Brenda is inviting people to share their pandemic stories on pieces of fabric. The pieces will then be tied together, showing our physical distance while representing our social ties. From students to seniors, our community is getting involved, including support from community members, local businesses, public libraries, the Homer Watson House & Gallery, and financial support from the Region of Waterloo arts fund.

The finished quilt project will be assembled and displayed this summer, and images will be uploaded to create a digital quilt. It is art that is keeping us together while apart. I thank Brenda and everyone for adding their stories to help create a tribute to spirit and resilience in the Waterloo region and throughout Canada

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

#### REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATION

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today I would like to highlight the 25th anniversary of Ciel et Terre, an organization founded by residents of my riding involved in environmental causes.

In 1995, the founders of the Centre de l'information sur l'environnement de Longueuil, now known as Ciel et Terre, were true pioneers, because the cause had far fewer supporters then than it does now. Nevertheless, the volunteers rolled up their sleeves and organized recycling awareness workshops in Longueuil schools.

Since 2009, the organization has recruited dozens of volunteers to participate in major cleanups of the St. Lawrence shoreline in Longueuil, which is a great idea. Ciel et Terre also participates in public debates. The organization writes reports on environmental issues, submits briefs to government authorities and holds consultations. By contributing their expertise, members of Ciel et Terre help improve policies and make them more environmentally friendly.

As the member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, I would like to thank everyone involved with Ciel et Terre now and in the past, as well as everyone who is committed to protecting the environment.

\* \* \*

#### HOOKED ON SCHOOL DAYS

**Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to wish my son Gabriel a very happy seventh birthday.

[*Member spoke in Italian*]

#### Statements by Members

[*Translation*]

I rise today to recognize Hooked on School Days, which is being held February 15 to 19. Let us be honest: Our young people could use a reason to get hooked on school these days.

It has not been easy to adapt to the many changes education has undergone over the past year. Between having classes in the kitchen or living room, not being able to play with classmates or even having to wear masks, it has been an entire year of learning and adaptation for all students and teachers in Alfred-Pellan.

I congratulate all the teachers, support staff and students, young and old, on their perseverance, resilience and daily victories in a school setting that is completely different. Everyone continues to amaze and inspire us. My message is this: Do not give up; you are doing great; way to go.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

#### ATHLETES FROM BEAUCE

**Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the accomplishments of Antony Auclair, an athlete from Beauce who recently won the Super Bowl. He is the pride of our young Canadians and Beauce residents. It all starts with a dream, and then it takes effort.

Speaking of effort, Beauce has been doing Canada proud in the world of sports for some time now. Besides Antony, I want to acknowledge the efforts of Marie-Philip Poulin, from Beauceville, who was named the best female hockey player in the world; Eliot Grondin, an Olympic snowboard cross-athlete from Sainte-Marie who recently won two World Cup medals; Raphaël Lessard from Saint-Joseph, a talented driver competing in the NASCAR truck series in the United States, whose season just started; and Thomas Chabot, a young NHL hockey player from Sainte-Marie who plays for the Ottawa Senators.

We have many more young athletes making the people of Beauce and all Canadians very proud. They are working hard to achieve their dreams.

Sports is in Beauce's DNA, and so is pride.

I congratulate all the Beauce athletes of today and tomorrow.

*Statements by Members*

[English]

**BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

**Ms. Kamal Khera (Brampton West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Black health care workers are both at the forefront and behind the scenes of this unprecedented battle against COVID-19. During a virtual Black History Month event in Brampton West, we celebrated Black front-line workers for their remarkable contributions during such a critical time in our country. We heard from Crystal, Tristan, Sherika and Angella on what it means to be a Black health care worker during the pandemic, along with Dwight, Prudence, Heather and Sellinor, whom I have had the privilege to work alongside on the front lines as a volunteer nurse.

While we owe it to our health care workers to end this virus, we also owe it to them to end another virus that plagues our society and institutions, which is anti-Black racism. As a proud member of Parliament for Brampton West and as a proud member of the Liberal government, I will not rest and will continue to work toward ending systemic racism in this country. I wish members a very happy Black History Month.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**TRÉVI**

**Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, given the public health situation, entrepreneurs in our ridings are being sorely tested and must try to keep going in order to be ready when things get back to normal.

Today, I would like to talk about a company in my riding of Marc-Aurèle-Fortin. The Trévi pool company has stayed in business thanks to its resilience and ingenuity. This family business decided to manufacture all of its in-ground and above-ground pools in Quebec.

My office has been working closely with Trévi to help this industry leader get through the pandemic and then grow once the pandemic is behind us.

Together, we can get through this crisis. I hope we will build back even stronger.

\* \* \*

[English]

**BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

**Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Amherstburg Freedom Museum is in my riding in the town of Amherstburg. The museum tells the story of Black slaves seeking refuge in Canada via the Underground Railway: pioneers who built homes, businesses, schools and churches in Essex County. It is the first Black national historic site in Canada, founded in 1966 by Melvin Simpson, and showcases this community's vital role in the Canadian tapestry.

Elise Harding-Davis, curator emeritus and celebrated Black Canadian history consultant, can trace her own Canadian ancestry back seven generations. Elise has worked tirelessly to preserve Black history in Canada for the next generation.

Finally, I give a salute to Claudius Thomas. Claudius leads the local chapter of Black Boys Code, a national organization founded to prepare Black youth for success in today's technology-dominated economy, each of them leaving the world a better place than they found it.

\* \* \*

**BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, 25 years ago, the Hon. Jean Augustine established February as Black History Month across Canada. This month, while we celebrate the incredible achievements of Black Canadians, we need to reflect on the systems that limit them from achieving their true potential.

There is an urgent need to reform criminal justice, to reimagine policing and to ensure equal access to jobs, housing, capital, health care and education. Today, the Minister of Justice introduced important changes to sentencing to turn the tide on the disproportionate impact the current system has on young Black Canadians.

Despite the impact of anti-Black racism, Black communities in Canada are resilient. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many members of this community have been on the front lines to keep us all safe. I would like to thank the Black front-line workers who have been at TAIBU Community Health Centre, the Jamaican Canadian Association of Nurses, the Black Health Alliance and those across the country who continue to keep us healthy and safe and make Canada great every day.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

**SMALL BUSINESS**

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have all heard from struggling small businesses in our ridings. Small business owners do not have pensions. They do not have employer health and dental insurance, vacation pay, sick leave, maternity leave, a minimum wage or overtime payments. Owning a business is a tough life, yet thousands of Canadians with a dream and an entrepreneurial spirit do it anyway, and they provide the goods and services upon which every community depends.

Sadly, these hard-working Canadians have borne the brunt of COVID restrictions. While relief programs allow some business owners to cling to their life's work, they need customers and they are watching helplessly as the rest of the world surges ahead of Canada with vaccines and the end of pandemic restrictions. The government owes it to small business owners, who are burning their savings and piling on debt, to deliver vaccines to safely, open the economy and save our local businesses.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

**Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our country was built by two founding peoples, one francophone and one anglophone, along with the first nations.

The Official Languages Act, which was adopted in 1969, declares English and French to be Canada's two official languages. French has been on the decline in Quebec and in francophone communities across Canada. The last report from the Commissioner of Official Languages was clear. We need to take urgent action to stop the decline of French in our country.

A Conservative government would take action within its first 100 days, modernizing the Official Languages Act to make it stronger, creating an administrative tribunal to handle complaints, allocating a budget for francophone universities in minority communities and centralizing enforcement powers at the Treasury Board to protect public servants. As the leader of the official opposition has said so well, we must act now to protect the French language across Canada.

How can Quebecers and francophones have faith in this Liberal government, which has done nothing to protect the French language over the past five years?

\* \* \*

[English]

#### ALGOMA—MANITOULIN—KAPUSKASING

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, every day my social media feed shows me people across Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing doing their most to raise spirits and bring a smile to others.

That is how I learned of the Thessalon First Nation snow sculpture contest, and where I hear concerts from fantastic musicians such as George C. Williamson, his grandson Cole Hughson, and Robbie Shawana, all from Manitoulin Island, and from Johnny Lemieux and Estelle Deschamps from Smooth Rock Falls.

In Espanola, Dennis Lendrum and volunteers have been improving the Black Creek Sno-Shoe Trail on the Espanola Game and Fish club's property for all to enjoy.

In Wawa, brothers Myles and Spencer Jennings are clearing and maintaining a skating path and small hockey rink on Wawa Lake.

In Kapuskasing, the Rotary Club is hosting a photo scavenger hunt on the hiking trails, while students from École Secondaire Je-

#### Statements by Members

unesse-Nord in Blind River and from Assiginack Public School made valentines for seniors in their communities.

It is clear that Canadians are finding innovative ways to help each other through the pandemic, and it is easy to see that we are truly in this together.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### REGIONAL RECREATIONAL ORGANIZATION

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to take advantage of the activities surrounding the 50th anniversary of Loisirs Laurentides to acknowledge the exemplary work of all its partners.

This organization is a major player in sports and leisure in the magnificent Laurentides region. This organization was established on February 22, 1971, with a view to promoting physical activity and healthy habits for the people of Laurentides.

I want to acknowledge the invaluable contribution of the volunteers and the management team who have made Loisirs Laurentides a landmark in the region.

Long live Loisirs Laurentides and happy festivities for this noteworthy 50th anniversary.

\* \* \*

● (1420)

[English]

#### COVID-19 VACCINES

**Mr. Chris d'Entremont (West Nova, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia has been so fortunate during the second wave of COVID-19. In our province of almost a million souls, we only have 14 active cases and only one patient in hospital as of this morning. That is quite a contrast compared with other provinces and territories in our great country.

However, our economy continues to take a huge hit due to the Liberal government's failed vaccine rollout plan. Delays in a vaccine directly correlate with delays in our economy, and with Canada currently ranked 52nd in the world in terms of immunization, it will be impossible for us to foresee a strong economic recovery in the near future.

From the start of the pandemic, the constituents in West Nova took an all-hands-on-deck approach to help slow the spread of the virus, but we are getting tired of the isolation and would like to get back to normal. People want to get back to work or visit their grandchildren in other provinces. The only way to do this is through a strong vaccination program, which the Liberal government has yet to produce.

*Oral Questions*

We need to get the vaccine rollout right in order to secure jobs and secure our economic future. Let us get all Canadians and Nova Scotians back to work.

\* \* \*

**GERALD THOMPSON**

**Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I pay my respects to a great man and proud Newfoundlander. Gerald Thompson of Grand Falls-Windsor recently passed away, and I would like to pay tribute to his community service. He was dedicated to the Memorial United Church, the executive director of the chamber of commerce, a dedicated member of Lodge Northcliffe for over 40 years and indeed a dedicated Liberal, from Joey Smallwood's election to today.

Gerald left a great impression on his community, one of great respect, and I will miss his great poems. Gerald's greatest legacy is his family: four children, 15 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

To his partner and wife Ruth, someone who stood with him through an incredible journey, all of us here in the House of Commons send our sympathies. God bless Gerald.

---

## ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

**EMPLOYMENT**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business published a report showing that one in six small businesses are considering closing permanently, putting 20% of private-sector jobs in jeopardy.

We have already lost more than 800,000 jobs and the unemployment rate is one-third higher than the G7 average. The government promised one million jobs.

When will these workers get their paycheque?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the question. It gives me the opportunity to share some good news with Canadians.

This week, the International Monetary Fund published its annual report related to Canada. The report shows that Canada's strong and decisive measures provided essential support to the economy and the functioning of financial markets and helped protect lives and people's livelihoods.

That is not coming from me but from the International Monetary Fund.

[*English*]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, they need to update their talking points over there, instead of just reading a selective quote from some starchy report.

The reality is this. Here are the numbers. Across the G7, the unemployment rate averages 6%. In the U.S., it is 6.3%; in the EU, it

is 7.5%; in Canada, it is 9.4%. We are far worse than all the other countries that are also facing the COVID crisis.

Is it not clear that while those economies are suffering under COVID, our economy has the added problem of suffering under the policies of the government?

• (1425)

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me be clear about the success of our government's policies in supporting Canadian workers and Canadian jobs.

As of January, Canada had recovered 71% of the jobs lost since the beginning of the pandemic. That compares with only 56% recovered in the U.S. Canada has a 64.9% labour force participation rate. That is higher than Germany, at 56%, and the U.S., at 61.7%. It is higher than Japan and higher than South Korea.

We are doing well in tough times.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that answer demonstrates how out of touch the government is.

If the policies were working, we would not have 834,100 more Canadians out of work now than were a year ago. If it were working, then we would not have an unemployment rate that is 50% higher than the average of the G7 and of the United States of America. The reality is that the government is delivering among the worst job records on Planet Earth, and Canadians are starting to wonder how they are going to put food on the table or a roof overhead.

When will those people who have lost their jobs get their paycheques back?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that debates in the House are inevitably partisan, and that is why I know that Canadians will be really pleased to learn that the International Monetary Fund, the premier international financial authority, this week published a report with a very positive verdict on our government's policies so far. The IMF said that our government's strong and decisive actions provided crucial support to the economy and helped protect lives and livelihoods. It predicts our GDP will grow by 4.4% this year.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT**

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for months now, we have been clearly stating that the Liberal government has failed miserably at protecting Canadians.

In addition to COVID-19-related deaths, which now exceed 20,000, and the shutdown of the economy, the lockdown has us all stuck at home with no end in sight.



*Oral Questions*

The decision to make a deal with the Chinese Communist Party was a disaster. In addition to being duped by CanSino, we wasted three months when we could have been negotiating with other companies.

Again, why did the Liberals make a deal with the Chinese Communist Party?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with respect to vaccines, let me be clear.

Canada has secured 10 doses of vaccine per Canadian, and we have the most comprehensive and diverse vaccine portfolio in the world. To date, Canada has received over 1.4 million doses of vaccine, and we will receive another 400,000 doses this week.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I too can be clear with the minister. Currently, if we receive six million doses by the end of March, then three million Canadians will be vaccinated. That means 8% of Canadians will be vaccinated by the end of March. Right now, we rank 54th worldwide in terms of vaccinations. By the end of March, we will have dropped even lower.

My question is simple: does the Prime Minister have a plan B? At the moment, plan A is a flop.

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada has understood from the very beginning that it was important to have a plan A, B, C and D. That is why we have the most comprehensive and diverse vaccine portfolio in the world. We decided not to risk depending on just one vaccine.

Health Canada has already approved the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, and is currently examining the AstraZeneca, Novavax and Johnson and Johnson vaccines.

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I get the feeling that we have come to plan D, which is about to fail.

At committee this morning, the COVID-19 vaccine task force confirmed that it did not recommend that the government participate in the CanSino vaccine project with China. The panel demonstrated that it did not have the scientific basis to recommend the project. The government decided to go ahead anyway, despite the experts' advice. It defied their recommendation and put all its eggs into the CanSino basket. As a result, time has been wasted and Canada has not been able to develop a new domestic vaccine production strategy.

Why did the government not listen to the experts? Who made that decision?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, from the start of the crisis, our government has always followed the advice of experts, researchers and doctors. That is our policy, and it is an essential policy during a pandemic.

With respect to the vaccines, we have the most comprehensive and diverse vaccine portfolio in the world. At the same time, we have focused on production in Canada.

• (1430)

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I invite the Deputy Prime Minister to listen to what was said at the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology this morning. She would realize that that may not be the reality. Mr. Scott-Douglas, secretary of the task force, stated that the science suggested not backing CanSino. It is hard to understand the government. It refused, supposedly on the advice of experts, to give a mere \$2 million to test the vaccine developed by Dr. Kobinger of Université Laval. However, it sank \$56 million into a Chinese project against the recommendation of the vaccine task force. This proves that these were political decisions and that the government only listens to the science when it is in its interest to do so.

Who decided to go ahead with the Chinese project? Who shut down the Quebec vaccine?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government has invested and will continue to invest in vaccines manufactured in Canada and in domestic biomanufacturing.

In fact, Dr. Kobinger received a \$1-million grant for his research through the federal government's novel coronavirus rapid research funding opportunity. We will always invest in promising solutions that are made right here in Canada and Quebec.

\* \* \*

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP fought to bring in a federal paid sick leave program.

When the Liberal government introduced the program, it missed the mark. The plan is neither flexible nor accessible, the amount is not enough to support families and people are waiting too long to get the payment.

Will the Prime Minister commit to improving the paid sick leave program so it protects our workers and stops the spread of COVID-19?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we introduced sickness benefits so that all workers, no matter where they live or work, do not have to choose between going to work sick or putting food on the table.

This is an important program. Part of our commitment in the safe restart agreement is to provide 10 days of paid sick leave. Under the agreement, the provinces established job-protected sick leave. I encourage all eligible Canadian workers who need this support to apply for it.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, New Democrats fought to bring in a paid sick leave program at the federal level, but when the Liberals introduced the program, it had a number of problems. It is not flexible enough. It is not accessible enough. The amount is not enough to support families, and we are finding that the delays in receiving the payment are just too lengthy.

There is an opportunity here. Experts all agree that paid sick leave is one of the best tools to stop the spread of COVID-19. Will the Prime Minister commit today to improving paid sick leave so that it protects workers and helps us stop the spread of COVID-19?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member opposite that paid sick leave is absolutely essential. It is essential any time, and it is particularly important during this global pandemic, which is why our government was very pleased to put in place, as part of the safe restart agreement with the provinces and territories, 10 days of paid sick leave provided by the federal government. That sick leave is there, and I encourage all Canadian workers who need it to use it.

\* \* \*

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Uighurs in China are subject to the single largest mass surveillance program in human history, and Huawei equipment is helping in their oppression. Security experts around the world have been raising major concerns about Huawei, but despite this, the Minister of Industry has decided to sign-off on a \$5 million deal with Huawei anyway. He even bragged about it on Twitter.

How in the world could this government think it is wise in any way to hand over taxpayers' dollars to Huawei?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as members know and Canadians who are watching know, our government will continue to ensure that Canadian networks are kept safe and secure. While we cannot comment on any specific companies, an examination of 5G technologies and a review of security and economic considerations is ongoing.

National security is paramount when we assess the next steps. We carefully assess these matters with allies and partners around the world, and we will make the best decision in the interest of Canadians for generations to come.

● (1435)

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it looks like the minister is okay with turning the same blind eye to this genocide as his boss is. The genocide in China has been called the largest mass detention of human beings since the Holocaust, and Huawei appears to be right in the middle of it.

When are these Liberals going to show some courage and get serious about Huawei or at least cut them off from getting taxpayers' dollars?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have enormous respect

for my colleague, but I would take exception to the premise of her question. She well knows, because she is a very experienced member of the House, that the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council is responsible for the administration of the Alliance grants she was referring to. Grants are awarded through an independent process and managed at arm's length from government.

Further, she would know that last September we published a policy statement on research security, which included instructing the federal granting councils to review their security policies so that Canadian researchers can appropriately protect their work. That is an issue we take very seriously and we will continue to protect the interests of Canadians.

\* \* \*

**IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a troubling report revealed that Canada's visa application centre in Beijing is operated by a subcontractor owned by Chinese police forces. Canadians are concerned that sensitive and confidential information will fall into the hands of the Chinese Communist Party, one that is committing Uighur genocide and detaining the two Michaels. This brings into question the integrity of our visa application process.

I am baffled. Why does the government think it is acceptable for a company with ties to the Chinese government to be running our visa office?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we take the privacy and security of all applicants very seriously and ensure that we meet high standards when it comes to transparency and privacy. Protection of personal information is a primary consideration when choosing any service provider such as a visa application centre. Our officials closely monitor that these processes are followed and that Canada's stringent privacy standards are being met. We will always ensure that the privacy of all applicants remains protected.

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is obvious to Canadians that a company with ties to the Chinese government should not be operating our visa application centre. Last night at committee, a former Hong Kong legislator, Nathan Law, who has experienced first-hand the brutality of the Chinese regime, and former Canadian diplomat to China, Charles Burton, called for an end to the contract.

Given the contract's troubling connections to the Chinese government, will the minister end the contract, yes or no?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate that we take the protection of Canadians' privacy very seriously. Information is always handled according to Canada's privacy laws and the data is stored in Canada temporarily and then deleted. Our officials closely monitor that these processes are followed, that Canada's stringent privacy standards are—

**The Speaker:** I will have to interrupt. I believe we have a point of order.

[Translation]

**Mr. Mario Simard:** Mr. Speaker, the interpreter cannot understand the minister. She is asking her to turn her microphone down.

[English]

**The Speaker:** I would ask the minister to lower the arm on his headset.

**Hon. Marco Mendicino:** Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate that we take the protection of Canadians' privacy very seriously. Information is always handled according to Canada's privacy laws and the data is stored in Canada temporarily and then deleted. Our officials closely monitor that these processes are followed. We will always ensure that the privacy of Canadians remains protected.

\* \* \*

• (1440)

#### HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, members of the cabinet are persistently denying the Uighur genocide in spite of overwhelming evidence. Their proposed way of unearthing the evidence which they say they require would be for the Government of China to offer unfettered access to the scene of this genocide. Short of a proposed guided tour of the concentration camps, what evidence would they consider sufficient to recognize genocide?

**Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have been very, very clear from the beginning that we are very seriously concerned about the allegations that have been brought forward with respect to the treatment of Uighurs. We have demanded that the Government of China allow unfettered access to a group of experts to examine the situation, but in parallel, we are also working with our international partners to pool our expertise to best understand all of the allegations, most of them extremely credible, that have been made against the Chinese in their treatment of the Uighurs.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the evidence is just so clear and we continue to see breathtaking cowardice by the government and that minister. Yes, we understand that China is powerful, and so was Nazi Germany, but I am only here today because Canadians were willing to stand up to a genocidal power that threatened my grandmother's life. Will the minister finally put aside his nonsense talking points, think about his own legacy and his own humanity, and finally speak the truth about this issue?

**Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not very much appreciate those very personal comments made against me as a person, but I will respond by saying

#### Oral Questions

that this government is very seized with the issue of the treatment of Uighurs and other minorities, and we are looking at this very carefully in concert with our international partners so that we get to the bottom of the very serious allegations that have been made against China with respect to the treatment of the Uighurs and other minorities. We will continue to do that with single-mindedness.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in January 2020, the genetic sequence of the COVID-19 virus was made public so that scientists around the world could begin the race for a vaccine. The government did not take action to develop a vaccine domestically.

Two months later, on March 11, the World Health Organization declared a pandemic. The government stayed in neutral. The panel of experts that was supposed to advise the government on domestic vaccine production met for the first time on June 26.

It is unbelievable. While others had been racing for a vaccine for six months, the government was still in the starting blocks. Why?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. However, I want to set the record straight.

On March 11, the World Health Organization declared a pandemic, and 12 days later, the federal government announced \$192 million to support Canada's biomanufacturing industry. On April 23, we announced an additional \$600 million. Within about a month of the pandemic being declared, over \$800 million had been allocated to support the domestic biomanufacturing industry.

We will continue to build a resilient biomanufacturing industry here in Canada.

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, given the SARS experience in 2003, the government knew that we had to invest heavily in vaccine research and production capacity so as to not depend on other countries. That was the very first thing we needed to do at the onset of the pandemic.

Not only did the government not do that, but it took five months just to get experts together to consult. Because it was five months late, Canada had already lost the race for vaccines.

How could this government be so passive at such a critical time for public health?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

As I told him, the federal government made nearly \$800 million available in under a month. I will be a little more specific, because I know he is going to be interested.

*Oral Questions*

We have made historic investments. For example, we have invested \$173 million in Medicago in Quebec City, \$4 million in Glycovax Pharma in Montreal, \$1.3 million in Biodextris in Laval, \$4.6 million in JN Nova Pharma and \$4.1 million in Laurent Pharmaceuticals.

We have invested close to \$350 million in Quebec and will continue to invest to build a resilient biomanufacturing industry in Canada.

• (1445)

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, by all means, let us talk about Medicago. They sent their proposal in March but did not hear back until July. That delay was the government's fault.

Let me give a quick recap. The government did not create a consortium of all the Canadian researchers with the expertise to find a vaccine. It did not convene experts to advise it until June 26, which was five months late. It did not invest in production capacity until August 31, which was seven months late. It did not make meaningful investments in domestic vaccine production until October 23, which was nine months late.

As a result, we are depending on other countries and getting our vaccines late.

Why did the government not show some vision instead of always being late?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

On the contrary, as I said, we took immediate strategic action guided by a long-term vision. Investing \$350 million in biomanufacturing in Quebec is exactly the kind of thing Quebecers want to see.

I mentioned Dr. Kobinger earlier today. I have been talking to stakeholders all across the country about bringing the supply chain home so we will be in a better position to meet any future public health need. We are going to have a resilient industry here in Canada.

\* \* \*

**HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a simple and fair question.

There is a motion before the House calling on the government to officially recognize that the People's Republic of China is carrying out a genocide against the Uighur people and other Turkic Muslims.

Will the government support that motion?

**Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have welcomed the motion appropriately. It was time that this extremely important matter was debated. I am listening to the debate, and everyone is getting a chance to state their position.

We will see later, when the vote happens.

[English]

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me ask a slightly different question. If the House adopts the Uighur genocide motion but the government votes against it, will the government uphold democratic norms, respect the will of the House and recognize the Uighur genocide?

**Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, we welcome the debate today. I participated in it and many other colleagues on both sides of the aisles are doing the same thing. We will see the outcome next week. I am not going to speculate about the outcome. It is totally hypothetical and we will see what happens.

\* \* \*

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, moving on to the Indo-Pacific, President Biden is assembling a coalition of democracies to counter China's threats in the Indo-Pacific. Today, the Biden administration is participating for the first time in the quadrilateral security dialogue made up of Australia, India, Japan and the United States. Some say this could evolve into an eastern NATO.

Is Canada going to be part of this, as it was with the creation of the western alliance, NATO? Did the Prime Minister, in his phone calls with Prime Minister Modi and President Biden, raise this issue?

**Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada has had an interest in the Indo-Pacific area for trade, for example, our participation in the CPTPP. We are very interested in the ASEAN group of countries. We have a number of interests with respect to countries like India, South Korea, Japan and others in the Southeast Asia region. It is natural for Canada, which is a trading nation, to want to develop those, and we will continue to do that in the years ahead.

\* \* \*

**NEWS MEDIA INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Facebook's attempt to block news media in Australia is a direct attack on every nation's sovereignty.

When the government says that it stands with Australia, I say, "Well, God help the poor Australians." When Facebook was found guilty of breaking Canadian law, the Liberals did nothing. When Facebook needs staff, it just calls into the minister's department. Facebook Canada is run by a former Liberal operative, for crying out loud.

Canadians deserve a government that will hold this rogue company accountable. Instead, it has one that holds its hand.

Will the minister insist that Facebook pay what it owes in Canada now? That would be solidarity with the Australians.

• (1450)

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear for many months. In fact, our government is at the forefront of the battle to ensure that the web giants pay their fair share, should it be when it comes to our cultural heritage in Canada, should it be for media or online harm.

Just last week, I was in conversation with France, Germany, Australia and Finland, so we could work together to tackle these very important issues.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a well-known fact that when it comes time to support French education, the Liberals have a habit of dragging their feet.

The official languages in education program has been frozen for years, even though student enrolment is on the rise. In Alberta, Campus Saint-Jean is under attack from the Kenney government. In Ontario, Laurentian University is fighting to survive.

What will it take for the Liberals to realize how urgent this is and step up to defend the rights of francophones when it comes to education?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

Obviously we must protect our linguistic rights now and always. We must also ensure that francophones outside Quebec have access to universities and educational institutions where they can continue to learn their language and support the vitality of their communities.

I hope my colleague will join me in denouncing the inaction of the current provincial Conservative governments who unfortunately continue to reduce services to francophones daily and directly undermine the vitality of French in this country.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### FISHERIES AND OCEANS

**Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with the world's longest coastline and connected to three oceans, Canada is well positioned to be a global leader in the blue economy, an economy that creates good, middle-class jobs while ensuring healthy oceans and sustainable ocean industries.

#### Oral Questions

Could the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard please tell the House what our government is doing to grow our blue economy?

**Hon. Bernadette Jordan (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as my colleague said, Canada is an ocean nation. We have the largest coastlines in the world, and over 300,000 Canadians are employed through our blue economy. This is why it is important that we develop a blue economy strategy that is second to none.

Last week, we launched the engagement with a number of stakeholders through round tables, including ones with industry, fisheries and aquaculture, academia, ocean science and women in ocean leadership.

The blue economy strategy is going to be ambitious, prosperous and productive as well as sustainable. It is extremely important for us to develop this strategy for our future.

\* \* \*

#### PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on the questions asked by my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

Today at the industry committee, the vaccine task force said that the deal with CanSino, which fell through, for vaccines was struck before the task force was formed. However, after the task force was formed, it reviewed the deal and recommended against going with it.

If the vaccine task force said it was a no-go, why did the Liberals proceed?

**Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we received the advice of the vaccine task force to proceed with seven vaccine manufacturers. That is exactly what we did. We put in place the largest, most diverse portfolio of vaccines of any country in the world.

We began inoculations as one of the first countries in the world to do so, and we continue to ensure that Canadians have access to vaccines. Indeed, 14.5 million Canadians can expect to be vaccinated prior to the end of June.

Four hundred thousand doses of the Pfizer vaccine have arrived in Canada and are being distributed. That is hard work. That is progress, and we are sticking to it.

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is not what I asked. The vaccine task force said today that it expressly advised against proceeding with CanSino, and we know that deal had a huge impact on the delays we are seeing in vaccine delivery today. Those delays have cost Canadian lives, jobs, hopes and more.

*Oral Questions*

The vaccine task force, the science-delivered approach from the government, said “no-go” with CanSino, yet the government proceeded anyway. Why was it so enamoured with this Chinese company at the expense of Canadian lives?

• (1455)

**Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will tell members what we were enamoured with. We were enamoured with ensuring that we acted on the advice of the vaccine task force in order to execute those seven agreements in very short order.

I would like to thank all the public servants at PSPC who worked throughout the summer and on the weekends to ensure they got that job done.

In addition, we are well on track to have six million vaccines in the country prior to the end of March, another 23 million vaccines in the country prior to the end of June and 84 million vaccines in the country prior to the end of September, so that every Canadian who wants a vaccine will indeed have access to it.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, China has been detaining two Canadians, the two Michaels, for more than 800 days. China blocked shipments of vaccines to Canada. China is turning a blind eye to the genocide in Xinjiang. China banned Canadian imports of pork and canola. China simply does not respect human rights.

When will our Prime Minister join the Conservatives in calling for the Olympic Games to be relocated?

**Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

With respect to his very specific question about the Olympics, we have said many times that this decision is up to the International Olympic Committee, and our position has not changed.

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what a pathetic response. What a lack of leadership. Our athletes should not have to pay the price because the Liberals and their Prime Minister are inept.

We recently learned that Canadian athletes are being told what they can and cannot say in China to avoid being targeted by Chinese authorities. This is serious.

How can the Prime Minister and his minister be okay with this? When will they show some leadership, demand that the Olympics be relocated and urge the International Olympic Committee to do so, if necessary?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague knows very well that the Canadian Olympic Committee and the Canadian Paralympic Committee are responsible for deciding whether Canadian athletes will participate in the Olympics. We have full confidence in these organizations. They will make informed decisions that reflect Canada's fundamental values.

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the government has no guts when it comes to gun control

Not only is the government doing nothing to ban handguns, but it has also completely abdicated its responsibilities by asking the municipalities to act in its stead. There is no way that Quebec can end up with hundreds of different firearms policies because the federal government refuses to do its job.

Yesterday, the Quebec National Assembly unanimously called upon this government to delegate it the authority to control handguns.

Will the government respect this unanimous request from Quebec?

[*English*]

**Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member's question makes me wonder if she has even read the bill.

The legislation we brought forward will provide Canadians with the strongest regulatory framework for the restriction of handguns in all parts of the country. When coupled with the legislation we passed with Bill C-71 and the new measures of Bill C-21, we will have the strongest restrictions in every place in every part of the country.

There is nothing in this legislation that compels any municipality or Quebec to do more, but we are quite willing to work with those who want to do more in their communities. We have heard from many municipalities and provinces that are prepared to do more. Every order of government has a responsibility to the safety of its citizens.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, they are too cowardly to control handguns but too vain to let Quebec do it.

If the Liberals do not want to help, they should at least try not to hinder. There is no way that Boisbriand, Sainte-Thérèse and Blainville can end up with three different firearms policies covering the same square kilometre. The number of homicides committed with handguns grew by 40% in 10 years.

If the federal government does not want to take responsibility, will it at least let Quebec do so?

• (1500)

[English]

**Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member's unparliamentary and rude language notwithstanding, let me be very clear that the legislation we have brought forward will provide all Canadians in every place, including in the province of Quebec, with the strongest regulatory framework that prevents handguns from getting into the hands of criminals by strengthening our response at the border, by preventing the theft and criminal diversion of handguns into criminals' hands and by taking steps to remove dangerous firearms from dangerous situations.

We are also prepared to support the provinces. We have given the Province of Quebec tens of millions of dollars to assist the police, and we look forward to it finally distributing that to municipal police services to help them do the important work of keeping their communities safe.

\* \* \*

#### AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

**Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for months I have asked the government for certainty on getting international farm workers to Canadian farms. These workers are vital to Canadian fruit and vegetable producers. With commercial flights being cancelled from Mexico and the Caribbean, where the vast majority of workers come from, many farmers across the country are left wondering exactly how and when they will get their workers.

Will the minister tell farmers the plan for getting workers to farms after mid-March, when the largest number of farm workers are set to arrive?

**Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the integral role farm workers and farmers play in ensuring that Canadians have access to food, and we are here to support them. We are working very hard to ensure the continued safety and timely arrival of temporary foreign workers into Canada.

In the case of temporary foreign workers in the agriculture and seafood sectors, our government is deferring the requirement that they quarantine in a government-approved hotel until March 14 to allow for the development of tailored solutions. In the interim, temporary foreign workers entering Canada will go to the usual place of quarantine provided by their employer under existing quarantine rules. We value and are so appreciative of the work these workers do.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### EMPLOYMENT

**Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in Beauce, using foreign labour is not a choice but a necessity.

Companies like Beauce Reinforcing Steel in Saint-Benoît-Labre are coming up against red tape. The delays, especially right now,

#### Oral Questions

never end. Businesses like these need foreign workers to remain operational and deliver on their contracts.

I asked the minister about this matter a year ago, nearly to the day. Nothing has changed in a year's time. The pandemic keeps being used as an excuse.

I want to know what the minister plans to do to help those businesses and, more importantly, when he plans to do it.

**Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are working very closely with the agricultural sector and we understand the need for foreign workers. The Minister of Agriculture and I have been putting significant resources into this file and we continue to support those workers and of course the farmers. We thank them for their work.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### TRANSPORT

**Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a commercial driver in my riding has a job pending, but his FAST card has expired. All requirements were met, except for an in-person interview. The problem is that the FAST support service office is closed due to the pandemic.

What does this mean for renewals? Windsor-Essex is the busiest border crossing in North America. Failures in processing FAST cards mean jobs lost and delays at the border. What specifically is being done to fix the problem?

**Hon. Omar Alhabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, international bridges and border crossings are critical economic links between Canada and the United States, and those borders support essential supply chains for many different industries. We are aware of the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic and related travel restrictions have had on those border crossings. We are closely monitoring the situation to ensure that these border crossings and bridges continue to operate safely for individuals and supply chains.

\* \* \*

#### JUSTICE

**Mr. Jaime Battiste (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the evidence is clear: Indigenous and racialized Canadians are overrepresented in the justice system. Indigenous people account for just 5% of the adult population but 30% of federally incarcerated inmates. This is shameful.

### Oral Questions

However, the Minister of Justice has recently tabled a critical piece of legislation, which includes reforms that will help address the overrepresentation of indigenous people in the justice system. Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice update the House?

• (1505)

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I first want to thank the member for Sydney—Victoria for his tireless advocacy in the fight against systemic racism. We are finally turning the page on failed Conservative criminal justice policies that have not made us safe and not deterred criminals. Instead, they have resulted in the over-incarceration of indigenous people, Black people and marginalized Canadians.

The package that has been tabled is a necessary reset for our criminal law. It proposes to repeal certain mandatory minimum penalties, restore greater availability of conditional sentence orders and provide police and prosecutors the tools and guidance to treat addiction as a health issue.

Bill C-22 represents an important step forward in the fight against systemic racism. We hope members across the aisle support this bill that will truly keep all communities in Canada safe.

\* \* \*

### NATURAL RESOURCES

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it has been two weeks since I asked the Prime Minister to take action on the Line 5 issue. This requires a leader-to-leader interaction.

Will the Prime Minister personally pick up the phone, call President Biden and ask him to intervene to keep Line 5 open?

**Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have said, we take this issue very seriously. Line 5 is vital to our energy security and vital to our economy. It provides thousands of jobs at refineries in Sarnia and in Montreal and Lévis, Quebec. It supplies 53% of Ontario's crude oil supply and 66% of Quebec's. It supplies Michigan with 55% of its statewide propane.

I assure the House that we are looking at all of our options. Line 5 is a vital pipeline for Canada's energy security. We support it. We will defend it.

**Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has presided over thousands of job losses in Alberta's energy sector. At the same time, our energy workers watched foreign oil come into this country from third world dictators and human rights abusers. Clearly, the Liberal government is willing to support jobs in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Russia, Nigeria and others instead of supporting jobs here in Canada.

What specific action will the Liberal government take this year to reduce foreign oil imports into Canada?

**Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to remind the hon. member that we approved TMX and are building it. That is 7,000 jobs we have created. We approved the Line 3 pipeline, so another 7,000 jobs. We have approved NGTL 2021, with thousands of jobs created there. We are building LNG Canada, with thousands of jobs there. We

have put \$1.7 billion toward orphan and inactive wells, with thousands of jobs to be created. Of course, there is the wage subsidy. More than 500,000 workers were kept in their jobs in a pandemic, in Alberta alone.

That is our record.

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, over the last three weeks there has been growing bipartisan consensus that the Keystone XL pipeline cancellation was a mistake. Now high-profile Democrat and Republican leaders are calling for the project to be continued, and more than a dozen states are pondering legal action against the Biden administration.

The Liberals say they support the patch. Now is their chance to actually do it and stand up for KXL. Will the government finally do so?

**Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are not happy with the decision to cancel Keystone XL's permit. I will quote Chris Bloomer, the CEO of the Canadian Energy Pipeline Association. He said:

Keystone XL is a loss. But is it the end of Canada's oil and gas industry? Absolutely not. Canada is a world leader in responsible energy development.... We have abundant natural resources that can help meet the growing demand for affordable energy around the world and can offset global emissions.

We agree that the world needs more Canadian energy, and we support our energy workers.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### TOURISM INDUSTRY

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Parc Safari is one of the main tourist attractions in the Montérégie region, drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.

Like many tourism operators, Parc Safari has been hit hard by COVID-19, and has had to adapt to survive. A few weeks ago, I was pleased to announce that we are allocating close to \$1 million to Parc Safari to help it cover its new costs, continue to welcome families and protect the jobs of the many people who work there.

Could the Minister of Economic Development please tell the House how this government is delivering for tourism businesses in my riding and across Canada?



• (1510)

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Châteauguay—Lacolle for her question and her extraordinary work.

Parc Safari is certainly a key tourism attraction for the region. We know that the tourism sector is facing huge challenges. Of course, we have been there from the beginning to help.

Through economic development agencies, we have supported about 1,000 Quebec businesses. We have invested \$44 million in various tourism businesses. Across the country, we invested over \$350 million. About 3,500 organizations in the tourism industry have received federal funding, in addition to—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Vancouver East.

\* \* \*

[English]

### HOUSING

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are struggling with significant income loss due to the pandemic. Even with the CERB or CRB, many are unable to afford rent. Their debt load in rental arrears is staggering, and as provinces lift their temporary eviction bans, many Canadians are at risk of losing their homes. This is especially acute in large cities and has disproportionately affected women, people of colour and people with disabilities. The National Housing Strategy Act says that adequate housing is a basic human right.

Will the Prime Minister put in place national eviction standards and a federal retroactive residential tenant support benefit so that no one will end up on the street because they cannot afford rent?

**Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government's priority is to make sure that Canadians can keep food on their tables and a roof over their heads. That is why we took quick action by creating the Canada emergency response benefit and the Canada emergency wage subsidy to ensure that Canadians have the support they need to stay in their homes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have moved Canadians from the CERB into employment insurance with no increase in EI premiums. In addition, we are concluding agreements with provinces and territories for the Canada housing benefit, a game-changer to enable people to receive direct payments to enable them to pay rent.

\* \* \*

### HUMAN RIGHTS

**Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Vancouver Granville, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, disturbingly, Vancouver stats show that anti-Asian hate crimes are up 717%. At the same time, China's national security law is of grave concern to Canadians who have ties to Hong Kong. The two Michaels continue to be arbitrarily detained. As for the Uighurs, why is it genocide for my people, but not for the Uighurs? Move or boycott the Beijing Olympics? Well, the government has abdicated that decision in favour of an Olympic committee.

### Oral Questions

Will the government please stand up for justice and human rights and demonstrate it has the backs of Chinese Canadians, indeed of all Canadians?

**Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as we have stated repeatedly, we are gravely concerned about the allegations coming out of Xinjiang with respect to the treatment of Uighurs and other Turkic Muslim minorities.

We have urged the Chinese government to allow a group of international and impartial experts to examine the situation, and at the same time we are working with our international partners and putting together our expertise with respect to the serious allegations that have come out of China.

**The Speaker:** That is all the time we have for today.

[Translation]

There are two points of order. We will begin by listening to the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Mr. Speaker, after consultation among the parties, I believe you would find consent in the House for the following motion: That the House condemn the Facebook decision to ban content from Australian media on its social network and affirm that intimidation by Facebook has no place in democracy—

**An hon. member:** Nay.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** ...and call on the government to introduce a bill that would force web giants to pay their fair share for their use of media content.

**The Speaker:** Before asking the question, I would like to remind hon. members that, out of courtesy, members listen to the entire question and then state their position.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Mr. Speaker, it being Thursday, I would like to ask the usual question of what business we can expect to be brought forward in the House in the next few days. I would remind members that parliamentarians have been ready for almost one month to debate the bill to eliminate the controversial \$1,000 for non-essential travel by workers. Will the government soon introduce this bill so it can be debated and passed?

• (1515)

**The Speaker:** We will get to this question shortly, but I first have a statement to read. The member will then have an opportunity to repeat his question so that it may be clearly understood by all.

*Speaker's Ruling*

[English]

**POINTS OF ORDER**

## CRIMINAL CODE—SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** Following the order raised earlier today, I would like to make a statement on Bill C-13, an act to amend the Criminal Code with regard to single-event sports betting and its similarity to Bill C-218, an act to amend the Criminal Code with regard to sports betting, standing in the name of the member for Saskatoon—Grasswood. As members are aware, both bills seek to amend the same provision of the Criminal Code as it relates to single sports betting.

While Bill C-13 was introduced in the House on November 26, 2020, and has yet to be called for debate by the government, the general provisions surrounding single sports betting have in fact not only been debated in the House during consideration of Bill C-218, but a decision was made yesterday by the House on the general principle of allowing all single sports betting, and the bill was referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. The House is now placed in an unusual situation where a decision was made on one of two very similar bills standing on the Order Paper.

[Translation]

The Chair recognizes that both bills are not identical; they are, however, substantially similar as they both amend the exact same provision of the Criminal Code for similar purposes.

[English]

Both Bill C-218 and Bill C-13 seek to amend the same paragraph of the Criminal Code as it pertains to sports betting. Bill C-218 repeals paragraph 207(4)(b) of the Criminal Code in its entirety, to make it lawful to conduct and manage a lottery scheme that involves betting on a race, a fight or a single sporting event. As for Bill C-13, it conserves the paragraph, but seeks to amend it to make single sports betting lawful, except for bets on a horse race.

The rule of anticipation, which prohibits the same question from being decided twice by the House within the same session, is explained in the following manner at page 568 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition:

The rule of anticipation becomes operative only when one of two similar motions on the Order Paper is actually proceeded with. For example, two bills similar in substance will be allowed to stand on the Order Paper but only one may be moved and disposed of. If a decision is taken of the first bill (for example, to defeat the bill or advance it through a stage in the legislative process), then the other may not be proceeded with.

This makes clear that if two bills are similar, without being substantially the same, both may be placed on notice, introduced and given first reading, and both could even be debated at second reading, provided that the House has not taken a decision with respect to either of them.

[Translation]

Given the decision of the House yesterday afternoon, the question therefore before the House is, following the adoption of Bill C-218 at second reading, should Bill C-13 be permitted to proceed further in the legislative process?

[English]

● (1520)

In adopting Bill C-218 at second reading, the House has agreed to the principle of the bill and consequently has agreed to repealing the portion of the Criminal Code that deals with sports betting. While there are examples where the House has repealed sections of an act already amended by another bill adopted by the House in the same session, this is not exactly the situation before us today. Instead, since Bill C-218 seeks to completely repeal paragraph 207(4)(b) of the Criminal Code, it seems to the Chair that it would not be possible for Bill C-13 to continue in the legislative process, as it would seek to amend a paragraph of the Criminal Code that would no longer exist upon adoption of Bill C-218. In fact, the Chair notes that other avenues would be open to the House to achieve those same ends, such as through amendments proposed to Bill C-218 during the committee's study. As a consequence, the Chair has difficulty seeing how the House could now move forward with Bill C-13 after it has adopted the larger principle of repealing the very portion of the Criminal Code that Bill C-13 seeks to amend.

Consequently, as long as Bill C-218 follows its course through the legislative process during this session, Bill C-13 may not be proceeded with. As was mentioned during the intervention yesterday, as well as previously by the member for Saskatoon—Grasswood, members who wish to further review or amend the provisions included in Bill C-218 should follow the proceedings and take part in discussions during the hearings of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

I thank all members for their attention.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Mr. Speaker, we are seriously concerned with the process of this decision.

As mentioned in your answer, the point is that we are talking about two bills. One is from the government and one is from a member of the official opposition, the member for Saskatoon—Grasswood. The government had the chance to explain itself, and I officially ask that this member of Parliament speak on behalf of his private member's bill here in the House of Commons.

This decision has been made without considering the fact that this member of Parliament had asked to talk about his bill. Unfortunately, because of the decision made right now, he will not have that chance. We are seriously concerned.

[Translation]

This sets a very unfortunate precedent and we have some serious concerns. When a member's own private member's bill is affected by a decision, the member should at least have the right to address the House if they want. We made an official request to do so in this case, but the member was unfortunately unable to speak.

[English]

**Mr. Blake Richards:** Mr. Speaker, I want to add to this point of order as well.

I also have that same concern. I am disappointed at the timing of this ruling. The Opposition House Leader and I both stood and indicated, so it was on at least two occasions, that the member for Saskatoon—Grasswood did have points he wanted to raise on this in his point of order, and he should have that opportunity. He should have been afforded that opportunity. I am extremely disappointed that it was not given to him as a member. I think it is his right to have that opportunity.

Furthermore, we are waiting for a ruling on a question of privilege that I raised on Tuesday. You have obviously moved quickly when a member sought to intervene in this case and was not afforded that opportunity, yet you have a question of privilege on which there could have been a ruling and nobody else was seeking to intervene. It just seems to me that the timing of this is something that we should all be concerned about. I feel it is important and imperative that I raise that point with you.

I do think that the timing of this does create a real problem and a bad precedent for a member who did seek the opportunity to intervene and who did have pertinent facts, given that his private member's bill was one of the bills in question. There are serious concerns here, and I wanted to add those thoughts.

• (1525)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, I too rise on a point of order.

Very quickly, I think it is worth pointing out that the point of order that was raised today that you have now responded to was specifically with respect to seeking clarification as to how things were supposed to move forward. It was not, per se, a point of order addressing a procedural error, a point of order to which other people would contribute arguments. This was just a question that was asked of you to provide clarification on what the next steps would be. In the context of what is being discussed, I think it is important to consider that aspect.

**Mr. Brian Masse:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, this is a highly unusual situation to say the least. The government was custodian of this bill, its own bill, and did not move it rapidly through, so we are in a situation here.

I would ask if you had the chance to look at the submission I made earlier, because you did not reference it at all in your decision. There is some value to take a step back for a moment. That is not to question your judgment or capability in this; it is just that there is new information, and we want to make sure we go through a thorough process for this.

The government acted hastily yesterday. It gave no indication about its tactics of withdrawing the bill to any of us until yesterday, and then this morning we saw this action. I would ask for the process to be thorough to ensure that we do not rush to error, and perhaps take a day to allow the member for Saskatoon—Grasswood a chance to participate. That would be valuable too.

I respect your judgment on this, Mr. Speaker, but I believe it is incomplete without the chance to review my intervention earlier

### *Business of the House*

and the intervention from member for Saskatoon—Grasswood, whose bill I spoke of.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, with all due respect, I do not understand my colleagues. This is not a question of privilege. This is not a debate. It is a simple question for clarification that was asked of you: If Bill C-228 was adopted, could Bill C-13 continue? That is it. There is no debate. It does not affect anyone else. It was just to know whether if one were adopted, could the other continue? It was a direct question, and you answered, and that is it. There is no debate around this. It is an answer to a question.

**The Speaker:** I want to thank the hon. members. I know decisions are not always easy ones, believe me. I appreciate their advisement. I will take it under that guise.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know if this falls into the category of weekly statements, but each week we, the government House leader and the leader of the official opposition, have this meeting on Thursday afternoon to find out where we are headed.

For the fifth time, and I am not counting what I just did about five minutes ago, we are reaching out to the government.

When will it table the bill so we can debate it here in the House and eliminate the \$1,000 given to workers who travel when it is not necessary to do so?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if I understand the question correctly, my colleague wants to know what the legislative agenda will be for the next few days.

[English]

Tomorrow morning, we will continue with second reading debate of Bill C-14, which would implement certain provisions of the economic statement. In the afternoon, we will begin debate on Bill C-19, which would provide for temporary rules to ensure the safe administration of an election in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Translation]

Then, Monday and Wednesday of next week, we will continue the debate on Bill C-19. On Tuesday, we will consider Senate amendments to Bill C-7, the medical assistance in dying law. I would also like to inform the House that Thursday, February 25, will be an allotted day. On Friday that same week, we will begin second reading of Bill C-21, the firearms act.

I thank my colleague for his question.

*Business of Supply***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

## OPPOSITION MOTION—RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN CHINA

The House resumed consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

**The Speaker:** There is one minute remaining in questions and comments for the hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Kelowna—Lake Country.

• (1530)

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for the heartfelt examples he presented today of what is occurring. He mentioned standing up for those who cannot stand up for themselves. I am wondering if the member could go into more detail as to why it is important to work with our allies, and also to show leadership on this particular issue.

**Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the stories we have seen from the BBC, the Washington Post, The New York Times and the Associated Press have documented numerous examples of these personal stories. The people being affected in China, the Uighur people and the Turkic Muslim minority, do not have a voice. We do not need to go into why. We know why they are seeing oppression in China.

Here at home, we need to stand up for those who cannot do it for themselves. We owe it to them and our own values to do that.

**Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Kingston and the Islands.

I want to begin by thanking the member for Wellington—Halton Hills for bringing this crucially important issue to the attention of both the House and Canadians. I also want to thank him for his very thoughtful speech this morning, which outlined more than a decade of persecution of the Uighur people and other Turkic Muslims in western China.

Equally, I want to thank the member for Montarville for his clear elucidation of the importance of this Canadian Parliament continuing to take strong action on the infringement of human rights in China, and the member for St. John's East for his thoughtful understanding of this not only as a political process, which we are hearing today, but also for drawing a distinction between it and the subsequent legal actions that would be necessary to engage the whole world in ending the atrocious treatment of the Uighur people.

This is an issue I have been following closely for well over a decade. The Uighur community is small in Canada, but I am privileged to represent some of them who live in my riding of Don Valley West. I have heard first-hand their stories and worries about families, friends and colleagues who remain in Xinjiang province. My first encounter with this community was with a family facing immigration difficulties imposed on them by the previous Conser-

vative government, when I was in opposition. I was proud to stand up for them then, as I continue to be proud to stand up for them. Their faces, stories and broken hearts weigh heavily on me today.

This issue took on a larger perspective when I first met Rebiya Kadeer, who at the time was the president of the World Uyghur Congress. Known as the “dragon fighter”, she gently, passionately and intelligently told me the story of her people. It is a story that has only gotten worse over the last decade. She is not only known as the “dragon fighter”, but also as “mother of all Uighurs”. Her legacy looms large for me whenever I raise the issue of the persecution of her people.

Let me be clear: I have been and continue to be concerned, alarmed and horrified by the reports of mass arbitrary detentions and repressive surveillance; the allegations of torture, mistreatment, forced labour and forced sterilization; and the mass arbitrary separation of children from their parents by the Government of the People's Republic of China. It is wrong, and it is yet another example of the failure of the PRC to recognize the singular importance of human rights. Human rights are the bedrock of the civilized world, and to infringe upon them will never lead to peace, harmony, prosperity or the well-being of either minority or majority populations.

In 2018, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination raised the alarm on this issue. It noted that repression was rampant and organized, and that other violations were undertaken by senior members of the Chinese Communist Party. Though official numbers were impossible to obtain, it indicated the number of people detained may be anywhere from tens of thousands to over a million, and reports continue to emerge regarding practices of forced labour, forced sterilization and other coercive birth control measures. Other atrocities, which some have called human rights abuses, crimes against humanity, genocidal activity or genocide itself, have been widely reported.

All of this is why the Canadian government has already acted, and will continue to act, conscientiously on the international stage regarding the persecution of the Uighur people. One of the best ways to work with international partners is to do so through multilateral institutions such as the UN. Since both the drafting and adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, governments of two parties in Canada have taken an international leadership role in human rights. Human rights issues will not be solved overnight, and require vigilance and determination. That is why Canada is committed to pushing forward on issues related to China, recognizing that the China of today is not the China of even just a few years ago.

We worked at the UN Human Rights Council. In September 2020, Canada co-hosted a side event on Hong Kong. At the General Assembly's third committee on October 6, 2020, Canada and 38 other countries co-signed a joint statement on human rights in Xinjiang and Hong Kong. Also, through China's most recent UN Universal Periodic Review in 2018, Canada provided frank input on China's human rights record.

• (1535)

At a time when many are questioning the future of multilateralism or of diplomacy altogether, Canada is committed to playing an active role in shaping the norms and engaging the institutions that underpin our global community.

However, we know that only so much can be changed in the halls of power. That is why Canada also engages with diaspora communities, activists, civil society, journalists and human rights defenders to hear the stories of persecuted people around the world. That is how the world knows about the crackdowns on freedom of assembly and suppression of democracy in Hong Kong. That is how the world knows about restrictions of freedom, language, culture and religion, and the destruction of historic buildings and temples in Tibet. That is how the world knows about China's abuses against the Uighurs and other minorities in Xinjiang, which have all been very well enumerated today.

The mounting evidence of a systematic campaign of repression cannot be ignored. We take egregious human rights violations very seriously. We take allegations of genocide very seriously. The international community has to work together in order to investigate the egregious abuses taking place in Xinjiang. In the 21st century, there is no excuse to be unaware of these issues.

Canada is committed to engaging unilaterally, as well as alongside our partners, to advocate for the human rights of those in China. We will continue to call for unfettered access to Xinjiang for international independent observers, as we did in July 2019, June 2020 and at the UN most recently last October. We will continue to oppose China's prosecution and persecution on the basis of religion or belief for Muslims, Christians, Tibetan Buddhists and Falun Gong practitioners, as we did in the 2018 UPR.

We will continue to support restored respect for civil and political rights in Hong Kong, which we have done repeatedly with like-minded allies. We will continue to oppose the death penalty in China and everywhere, seeking clemency for Canadians facing that sentence.

Finally, we will continue to work tirelessly to bring Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor home. This is something that, very frankly, motivates my work every day of my life.

It is in this spirit that I am not only speaking in this debate but also listening to the wisdom, experience, passion and care being offered by my colleagues in every party today. Canadians expect their Parliament and their government to stand up against injustices in Canada and around the world. While we may sometimes disagree about how and when to do that, I know that we all agree that Canada needs to both speak and act, to continue to fight for justice and human rights in Canada and around the world. Today, we hold

### *Business of Supply*

the Uighur people in our thoughts, minds and hearts to do what is best and right for them.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I agree with many of the things my colleague said, but he has not really answered the main question, in terms of his remarks.

The parliamentary secretary knows that genocide has a specific legal meaning in international law. He knows that Canada is a party to the genocide convention, and being a party carries certain obligations. Those obligations do not depend on the actions of other parties or states.

Our commitment, as part of that multilateral instrument, is to respond in cases where genocide is taking place. We have those obligations as Canada, regardless of what other states do, although we know that other states, such as the United States, have already started to act.

The crucial question of this debate, and of this motion, is this: Does the parliamentary secretary believe that genocide is happening in the specific legal sense as defined by the convention, such that it triggers the obligations of the Government of Canada under that convention?

• (1540)

**Mr. Robert Oliphant:** Madam Speaker, for me, that is not the central question today. The central question today is about the health, well-being and human rights of the Uighur people, and how best to move on.

It is not about a Parliament deciding, in its unilateral way, anything on that issue. The Government of Canada bears the responsibility of international conventions. The Government of Canada bears the responsibility of asserting itself on the world stage. The Government of Canada continues to do that, and will continue to do that.

This issue is way bigger than the declaration of anything. It is about human rights, and let us drill down to the core of what these motions are about. They are about conversation, but they also need to be absolutely grounded in the reality of human rights atrocities. We will find every way to deal with these appropriately, honestly and with integrity on the world stage.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I somewhat agree with my Conservative colleague from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, and I somewhat disagree with the parliamentary secretary. He is skating around the issue so as not to commit to anything on behalf of his government.

*Business of Supply*

In his speech, the parliamentary secretary admitted that there have been human rights violations, that there are re-education camps, rape and sterilization campaigns, all of which have been documented at the international level. Last week, we sent an open letter to the newspapers signed by all members of this House: from the Liberals to the Greens and from the Bloc Québécois to the Conservatives. All that is needed to move forward is for the Government of Canada to admit that there is a genocide, because words are important. That is all that is missing to help the Uighurs in China who are currently facing genocide.

[English]

**Mr. Robert Oliphant:** Madam Speaker, I will be perfectly clear. There are many ways for us to help the Uighur people, so what I am doing today is utterly committing to listening to this debate and to hearing not only expert opinion, but also anecdotal thoughts about the current issue we are engaging in.

We will continue as a government to take the best course, always concerned about human rights and always concerned about finding the best way to do things. We will make sure we do this carefully and studiously with the best legal minds at stake, and we will make sure we get it right. The goal of government is to get it right, to do it well and to continue to make sure we do the best for the Uighur people, not the best for me or for any member of the House.

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I certainly miss the conversations I had with the member at the Canada-China relations committee.

These issues are complex, but ultimately this motion has to come to a deliberative end. We are a country that believes in the rule of law. If we see human rights abuses happening to Uighurs in China, as the member has said he clearly does, does that not compel us as a people to put the rule of law into action through the international obligations and conventions we have signed?

Does the member acknowledge that the government has an obligation to stand up for Canadian values and the rule of law on behalf of those who are—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I have to give the member 10 seconds to answer.

• (1545)

**Mr. Robert Oliphant:** Madam Speaker, right now the government has a responsibility to listen to Parliament. It has a responsibility to listen to every member in this place. It also has a responsibility to act with integrity, as we move forward, for the betterment of the Uighur people.

I miss the member at committee as well.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to speak to this opposition motion, and I want to thank the member for Wellington—Halton Hills for introducing it. It is substantive and addresses a real and pressing issue, and I can honestly say, having had the opportunity to sit in the House today and listen to the speeches, questions and answers from all sides, that I genuinely feel more informed and understand this issue better than I did when I woke up this morning. I give credit to the member for that.

Our government has on many occasions spoken in the House about the work it is doing to strengthen the rules-based international order. In the wake of the Second World War, the foundations of this order were laid by numerous outstanding Canadians, including Louis St-Laurent and Lester B. Pearson. Since then, Canada has worked with other countries to build on those foundations. The result has been unprecedented periods of peace and prosperity. We have not achieved perfection, but we have certainly made progress. Respect for human rights lies at the heart of the rules-based international order.

The United Nations was founded on three pillars: to advance peace and security, development, and human rights. Its member states came together 72 years ago to approve the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, putting people, not states, at the centre of the new international order. This declaration lays out the obligations that all governments have to their citizens.

Today, the rules-based international order faces dire challenges. There are some governments that seem to believe in an international order that is not for the people but for the states. This is certainly not Canada's approach.

Canada stands up for human rights everywhere and at all times. Canada stands up for the people of Venezuela, for the people fleeing their homes in Myanmar, for the people of Yemen suffering in the midst of war, for the people of Belarus calling for free and fair elections and for the Uighurs facing repression, persecution and arbitrary mass detention.

It is clear that the promotion and protection of human rights deserve more attention than ever before. Canada is doing its share. However, the challenges are daunting across a whole range of human rights, especially now in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Freedom of opinion and expression and the freedom to think what we want and say out loud what we want are cores of our human identity, yet in too many countries this is under assault. On the multilateral front, Canada has consistently raised concerns regarding violations of freedom of expression, including freedom of the media at the UN Human Rights Council, at the UN General Assembly and in other international forums.

Canada has worked with its partners to pass resolutions at the UN on freedom of expression, human rights defenders, Internet freedom and for the safety of journalists. Canada helped found and co-chairs the Media Freedom Coalition, a group of 43 countries committed to addressing issues around freedom of press.

It is not only the freedom to speak that is under attack. Many governments are also cracking down on the freedom to love, lesbian, gay, bisexual, intersex and two-spirit people face discrimination and violence. Canada works to advocate for the rights of LGBTI persons in two areas: advocacy in the decriminalization of same-sex conduct and the elimination of violence and discrimination targeting LGBT people.

Canada has developed programming that addressed human rights training for police, the judiciary and schools. Canadian missions support the work of the local LGBTI civil society groups through the Canada fund and local initiatives. Canada also serves as co-chair on the Equal Rights Coalition, the world's first intergovernmental forum for the protection of the rights of LGBTI people. We continue to play a central role in the coalition.

People in some countries are deprived of their liberty and have their economic, social and cultural rights threatened because they are members of religious minorities. Canada's approach to promoting freedom of religion or belief includes advocating on behalf of persecuted faith and belief communities opposing religious hatred, discrimination and others, and fostering greater mutual respect and understanding through interfaith, intercultural dialogues.

● (1550)

In addition, Canada is committed to building a more inclusive world, free from racism. As recent events at home and abroad have made increasingly clear, systemic racism is a global concern, a root cause of exclusion and one of the greatest barriers to our collective well-being. As we work at home to dismantle systemic racism, which continues to impact indigenous peoples, Black Canadians and other racialized people, we are also promoting anti-racism and inclusion abroad by continuing to lead the conversation about the value of inclusion and respect for diversity with our international partners bilaterally and multilaterally.

Canada also continues to be committed to the struggle to see the human rights of women fully recognized. Canada is a long-standing advocate for the advancement of gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, and the realization of their human rights both at home and abroad. Internationally, Canada has a long-standing commitment to the human rights of women and girls, with the affirmation of feminist values at the core of our foreign policy efforts, including the launch of our feminist international assistance policy.

One of the most effective ways of improving the status and well-being of women and girls is by ensuring their full, equal and effective participation in decision-making at all levels politically, economically and socially. Canada works in a multilateral context with the Human Rights Council and other forums to champion issues such as eliminating violence against women and ending early and forced marriage. We need women's leadership to catalyze the change we want to see globally and help tackle many of the world's most intractable problems. Many governments that deny basic human rights to their own citizens are cracking down on people who stand up for the rights of their neighbours.

Canada recognizes the key role played by human rights defenders in promoting and protecting human rights and strengthening the rule of law. The promotion of respect for human rights defenders is critical and inclusive, safe and prosperous for societies. Canada is concerned with the rising threats against human rights defenders, such as enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrest, unlawful imprisonment, torture and unfair trials.

Canadians are reminded every day about the importance of human rights, and they expect their governments to be vigorous advocates for human rights at home and abroad. This is why the government is committed to protecting people at risk of persecution and to

### *Business of Supply*

speaking out against the regimes that violate the fundamental freedoms of their people, including those that engage in torture and other forms of mistreatment.

Canada highly values the rules-based international order and will continue to co-operate with the international community and civil society to put an end to torture. In addition, Canada has made it clear that it opposes the death penalty and supports the abolition of the death penalty internationally. Canada undertakes clemency intervention in all cases where Canadians are facing execution in foreign jurisdictions.

In an era of rapid technology and technological developments, Canada strongly believes that the human rights and fundamental freedoms individuals have offline must also be protected online. Through its participation in the Freedom Online Coalition, Canada has affirmed the importance of supporting Internet freedom for individuals worldwide, as well as links between digital inclusion and the protection and promotion of human rights.

Every human being is born with human rights. That is the reason for Canada to commit itself to building respect for those rights. However, while human rights have intrinsic value, they also have practical value. The societies where diversity and human rights are respected, societies that adopt inclusive approaches so that all citizens can contribute, are the most successful. Canada believes that all governments must recognize that they are accountable to their own people. We need to remember that people are at the heart of the international rules-based order.

There is much to be done to build greater respect for human rights globally. To reach our maximum potential, all governments must do their part. Canada will continue to work to advance respect for human rights by standing up and by reaching out.

● (1555)

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Madam Speaker, if this motion, and the amendment before of the House, are adopted, but the government votes against the motion, does the member believe the government has an obligation to uphold the terms of the motion?

As the member knows, these motions are not statutorily binding, but they are binding in the normative sense of the word. If we believe in upholding democratic norms, it is important to respect the will of this House. If this motion is adopted, does the member believe the government needs to follow the terms of this motion, even if the government voted against it?

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, I know the member has asked this question of a couple of other people today. I will try to be as direct as I can. I genuinely believe that this government will do what is required of it to do.

*Business of Supply*

The member might be right that it is not a statutory obligation, but I strongly believe that this government always does and always will respect what this House puts forward. I also believe this government will act appropriately, regardless of what the outcome might be. It is hypothetical to guess what might happen next week in the vote. I know the government will always do what it is required to do and what is the will of the people who elected us to this House.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech in which he spoke a lot about the importance of human rights. He also raised the issue of feminism.

I would like to remind this government, which claims to be feminist and to defend feminist values, that 80% of Uighur women are currently at risk of forced sterilization. Rape is being used as a weapon against them.

With that in mind, does the government agree that we need to send a strong message to the community to defend Uighur women who are the victims of horrific sex crimes? Will the government vote in favour of the Bloc Qu b cois's amendment to relocate the 2022 Beijing games?

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, I thank all the members who, as I said at the beginning of my speech, contributed today. They have really helped to inform me about this particular issue. I will be the first to admit that when I walked into this chamber this morning I did not understand the great depth to which people were being persecuted. I am much more aware of that now, as a result of the deliberation that has happened here.

I absolutely think that Canada needs to send a strong message. In any case, when acts such as what we have been made aware of are happening, there is a very important role for Canada to play in terms of delivering a strong message, whatever that might be, and at whatever time it might be warranted.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the member spent a lot of time talking about inclusion, women's leadership and Canada being a face of how to do it right to the international community.

I just want to remind the member that almost 20 months ago the government made a commitment to release an action plan to implement all 231 individual calls for justice in the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls report. In my riding, we have organizations that are fundraising by making pins, so they can put up billboards to let people know about the indigenous women and girls who have gone missing whom families have been looking for, in some cases for decades.

I am wondering when the government is going to stand up and show that kind of leadership. It is so important, when we look at the atrocities across the world, and particularly today in China, that Canada perform that leadership as well. Could the member speak to that?

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's intervention. I have always gotten along great with her when we have had the opportunity to be on committee together.

I can honestly say that I am extremely proud of the progress this government has made. Is there more work to do? There absolutely is more work. Will there always be more work to do? I imagine there will be, long after both she and I are no longer in this House.

It is a relationship that has led to consequences and actions that will require decades to repair. We need to do as much as we can now, and move as quickly as we can. I would completely agree with the member that this relationship is something that needs to be worked on, and there will always be more to do.

• (1600)

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise virtually in the chamber on behalf of the good people of Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

I will be sharing my time with the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

Earlier today, the member for Wellington—Halton Hills shared with us chilling and horrific accounts of the atrocities Uighurs are facing in China. The details and evidence are well documented and are very disturbing. Let there be no doubt that this is genocide.

I will even go a step further to suggest that this is literally a textbook example of the horror that is a genocide. Let us make no mistake about that. Deep down, I do not believe there is a member in this place that is in doubt of that fact. Indeed, we have heard current and former members of the Liberal caucus publicly voice that view.

I mention that today because, ultimately, I believe what we are really here today to debate is this question: Why does the Prime Minister refuse to stand up for some of the world's most vulnerable people, the Uighurs, and rightfully call out and condemn this as genocide?

I believe all of us know part of the answer. It is not because the Prime Minister is afraid to use the term "genocide". Indeed, he has stated that a genocide has occurred here in Canada. Therefore, why is there a refusal to call it a genocide against the Uighurs? We all know the answer. It is because the Prime Minister, for whatever reason, refuses to stand up to the Chinese Communist Party government.

We do not know why that is. It has gotten so bad that even the Liberal member for Malpeque has had to stand up and tell the Prime Minister to "wake up and smell the roses" when it comes to China.

[*Translation*]

I highly doubt that any member of the House would disagree with the advice the member for Malpeque gave the Prime Minister.



I applaud the member for Malpeque for calling his leader on his bad behaviour, especially since he knows what happened to former Liberal member Jane Philpott, who dared to speak her mind and challenge the Prime Minister on his bad behaviour. When a Liberal member dares to criticize their boss's bad behaviour, that can spell the end of their career. That is exactly what the member for Malpeque did. This motion is our opportunity to send a strong message to the Prime Minister.

Let us never forget that, on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, Canadians gather to pay tribute to the many courageous Canadians who made so many sacrifices for our country. They left their homes, their loved ones and their families not only to serve Canada but also to resist tyranny and oppression and fight for the most vulnerable. That is how Canada operated back in the day.

I am deeply concerned about the fact that this has changed under the current Prime Minister. If we allow the Prime Minister to ignore the atrocities and the genocide being perpetrated on the Uighur people in China, his failure will be Canada's failure. We cannot allow that to happen. That is not the Canada I believe in.

• (1605)

I am wondering if that is the Canada the government believes in, a Canada that looks the other way, that does nothing about genocide. This all stems from the fact that we have a Prime Minister who is completely incapable of standing up to the Chinese Communist government.

[*English*]

I would like to share a quote from Irwin Cotler. He said, "Indifference in such mass atrocities, let alone genocide, always means coming down on the side of the victimizer and not on the side of the victims." This is the path that the Prime Minister is trying to put us on, the side of the victimizer. Again, I ask why. It is because, when it comes to the Chinese Communist government, the Prime Minister refuses to stand up and show leadership.

Let me read that quote again from Irwin Cotler. He said, "Indifference in such mass atrocities, let alone genocide, always means coming down on the side of the victimizer and not on the side of the victims."

I ask a simple question. Who will members stand with? Will they sit with the Prime Minister in silence and come down on the side of the victimizer, or will they take a stand on behalf of the Uighur people and support this motion?

Let us be clear what this motion is asking us to do. Leaving out all the preamble today, we, as members of Parliament, are being asked to support recognizing that a genocide is currently being carried out by the People's Republic of China against Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims, and to call on the government to officially adopt this position. This is precisely what Mr. Cotler and a great many others are asking Canada to do. Today, one can take that stand, or one can continue to sit in silence.

[*Translation*]

Before concluding my remarks, I would like to ask everyone a simple question.

### *Business of Supply*

Ultimately, our time here is limited. When we look back and think about the time we spent here, we will all undoubtedly have good memories. Let us hope that we will not have many regrets.

Let us ask ourselves this question: If each one of us decided to sit in silence today and to join the Prime Minister in opposing this motion, would this be one of our best memories?

[*English*]

Today, we have an opportunity as members to stand up and send a powerful message. In doing so, we continue Canada's long-standing and proud history of standing up for human rights and defending the most vulnerable. I believe this is the Canadian way. As members of this place, and as Canadians, let us stand united. We need to adopt this motion.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Madam Speaker, in this debate, many of the comments we have heard have revolved around the relevance of the amendment moved by my colleague, the member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

The amendment calls upon the IOC to move the games, and many people wondered whether that was the right way to go about it, whether the IOC was going to agree and whether it was a good way to apply pressure. I would remind members that there have been similar cases in the past. For example, in 1968, about 40 countries in Europe, Africa and the Caribbean threatened to boycott the Olympic Games because South Africa was participating, and the IOC gave in. In 1972, some African countries threatened to boycott the games because of the presence of Rhodesia, a racist country, and the IOC gave in.

The IOC is therefore sensitive to international pressures related to human rights issues. It is very sensitive to that. I think the amendment from my Bloc Québécois colleague is really important. We can work with that. The IOC is sensitive to global human rights issues. I think this a very important amendment.

Could my colleague tell us how this kind of international pressure could be really effective? Could he talk a little bit more about that?

• (1610)

[*English*]

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, we must do our own work here and support this motion. We need to take a stand so we can communicate that the highest political institution in the land, this place, this Parliament, has come out clearly and succinctly to call out the Communist Chinese government for committing genocide. We must do that first. If we take that moral leadership, I believe others will as well.

My own leader has said that the games should be moved, and I believe that our resolution around this, with all parties united, would be a powerful message to both the committee and to the world.

*Business of Supply*

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Madam Speaker, we recently learned that the Canadian government has contracted out the visa application centre work to a company called VFS Global, which in turn has subcontracted that work out to another company that is owned by the Beijing police.

Given the situation of what is going on with the genocide of the Uighurs and the situation in Hong Kong with the national security law, does the member think that this is the appropriate thing to do, or should the government cancel that contract and bring that work back in-house, especially given the sensitive nature of the information that the processing centre might receive?

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, I came to the chamber today prepared to try to persuade all members to vote in favour of this motion calling out the Communist Chinese government on genocide. Whatever reasons an individual member may have, such as the member for Vancouver East, I hope that they will vote in favour of this. I believe that is the big thing. We all will have a reason, but the best reason is to protect our values and to call out China and not allow a normalization of the current path that, if we do not intercede as a country, may continue to happen.

**Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP):** Madam Speaker, I am going to support this motion, because I agree that we need to call out China for its human rights abuses, as this is a genocide and we need to do something about it. I am seriously concerned about our trade integration with China and the Canada-China FIPA that we have. We have heard several times different members say that the old China is not the same as the new China. When we had the team Canada trade missions to China after Tiananmen Square, I would have said that was a bit of a naive move, and I think that having the Canada-China FIPA as a locked-in agreement for 31 years is seriously problematic.

How are we going to deal with China in terms of that investment treaty and the integration of our supply chain with, and our dependence on, China?

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, I would simply say that if the member wants to support this motion for whatever reason, because I believe it is the right thing morally for us to do as a country, that is good. I would not tie this to anything other than its being the right thing to do. This member can raise economic concerns and other matters—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We will resume debate with the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

• (1615)

**Ms. Nelly Shin (Port Moody—Coquitlam, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it has been less than a month since I saw photo presentations of emaciated women and children lined up in the Auschwitz death camp and listened to Holocaust survivors talk about their scars from forced separation from family members, torture, the death of loved ones, gas chambers and the exploitation of their bodies for science experiments.

January 27 was International Holocaust Remembrance Day. Six million Jews died in the Holocaust, and the phrase “never again” is solemnly spoken as a reminder to be vigilant and a call to action to prevent and stop genocide.

Today my Conservative colleagues and I are calling on the government and members to acknowledge that the Government of the People's Republic of China is subjecting Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims to genocide.

Numerous entities have drawn the conclusion that the Government of China is committing acts of genocide that include mass detention, systematic population control and sexual violence. The reports provide elaborate details on the depth of the abuses perpetrated by the government against this minority group.

The Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development released a statement October 21, 2020 that reads:

The Subcommittee unequivocally condemns the persecution of Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang by the Government of China. Based on the evidence put forward during the Subcommittee hearings, both in 2018 and 2020, the Subcommittee is persuaded that the actions of the Chinese Communist Party constitute genocide as laid out in the Genocide Convention.

I just want to note here that this is a statement by a committee of members across all aisles. CBC News reported a statement by Bob Rae that there are aspects of what the Chinese government is doing that fit the definition of genocide in the genocide convention. I would also like to note that Bob Rae is Canada's ambassador to the UN. Genocide is defined by the genocide convention with respect to three constitutive elements.

First, the victims form part of a protected group of national, ethnic, racial or religious group. Second, the perpetrators committed one or more enumerated acts against members of the group, killing members of the group, causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group, deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part, imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group, and forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. Third, the perpetrators acted with the intent to destroy the protected group in whole or in part.

All three elements are present a genocide in the heinous acts of persecution against the Uighur people.

On January 19, 2021, outgoing U.S. Secretary of State Pompeo said:

After careful examination of the available facts, I have determined that since at least March 2017, the People's Republic of China, under the direction and control of the Chinese Communist Party, has committed crimes against humanity against the predominantly Muslim Uyghurs and other members of ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang.

The current U.S. Secretary of State Blinken has stated numerous times that he also believes genocide is being committed against the Uighurs. American officials acknowledge this as genocide. They are our neighbours and closest allies.

The existence of detention camps holding a million Uighurs has been confirmed through government documents, witness testimony and satellite imagery. Most people in the camps are innocent. They have not committed any crimes. They have no means to defend themselves. Human rights groups say their crime is being Muslim. They are being persecuted and killed because of their religion. This is unacceptable and it is not a time to be silent.

Between 2017 and 2019, approximately more than 80,000 Uighurs were forced from their homes to work in factories across China and in detention camps. The president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews wrote in a letter of “People being forcibly loaded onto trains, beards of religious men being trimmed, women being sterilised, and the grim spectre of concentration camps.”

This bears similarities to what happened in Nazi Germany 75 years ago. Indeed, Jonathan Sacks, the U.K.'s former chief rabbi, tweeted on July 22:

As a Jew, knowing our history, the sight of people being shaven headed, lined up, boarded onto trains, and sent to concentration camps is particularly harrowing.

Jewish leaders acknowledge the eerie familiarities of what is happening to Uighurs with what the Nazis did during World War II. These are serious statements coming from a community that experienced severe genocide.

In a BBC article earlier this month, according to independent testimonies, more than a million people have been detained in the internment camps. Former detainees have testified to having experienced or witnessed a system of organized mass rape, sexual abuse and torture. Women were also forcibly sterilized or fitted with IUDs. Many women turn to alcohol to cope with the trauma. One woman who fled Xinjiang says, of a victim who is now an addict, she was “like someone who simply existed, otherwise she was dead, completely finished by the rapes.... Their goal is to destroy everyone”, she said, “And everybody knows it.”

● (1620)

This is absolutely abhorrent. These women are experiencing trauma that will probably take a lifetime to overcome, if they survive: nightmares, anxiety, fear, depression, self-esteem issues, challenges in intimate relationships and the grief of forcibly losing one's ability to bear children.

When asked by reporters why the government has not yet acknowledged the actions of China's government against the Uighur Muslim minority as genocide, the Prime Minister said that the word “genocide” is “extremely loaded” and something that we should be looking at to determine if we can label it as genocide. The fact that leaders and members of his own party, Canada's ambassador to the UN and international communities are calling this genocide makes the Prime Minister's failure to acknowledge it as such disturbing.

On February 3, my colleague from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan asked the Prime Minister if he believed the testimony of female Uighur victims of systemic sexual violence in Chinese state-run concentration camps where sexual violence is sometimes paired with electrocution. The Prime Minister's response was:

For years now we have been advocating directly with Chinese leadership for transparency and better treatment of the Uighurs in western China... We need to have international investigators, including from the UN, accessing the Xinjiang province to be able to keep people safe there and everywhere around the world.

### *Business of Supply*

We know that the Government of China will not allow UN investigators access to its torture facilities. I wonder if the Prime Minister really understands the full ramifications of what is going on, because underneath his diplomatic response, it seems to me, as a woman, that the PM is saying, “I'll try to get the perpetrator's permission to check out the crime scene. If we can go there and see if what you're claiming is actually happening, well then we'll take it from there.”

Does he have more faith in the Chinese government to allow an investigation to take place or does he believe the victims? This is the same government that continues to disregard human rights and international law with regard to Hong Kong, Tibetans, Falun Gong practitioners, Christians and other minority groups. We also have the two Michaels still detained in China.

Going back to the Prime Minister's insensitivity, we just debated Bill C-3, and passed it unanimously. This piece of legislation had to be passed, because rape victims are often treated unfairly and often revictimized by judges who condemn the women and not the perpetrators, and their testimony is dismissed. The women relive their trauma and end up further victimized. Therefore, I would like to ask: Is it the Prime Minister's intention to gaslight the Uighur women who had the courage to step forward with their stories? By saying that he is consulting directly with the Government of China on these issues to seek investigations shows that he does not acknowledge the plight of these women.

My Conservative colleagues and I call on the Liberal government to join our allies in the U.S. to officially recognize the Uighur genocide, to take coordinated action with other countries internationally in response to this genocide and impose Magnitsky sanctions against those who are responsible for the heinous crimes being committed against the Uighurs.

I am sitting here in my constituency office today with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms behind me. This is our Canadian legacy. We stand for it at home. That is why we come to the House of Commons as parliamentarians: To uphold the dignity of every human being and do our best to allow each one to prosper uniquely in their own way. When we see our fellow humanity abroad suffering, as the Uighur and Turkic Muslims are in China, it is time to stand up and acknowledge the atrocity for what it is—genocide—and take realistic, practical steps with our international allies to hold the Government of China to account.

*Business of Supply*

We have a moment of decision today on our values, the identity of Canada and what freedom and human rights are really about. There is no room for hypocrisy in this hour. I understand that there are complex economic and social layers in our relationship with China. However, genocide is genocide, human rights are human rights, and I implore the government and ask my colleagues across all aisles to adopt the position my Conservative colleagues and I are addressing today.

As we consider this motion, I would ask this: What is the legacy that my colleagues would like to leave behind? Is it one of fear or moral courage? We have come so far as a nation, and we still have a ways to go to really act with true freedom and moral courage, but in this hour there is an opportunity, and I fear that being indecisive about whether this is genocide is making us go backwards. Canada has a role—

• (1625)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Questions and comments, the hon. member for Shefford.

[Translation]

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Port Moody—Coquitlam for her speech, which put a lot of emphasis on the horrible crimes against Uighur women. I will read you an excerpt from a testimony:

In this example, they brought 200 prisoners to the hall, and they picked out one young girl, about 20 years old, and they forced her to accept the guilt for something that she never had done. She was crying and she was saying that she was guilty even though she was not guilty. She accepted it in front of the 200 prisoners. Then the Chinese guards started raping her, one by one, in front of all these 200 prisoners. They went down the line and raped her one by one in front of all the people.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts. Despite these disturbing testimonies and although her party says it is prepared to support the motion moved by my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean to relocate the 2022 Beijing Olympic Games, what does the hon. member think of the fact that her own party, the Conservative Party, collaborated on having Chinese nationals deported when it was in power? What does she think of the fact that Huseyincan Celil, a Canadian of Uighur origin, has been imprisoned in China with no Canadian consular services since 2006, when the Conservatives were in power? I would like her view in 2021 on the importance—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Order. The hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

[English]

**Ms. Nelly Shin:** Madam Speaker, going back to what my colleague said about the rapes and essentially the gaslighting and condemning, this is why our motion today is so important. This issue is more than just about killing people and trying to decimate them. The whole issue of human rights violations like the way the women are being treated is not just about killing them, it is the way they are being killed, demoralized and humiliated in the process. All of it, the whole package, is disgusting and we have to make it end.

As for the rest of what my colleague said, for the sake of this motion, I would like to focus on the fact that this really needs to come back to human rights.

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Madam Speaker, as new Democrats, we also recognize China's mass detention,

forced labour, surveillance and population control measures that have been directed against the Uighurs and Turkic Muslims fit the definition of genocide and we support an immediate, independent investigation. The Liberal government needs to act in concert with other countries and international organizations to put pressure on China to put an end of this.

The word “genocide” comes with a very serious responsibility. If the House of Commons passes this motion, what actions would the member opposite like to see the government take to ensure an end to the ongoing genocide of the Uighurs?

**Ms. Nelly Shin:** Madam Speaker, the first step that absolutely needs to happen is for all of us to unanimously accept this is genocide. When we acknowledge it, then we are saying we are acknowledging the atrocities that are happening and that these women are being victimized. On the steps following that, the immediate things we can do are, for example, to redirect the Olympics somewhere else to show we are serious, that there are consequences and accountability connected to acts of violations against human rights.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Madam Speaker, when I spoke to our motion this morning, some Liberal members indicated that of the Five Eyes countries, the United States was alone in recognizing a problem with the Uighur people. My response was that Canada could show some leadership and be the second. What does my colleague think?

[English]

**Ms. Nelly Shin:** Madam Speaker, I absolutely agree that this is an opportunity for Canada to take leadership and show we take freedom and human rights seriously. We just have to do the right thing. It is about moral courage, not being silent when our voices and our actions need to follow that voice.

• (1630)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** 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 Courtenay—Alberni, Families, Children and Social Development; the hon. member for Fredericton, COVID-19 Emergency Response; the hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay, the Environment.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Scarborough—Guildwood.

I will start by acknowledging Irwin Cotler, who I would classify as a good friend of mine. For years we sat on the opposition benches and I truly benefited by listening to his many interjections in the House and the talks we had with each other. I have a deep amount of respect for everything he does on the issue of human rights.

It is always encouraging when the House of Commons witnesses the coming together of political parties to recognize and condemn human rights violations. However, there is a sad part to this.

It is very shameful that the last two speakers and others have taken this opportunity to take cheap political shots at the Prime Minister of Canada. If they were genuine in wanting to allow for a healthy debate on this issue, they could have forgone the cheap, unfair, untrue shots at the Prime Minister, let alone the Minister of Foreign Affairs at times. I do not say that lightly.

Let us think about it. The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was adopted in the United Nations General Assembly back in December of 1948. I understand that resolution took effect in 1952. Over 150 countries signed onto that agreement. Earlier I posed a question for the member of the opposition Conservative Party who brought forward the motion. I asked him how many countries had made the declaration that it was a genocide. The member responded that the U.S.A. was the first and only, and the new administration has reaffirmed Donald Trump's position on it.

Are the Conservatives saying that those 150 nations and their leaders should be ashamed of themselves because they are not informed or aware of what is taking place in China? Are they that naive to believe that world leaders around the globe are not aware of what is happening in China? Of course they are. The promotion of protection of human rights is integral to our foreign policy. All Canadians take human rights very seriously. It is part of our values.

We do not need to be told by Conservative political spinners that we are doing a poor job when we have in fact done a good job of ensuring that the interests of Canadians and values we hold so close in our hearts are well represented around the world. The Prime Minister of Canada, in whatever part of the world he happens to be in or whatever group he is speaking to, will talk about the important issue of human rights and the values Canadians have for it. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, whether the current or previous minister, is doing likewise, ensuring that the values Canadians hold so close are being espoused around the world.

Yes, the United States did classify it as a genocide. I hear members around the chamber talk about the subcommittee on foreign affairs and its fine work. Even Liberal members have talked about it being a genocide.

● (1635)

I posed a question for my New Democratic colleague about possibly having that committee deal with this motion. I asked if there would be any harm in allowing the foreign affairs committee to take a look at it, given its very nature.

China is not a country of five million people. China has over 1.2 billion or 1.3 billion people. The economic and social tentacles in China scour the world. Do we think it is that simple? I do not believe that for a moment. I would have liked to see this motion go to the foreign affairs committee before it came to the House, because we could have benefited from seeing what that committee might come back with. The committee has easily demonstrated it can in fact put party politics to the side and come up with recommendations. It has demonstrated that.

### *Business of Supply*

When I posed the question for the member for St. John's East, his response to me was "Perhaps we could have done this a week from now or two weeks from now after the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development has dealt with the report of the subcommittee, but we are aware of the essence of it." That is what the New Democratic member had to say when I presented what I thought was a fairly simple suggestion.

The Conservatives are more focused on trying to score political points than they are on the human rights issue. I know that might upset some, and my apologies for those who are actually being genuine on this. However, not all Conservatives are genuine in wanting this to happen. They are more interested in trying to bash the Prime Minister and give a false impression that this government is not doing what it should be on this file. Nothing could be further from the truth.

It was interesting to hear the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. On February 8, he was on *Power Play*, CTV. If we declare it a genocide, there is an obligation for us to take some actions. I believe that to be the case. The member for Wellington—Halton Hills said on *Power Play*, "Well, we're not saying that a boycott is necessarily the way to go."

We believe that a genocide is taking place, but our primary responsibility is to protect Canadians and their interests. As a small country relative to a superpower, China, we cannot act alone. That has been made clear to us over the last several years. Whatever we do has to be in concert with our allies, including the United States, Japan, Australia and so many others. Everything should be on the table as we work to defend these interests and values.

Let us look at what the Minister of Foreign Affairs said a bit earlier today about working along with international partners. It does not mean we cannot pass this motion. However, some of the commentary that has been put on the record today to try to politicize what is taking place is unfair. The Minister of Foreign Affairs talked about an agreement that was achieved with many countries collectively. This is in regard to the two Michaels who are still in captivity in China. The minister stood with nearly 60 other countries at the launch of the declaration against arbitrary detention in the state-to-state relations. That is a clear demonstration that this government understands and appreciates, as I believe most members do if we take away the political spin, working with international partners to try to resolve the many issues that China brings to our table. This is the direction we need to take.

The stories and examples are very heartbreaking and they give a high sense of anger in all who speak on the issue of genocide. I do not understand how a human being, let alone a government, can be so cruel to another human being. I will never accept that, but the Prime Minister—

● (1640)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We will have to give our colleagues the opportunity to question and comment on the hon. member's speech.

The hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands.

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Madam Speaker, we have had quite the debate here today. One of the frustrations is we have been talking about the human rights abuses in China against the Uighurs for a very long time, and we are still waiting for the government to take action. All we have to do is look at the Liberals' track record on other issues. They are routinely the last ones in, or quite honestly are always using delay tactics and waiting for other people to make up their minds so they can then say, "We did not have anything to do with that. It is not our fault."

At what point are the Liberals willing to take decisive action and make up their minds, whether it is Huawei or whether it is dealing with this? When will the government take decisive action? Will it refuse to do it because it is scared that it actually has to do something if it makes a decision for once?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I would cite a specific example. Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor are two Canadians who are in captivity in China for no just reason. The Government of Canada worked with other nations, and now there is an agreement. It does not specify China, but there is an agreement that these sorts of detentions are wrong. That will go a long way, because the Michaels are not alone. This takes place around the world. This is just one of the things the Government of Canada is doing, along with the day in and day out. We heard the parliamentary secretary on that particular issue. Every day he is on that issue.

We are doing what is possible in the area of foreign affairs to protect the interests of Canadians, whether they are here or abroad.

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Winnipeg North for his speech. He spent a large part of his time explaining how shameful it was that some opposition members were using today's motion to make the Prime Minister look bad.

I understand where he is coming from. The problem is that he spent a good chunk of his time explaining how the Prime Minister has done a good job. In all of that I did not really hear any substantive argument on the motion we are debating regarding whether we should recognize that there is a genocide against the Uighur people in China.

I want to give the member for Winnipeg North a chance to put partisanship aside and answer me. Should Parliament recognize the Uighur genocide in accordance with the conventions that Canada has signed? If not, why?

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, all members of the House in all political parties would have been better served had the standing committee been afforded the opportunity to do again what it has done so well previously, in terms of its investigation that came back saying there was genocide. Allow them to let us hear what they have to say on a motion like this so that we would all be in a better position. As opposed to trying to make a political, partisan statement, we should have depoliticized a motion of this nature, given it is at the heart of Canadian values when it comes to international relations. I think we would have been better served.

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Madam Speaker, my colleague talked a lot about human rights and the government's record on human rights. I am thinking about here at home.

Yesterday, I asked the Prime Minister to explain why the Liberals did nothing when the Department of Fisheries and Oceans knew that violence against Mi'kmaq fishers was likely, and he deflected. He said that he condemned and regretted the actions of a few in Nova Scotia, but took no responsibility for the failure of the government to protect those indigenous fishers so that they could advance their rights. He talked about politicizing what is taking place on the ground. He is doing that here. The government has been doing it with indigenous people, with no recognition of systemic racism as an issue here in Canada and no commitments to keep Mi'kmaq fishers safe when exercising their rights. I can assure the House that no indigenous people felt safer after the response from the Prime Minister yesterday.

When will the Liberal government—

• (1645)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I have to give the parliamentary secretary five seconds to answer.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I represent an area of Canada that has about 20% indigenous people, 40% of Filipino heritage and 10% to 15% of Indo-Canadian heritage. Discrimination is an issue that I take very seriously and I believe that the—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Scarborough—Guildwood.

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Wellington—Halton Hills for tabling this motion, but with a caveat. In this chamber, we pretty well say what we wish to say within the rules of parliamentary decorum, but it is ultimately the government and the government members who will have to deal with the fallout, if any, from this debate. This chamber, however, has an opportunity to reflect the deep anger of the people of Canada toward the Chinese Communist Party: the current Government of China.

There is no question that the arrogance and ignorance of the Chinese government, as expressed by its officials and so-called diplomats, has inflamed the passions of Canadians. The most obvious point of contention is the hostage kidnapping of the Michaels by the Government of China. The Government of Canada is necessarily constrained when it deals with the reality of kidnapping. I think that was the point that my hon. friend, the member for Winnipeg North, was trying to make: There is a constraint imposed upon the Prime Minister when dealing with a government that kidnaps citizens of another country.

Kidnapping works. It is the hallmark of terrorists, organized crime, rogue nations and the Communist Party of China. It is contrary to the rules and values of any civilized nation, let alone the rule of law. Necessarily, the Government of Canada has had to deal with the Government of China as one would with terrorists or Mafia thugs; therefore, this has had relational consequences, as does this debate. No trade deal, convention, memorandum of understanding or contract is worth the paper it is written on with this government. Any vulnerability will be exploited by the Government of China, and there is no basis for any trust, for any undertakings or for any understandings.

It is clear that the Government of China has decided that it has no respect for any other nation, large or small. The goal is to have all nations as vassal states, including Canada, New Zealand, Australia and Great Britain. Even Donald Trump was at least dimly aware of the threat to the United States.

It did not have to be that way. Going back to the historic Nixon visit, it was the intention of the family of nations to bring China out of its backward state by a series of favourable trade deals, the most significant of which was admission to the World Trade Organization. For years, China has regarded the laws, conventions and rules of the WTO as casual suggestions to be ditched when convenient. It appears that cheating pays.

Widespread theft, one-sided trade admissibility, off-tariff blockage and outright corruption have fuelled China's spectacular rise in wealth, and the west has been slow to respond. Simultaneously, unanswered military aggression in the South China Sea, with the creation of artificial islands and the intimidation of other nations' navies, particularly those of the Philippines and Vietnam, has further entrenched China's bully status.

The use of its vast financial resources to buy or intimidate other nations is legendary. The government of Sri Lanka is completely at the mercy of China. Many African states are so compromised that their own people cannot get either work or food in their own nations. It is not just developing nations: widespread theft of intellectual property by Chinese entities, at the behest of the Chinese Communist Party, occurs here daily. The *Globe and Mail*, the *Toronto Star* and the *CBC* have all documented vast slave networks producing all kinds of goods, many of which infect Canada's supply chain.

Recently, *CBC's Marketplace* ran a piece on slave labour used in the making of PPE products that we use daily. Members will recollect that we were desperate in the last few months for products such as those.

• (1650)

The *Globe and Mail* recently reported about solar giant Canadian Solar and two mining companies that are in grave danger of having their supply chains tainted with slave labour. The *Toronto Star* wrote a devastating piece on shipments coming from foreign sources. The U.S. will not allow them to be sold in its country but allows them to be transhipped into another country, namely Canada.

Canadian workers and companies cannot compete with slave labour. The practice is so widespread that consideration should be given to a change in the presumptive balance, the assumption being

### *Business of Supply*

that goods coming out of China have slave elements in them unless it is demonstrably shown to be otherwise.

In the last Parliament I introduced Bill C-423, the modern slavery act. That bill has been picked up in the Senate and is now Bill S-216. As its successor, it is making a painful way through the Senate. The Government of Canada would be well advised to take it over. It works on the presumption that Canadians would not knowingly buy products made by slaves. Companies of a certain size would be required to certify to the Minister of Public Safety that they have examined their supply chains and are satisfied that no slavery exists in them.

Wealth built on theft, intimidation, duplicity and slavery is the hallmark of this Chinese government. It should therefore be no surprise that human rights, let alone moral integrity, are foreign concepts to this deeply corrupt government. We saw the human rights of the people of Hong Kong rolled up last summer, despite the protests of millions and the treaty protection of the Sino-U.K. treaty. Taiwan endures an ever-increasing series of aggressive military provocations, regardless of the democratic aspirations of the Taiwanese people. China regards these as "internal matters", even though they are manifestly not internal matters. There are other international concerns: border skirmishes with India, the occupation of Tibet, the abuse of its own citizens, the substantiated allegations of organ harvesting of Falun Gong practitioners and the wanton destruction of Christian churches.

Therefore, it should be no surprise that when credible human rights organizations make credible allegations of extensive abuses of the human rights of Uighurs and Turkic Muslims, including but not limited to torture, enslavement, restrictions of freedom of movement, denial of freedom of religion and belief, denial of the right to a fair trial and so on, all the evidence points one way and all the state disinformation points the other way. The observations of any objective report point one way and one way only. Unfortunately, these are all the requisite elements of a genocide taking place against the Uighurs and Turkic Muslims.

Unfortunately, I have to support this motion. I say unfortunately because the labelling of "genocide" is very serious business and the Prime Minister is right to be cautious. The Government of China has no respect for the rights of other nations, no respect for the rights of other peoples, no respect for the rights of its own citizens and certainly no respect for the rights of minority groups. I dare say the Government of China will have no respect for the passage of this motion.

I look forward to questions from colleagues.

*Business of Supply*

• (1655)

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have been listening to the speeches all day today and taking notes. I appreciate the member's comments on the amendment and the motion in front of the House.

In the member's opinion, what are the most effective measures that democracies could take in concert to put pressure on China to change? Is it Magnitsky sanctions on particular Chinese officials? Is it using trade sanctions? Is it other forms of pressure, such as diplomatic pressure? Is it a reform of multilateral institutions to put in place mechanisms to better hold China accountable for its infractions of international law and our international rules-based system? I am wondering what in his opinion would be the most effective tools available to democracies to effect change in China.

**Hon. John McKay:** Madam Speaker, my immediate response is all of the above. The member and I had something to do with the creation of the Magnitsky sanctions in Canada. I like what they do in terms of targeting the most egregious perpetrators of these kinds of human rights abuses. However, the limitation of the Magnitsky sanctions is that the Government of China has a pervasive government policy to carry on, as it does, with trade deals.

If there was a mechanism by which realistic trade sanctions could be coordinated by trading nations that share the same values, I would be very supportive of it. Regrettably, however, Canada is a rather small player in a rather big pond, and unless and until we have pretty well everyone in place, our unilateral responses will be brushed off by the Government of China, with possibly gross reactions that are counterproductive to the best interests of the people we hope to help.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank and congratulate our colleague.

From the beginning of his speech, I was ambivalent. I heard his reaction to China's flouting of international rights and all of the examples he provided. However, in light of his political allegiance, I kept waiting for the other shoe to drop. At the end of his speech, I was and still am surprised, to his credit.

It should again be noted that the Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development has determined that China has committed crimes against humanity. They include concentration camps, rape, separating children from their families, slavery, mass surveillance, harassment of Uighurs abroad and mass sterilization. These things are inconceivable in 2021.

Would my colleague be willing to adopt the Bloc Québécois motion to boycott the 2022 Beijing Olympic Games in retaliation against China?

• (1700)

[*English*]

**Hon. John McKay:** Madam Speaker, as a practising parliamentarian of 23 years now, I am a big fan of committees. Sometimes they drive me crazy, but by and large, committees have the power to bring witnesses together in a manner that is extremely useful and helpful for guiding government policy. Whether it is a subcommit-

tee or a full committee, if they have opined on taking in evidence, I would take that very seriously.

The Olympics issue is a bit of a sidebar issue in this particular debate. However, I point out that the Olympics are largely an exercise in political symbolism, and I think the political symbolism of withdrawal or shifting is something to seriously look at. I want to stay with the motion before us today, but the member does raise a valid point.

**Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC):** Madam Speaker, no person can be unmoved by today's deliberations concerning Communist China's ongoing and brutally coordinated campaign of genocide against the minority Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims inside its borders. We have heard details of family separation, arrests and show trials, mass detention, campaigns of gang rape, forced injections, widespread slave labour, concentration camps and mass murders. All of this has been done under China's state police. Credible estimates place the number of Uighurs in concentration camps at over one million. The world has not witnessed anything like it since the mid- to late 20th century.

We say "never again" at solemn occasions when reflecting on past evils. We say it because it is important. It is also meaningful. However, saying "never again" is also relatively easy. This vote in our Parliament to declare an important country to be guilty of genocide will not be easy, because the vote will have consequences in rallying or even discouraging others and, of course, on Canada's federal government. If successful, Parliament's vote will inform the public, our constituents, of China's odious actions. It could propel other legislatures and other democracies to make similar declarations. It might even offer some comfort to those being persecuted that a parliament hears them. It could finally compel Canada's federal government to face facts and act in the name of our shared Canadian values.

Should the Liberal government ignore the evidence and vote against the motion on these crimes, it will provide sanctuary to the Chinese Communist Party. A vote against this motion is not an expression of neutrality, nuance or high-mindedness. Rather, a no vote is a highly visible shrug to Uighurs and a haven for the tactics of the Chinese Communist Party. I therefore implore members of the House to take a stand for the persecuted and against this genocide and back up statements of "never again" with a vote of affirmation to this motion in Parliament.



*Business of Supply*

I dread that the Liberal government will remain silent, mostly because the alternative is hard. Voting yes would require subsequent government action in opposition to China's atrocities. Let us take a look. The government's position is to call for an independent investigation by sending observers to Xinjiang to determine what is happening, but the foreign minister and the Prime Minister know Beijing will never agree to this. It is an empty statement.

I am also distressed that the right path will be sidestepped for the easy path, because the Liberal government has been both weak and cowardly elsewhere in its dealings with the People's Republic of China. The Chinese Communist Party is so determined to control Uighurs that it is spending billions of dollars on facial recognition devices, electronic spying and coercive DNA collection to track their every move. Uighurs live under a totalitarian system that controls them down to their DNA.

China's Huawei has been complicit in developing this technology. Canada's security services have warned the federal government about the risks and dangers that Huawei poses to Canada and our freedom. If the Liberal government will not ban it as our allies have done, a government unwilling to ban Huawei is not likely to hold the People's Republic of China to account today.

It is not just high-tech surveillance. Uighurs are also forced into labour camps to produce products for export to the world. Uighurs are electrocuted to meet production quotas. These crimes against the Uighurs are inhumane, as international NGOs and labour groups around the world have reported and demonstrated.

In July of last year, I highlighted this mistreatment of Uighurs in labour camps. I called on the global affairs minister to launch an independent investigation into forced labour camps operating in China's northwest province. I also called for Canada's United Nations ambassador to work to reverse Beijing's appointment to a seat on the consultative group of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

• (1705)

Sadly, the government did not act, even though it was widely reported that the Chinese Communist Party was using forced Uighur labour in Xinjiang factories and selling these made-in-China goods and materials to global brands around the world.

When the government finally responded, it was in January, and it was by the outgoing global affairs minister on the very day he was moved to another ministry. Ottawa feebly acted by announcing its intention to support tougher restrictions on products being exported from Xinjiang, but the apparent tough talk lasted less than 30 minutes before a new minister was in charge.

Even the talk by the outgoing minister was thin gruel. Unlike other international allies, which are taking tougher action to root out forced labour in commercial supply chains, the Trudeau government will not impose financial penalties on companies that do not comply.

The Trudeau government has spent the past six years extolling and overstating the importance of China—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. parliamentary secretary is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Not only once or twice, but on several occasions the member has referred to the Prime Minister by his name as opposed to his title. He is an experienced member. I am sure he can appreciate there is a rule against that, which has existed for many years.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank the hon. member. I did not notice it myself, but I take the hon. parliamentary secretary at his word. I know the hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest will take note of that for the remainder of his remarks.

**Mr. John Williamson:** Mr. Speaker, I apologize for that breach.

The federal government has spent the last six years extolling and overstating the importance of China to our nation's well-being. It has wrongly promoted economic relations with this totalitarian regime as a key tenet of Canada's foreign policy. It called for a free trade agreement without answering how a free country like Canada can trade freely with a non-market economy like China.

The government tried to work with China on developing a vaccine, but instead, our health data was stolen and Canada lost months working to secure vaccines from reliable sources. As well, the Liberal government has largely been silent on Beijing's actions to crack down on democratic expressions beyond expressions of concerns and regret. This is the wrong approach. Communist China should be labelled a perpetrator of genocide and be viewed as an outcast state. As I said, it will not be easy.

We have more friends in mainland China than perhaps we realize. They are people who want the same freedoms that they see in Taiwan and, until recently, Hong Kong, before Beijing snuffed those freedoms out. Now more than ever, Canada needs a principled foreign policy that promotes freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

I must admit my hope is eternal. Some Liberals have stood up and said, "Enough." This includes the Liberal member for Scarborough—Guildwood, the previous speaker. I applaud his courage. His long-standing position on these issues is well known. We can see today that more Liberal MPs realize they are on the wrong side of history. It is why we increasingly hear them say, as a way to excuse their past errors in judgment, that today's China is not the same as the China of two years ago. Of course, this is nonsense.

*Business of Supply*

What has changed? Two years ago, the Liberal government was mugged by reality when two Canadians were illegally detained by China. Today's China is the same China that cracked down on students in Tiananmen Square 22 years ago. It is the same China that, after being admitted to the World Trade Organization, failed to adhere to its commitments to liberalize and open up. It is the same China that imprisons its citizens and denies them freedom of speech and press.

More recently, it is the China that has illegally expanded its territory throughout the South China Sea and claims much of that sea as its territory. Its pursuit of a predatory posture regarding our open economy is well known. It openly steals our technology and research, and let us not forget the hundreds of millions of Chinese citizens on the mainland who are denied the right to choose who will govern them.

As an aside, democracy is not alien to Chinese people. It is acted on and upheld by Taiwan, a small nation of 24 million people with democratic freedoms that mirror our own in Canada. I could go on about Beijing's recent belligerence, but I have made my points. To say that today's China is nothing like yesterday's China is to ignore its recent history under the Communists.

However, if my hon. Liberal colleagues believe today's China is acting in an uncivilized and unbecoming fashion, what are they prepared to do about it when we vote? I hope it is not more nothing. I hope that on Monday they will vote on today's facts, which are that China is committing genocide against ethnic and religious minorities. They have said, "never again", but we will see, and all Canadians will see, when that vote is called.

• (1710)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member says that the China of today has not changed at all from previous years.

Why does he believe the Harper administration entered into a secret trade agreement, without any form of parliamentary consultation, when there were human rights violations back then?

**Mr. John Williamson:** Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that today's government will repeal that agreement and move away from it.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

It seems we agree on the fact that there are problems with respect for Uighur rights. I would refer to the testimony of Gulbahar Jalilova, a Uighur rights activist and Kazakh concentration camp survivor. She was arrested while travelling in Xinjiang and accused of being a terrorist. She refused to confess to the charges and was imprisoned, tortured, raped and forced to swallow unknown pills. She begged the guards to kill her.

It is easy to point fingers at the Liberal government now, but in 2008, the Conservatives did nothing when Beijing hosted the Olympic Games. What changed from 2008 to 2020? I think we can

agree that respect for human rights in China is a long-standing problem.

**Mr. John Williamson:** Mr. Speaker, I totally agree with the hon. member and it has been a problem for a long time.

The government at the time adopted certain positions that I agreed with and others where I think it made a mistake. We are now talking about the vote that will be held on Monday on this motion and on what we are going to do to change our relationship with China. I hope that the House will adopt the motion and that the Government of Canada will respect it and act in such a way as to respect our Canadian values. I hope that we will be more serious with China.

[*English*]

**Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we heard a lot today about courage and having the courage to stand up for human rights.

Will the hon. member and his Conservative caucus keep this same energy and focus on courage for Palestinians, for the Muslims who are in the Assam region of India, for people in Myanmar, and for other human rights victims across the world, or are they only fixated on the Chinese government?

• (1715)

**Mr. John Williamson:** Mr. Speaker, no, not at all. I welcome future debates in the House on those issues as well. I share the member's concern.

China is somewhat different because China also poses a clear danger to Canada's economic well-being, as well as to our security, so that is twinned with its human rights violations and its undemocratic, proprietary and aggressive approach to its relation with Canada and other democracies. I think that is the big difference, but I certainly share the member's concern for those other issues.

**The Deputy Speaker:** That brings us to the end of the time allowed for Government Orders.

[*Translation*]

It being 5:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

The question is on the motion. May I dispense?

**Some hon. members:** No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

[*English*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request a recorded division, or that the amendment be adopted on division, I would now invite them to rise and so indicate to the Chair.

*Private Members' Business*

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Mr. Speaker, I request that the division be deferred. I am talking about the vote on the main motion, not the amendment.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to order made Monday, January 25, the recorded division stands deferred until Monday, February 22, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

Before resuming debate, I would like to make a clarification. The deferred division on the amendment will take place before the vote on the main motion, which will be held on Monday, February 22.

• (1720)

[English]

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, these are not words I ever imagined I would utter in this House, but I believe if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to see the clock at 5:30 so we can begin with Private Members' Business.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to see the clock at 5:30 p.m.?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business, as listed on today's Order Paper.

---

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

### CITIZENSHIP ACT

The House resumed from November 19, 2020, consideration of the motion that Bill C-223, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (adequate knowledge of French in Quebec), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to speak to the Bloc Québécois bill on citizenship for newcomers to Quebec. This bill would raise the age at which people must have an adequate knowledge of one of Canada's official languages, specifically French in Quebec, from 54 to 65.

This is a pretty significant change for people who have decided to immigrate to Canada, especially for older people, considering how hard it is to master a second language at a certain age. Often these newcomers are fluent in a language other than French or English. In Quebec, older people would have to become proficient in French.

At the same time, I think it contributes to the commendable goal of protecting French throughout Canada, but also in Quebec. The recognition that French is at risk is a big change in the discourse of the Canadian Parliament. French is the minority language in the other provinces outside of Quebec but also within Canada. French is also at risk in Quebec, as we learned from a study that was just published today. It found that the number of people who speak French at home is dropping in my beloved home province of Quebec.

It is important to point out that Quebec is the only unilingual francophone province or region in North America. Of course, there are anglophones and people who speak all sorts of other languages living in Quebec, but it is basically a francophone province. New Brunswick is bilingual, and the other provinces are anglophone, and they all exist in a country that has a law defining it as bilingual and where people can express themselves in both official languages, French and English.

Given that Quebec is a unilingual francophone province, we must be very careful and ensure that immigrants to Canada who settle in Quebec and apply for Canadian citizenship can do so in Quebec's main language, which is French. If we do not, the number of people who can speak French will fall steadily. We need only look at what is happening in Montreal, Quebec's economic metropolis and the second-largest city in Canada, where almost half the population primarily speaks English.

The Bloc Québécois has introduced a very interesting bill that deserves our consideration and that I believe should be studied in committee. That said, increasing the age from 54 to 65 may be problematic, and this provision should be amended and the age of 54 reinstated. However, we are fairly comfortable with the idea of having people in Quebec take a test to demonstrate their knowledge of French.

We are also very concerned that the Liberal government is making little effort to protect and promote the French language and ensure that it is healthy in this country. We often hear sanctimonious virtue signalling from the Minister of Official Languages and the Prime Minister, but in the past few months alone, the government accepted a unilingual English report on the former governor general, for example.

We know what a scandal that kicked off. This was someone who had been appointed by the Prime Minister, without even using the advisory committee that was created by former prime minister Stephen Harper to ensure that all appointments would be merit-based and non-partisan. We saw what happened three years later.

• (1725)

Just look at WE Charity, which the Prime Minister wanted to help. This organization, which had very close ties with his family, received a nearly \$1-billion contract to administer a volunteer program. We know that this organization is unilingual anglophone and unable to serve communities in Quebec and across the country. That is another good example of this government's sloppy, insincere approach to protecting French.

*Private Members' Business*

We could also add to that the fact that some public servants feel they are being treated unfairly because they do not get to express themselves in French at work. We can think about the fact that COVID Alert texts are being sent in English only in Quebec. I am also thinking about the Commissioner of Official Languages, who made 18 recommendations in 2018 to ensure that the modernization of the Official Languages Act could be applied properly, French could be promoted and celebrated, and we could help francophones across the country. However, to date, none of those recommendations have been implemented by the current minister.

I could give countless examples that demonstrate how French does not seem to be a priority for this government. We have been waiting for the Official Languages Act to be modernized for months and years now. The consultations have been done, the Senate has done its work and the commissioner has made his recommendations. There was a bit of drama before the holidays, when we learned from the print media in Quebec that the minister would not introduce a bill after all, which is what everyone in the country was expecting, but would instead table a white paper.

As we waited for that white paper, another pseudo-consultation intended to stall for time, a media leak earlier this week revealed that in the end, there will be no white paper, but rather a discussion paper for a committee to reflect on what should be done to protect and promote French across the country. This issue is so important and we are supposed to be so proud of it, and yet it keeps being put off.

In Canada, there are two official languages. Having a francophone community like Quebec, this people, this nation of Quebec that Prime Minister Stephen Harper recognized under the previous Conservative government, is something we should be proud of and do everything we can to protect. We do not get that feeling from the current government, which is putting off this work by not bringing in legislation to respond to concerns we have across the country and in Quebec.

I understand that the Bloc Québécois wants to work with newcomers to Quebec to make French the priority. The Government of Quebec wants to improve Bill 101 so that employees in all federally regulated businesses and all private businesses in Quebec can work in French.

The Conservative Party supports this initiative. I think that Quebecers will be happy to hear that. Meanwhile, once again, the Liberal government is not getting to work. The Liberals are not joining us in this movement to recognize that there are indeed two official languages, but only one is in jeopardy: French.

We support the substantive principle of this bill, that is, the principle behind its French language requirement. Indeed, this requirement is truly consistent with our values and our leader's commitment to Quebecers and francophones.

However, as I pointed out earlier, the Conservatives are concerned with the proposed change to the maximum age for requiring linguistic knowledge, from 54 to 65.

We therefore supported this bill at first reading, making sure that the perspectives of older newcomers to Canada would be heard and that their concerns would be addressed in committee, with opportu-

nities for amendment. This is extremely important to us and I hope the Bloc Québécois will take that into account.

This bill will make knowledge of French, rather than English or French, mandatory for permanent residents living in Quebec who wish to obtain Canadian citizenship. As I said, we support the principle behind this measure and we recognize the urgency of doing more to protect the French language not only in Canada's smaller communities, but also in Quebec. This represents a major shift in discourse on Parliament Hill. I think that is clear to all opposition parties.

• (1730)

Despite the fact that the Liberal Party has more than 35 Quebec MPs, several of them ministers, that our Prime Minister was born in Quebec and that the Minister of Official Languages is a Quebecer, there seems to be no sense of pride or desire to take action. Talk is not good enough. Lip service and public posturing change nothing. We need concrete action to promote French everywhere and create a sense of pride.

Our leader has even said that, once he is prime minister, in the first 100 days of the next Conservative government, he will introduce an official languages bill to implement positive measures—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I have to interrupt the member because time is up.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Saint-Jean.

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-233, which was introduced by my colleague.

First, I would like to remind members that the Bloc Québécois believes that the protection of French in Quebec requires an asymmetrical approach, which is why the bill is specifically tailored to Quebec with respect to the knowledge of French required to obtain citizenship.

In a way, we are pleased that the federal government is recognizing for the first time, albeit it timidly, that Quebec's situation and the status of French are unique. I would like to quote from this fall's throne speech:

Our two official languages are woven into the fabric of our country.... The Government of Canada must also recognize that the situation of French is unique. There are almost 8 million francophones in Canada within a region of over 360 million inhabitants who are almost exclusively anglophone. The government therefore has the responsibility to protect and promote French not only outside of Quebec, but also within Quebec.

This is in stark contrast to what we have seen in the past. The government is now talking about the importance of protecting the French language in Quebec. However, the government needs to walk the talk, and that is what the Bloc Québécois wants to achieve with this bill.

The notion of citizenship is closely tied to politics. It always has been, and that is still the case. The main differences between a permanent resident and a citizen are the following: the right to vote or run in elections; the right to hold a job requiring a specific security clearance, such as a position with a company that does business with National Defence; and the right to sit on a jury. All of this requires some knowledge of French, and the French-language test required for citizenship is not very difficult. Candidates are required to be able to interact in everyday situations or to ask simple, basic questions to express their needs in day-to-day life. They are not asked to compose poetry or write in Alexandrine verse.

This is not the first time that this bill has been introduced. What I find unfortunate is that, in the past, there seemed to be a determination to nip the bill in the bud. I am thinking of former MP David de Burgh Graham, who said the following concerning the bill at the admissibility stage, and I quote:

My wife speaks five languages. French is not one of them. When she got her Canadian citizenship, we had just moved to Quebec. I had already lived there; she came to Quebec with me. She would have had to return to Ontario or stay in Ontario to get her citizenship, and I think that's against the values of our Constitution, our charter. I cannot support that on constitutional grounds.

No evidence was ever provided to show that the bill was unconstitutional, aside from an opinion that was not supported by legal advice, and the clerks of the House had found the bill to be constitutional. It therefore seems that some were determined to kill the bill from the start, which I think is unfortunate.

This time, the bill has gotten further in the process. It has been deemed admissible. After second reading, the bill will be sent to committee, where expert witnesses will speak to various issues. I think it would be a shame to abort the process now and kill the bill again before it even gets off the ground. The argument is that we should not vote in favour of the bill because it would hinder many people from obtaining citizenship.

I would like to point out that, to obtain citizenship, a person has to have spent 1,095 days in Canada. That is a good opportunity to learn the basics of French. I would also like to point out that not having citizenship does not prevent anyone from working or getting health care, because permanent residents can do both of those things.

I think it is a shame that people are refusing to send the bill to committee. The purpose of this bill is to protect the French language, so I think it is a shame to miss this opportunity to see what other obstacles to citizenship exist.

• (1735)

Some people have said that making knowledge of French mandatory would prevent a lot of people from obtaining Canadian citizenship. However, in November 2019, which is not so long ago, Statistics Canada reported that the citizenship rate among recent immigrants had dropped between 1996 and 2016 and had declined much more dramatically after 2006. Even without the requirement to pass a French test, there has been a decrease in citizenship uptake. It would have been interesting to examine the reasons for this decrease in committee.

I also find it odd that the government claims that knowledge of French would be an obstacle to obtaining citizenship, when we

### *Private Members' Business*

know that one of the obstacles to citizenship is the cost of the tests that are required to obtain citizenship. In the 2019 election campaign, the Liberals promised to make the test free, but it still costs \$630 per person. For a family of two adults with children, that could mean up to \$1,200, \$1,800 or \$2,400. That is a lot of money, and it is a major obstacle to citizenship. This could also have been studied in committee.

There is another aspect that could have been studied in committee, although I admit it is rather upsetting. In some cases, to obtain permanent resident status and to access other stages of the immigration process, the person needs to already have knowledge of one of the two official languages. However, we are seeing an imbalance when it comes to the tests that are administered. The Commissioner of Official Languages has received several complaints about the cost of tests in French, which is not the same as the cost of tests in English. We see that the cost of these official language proficiency tests is twice as high in French as it is in English. We also see that those who choose to take these tests in French get their results much later.

Fundamentally, there is already an imbalance when it comes to knowledge of one of the two official languages. That is something that could also have been looked at in committee. This has been going on for some time. The government has made several promises on this, but it has not kept them.

Furthermore, these tests are developed and also marked in France, not Quebec. The tests given to many immigrants are not necessarily appropriate. I will give a very simple example. In France, the meals are called “petit-déjeuner”, “déjeuner” and “dîner”, whereas the terms used in Quebec are “déjeuner”, “dîner” and “souper”. This can lead some people to make mistakes and possibly fail the test. For example, a U.S. citizen stated that when she took the test, she was asked to role-play a conversation where she had to order something at the Bistro du Louvre. The different expressions used in Quebec and France were a thorn in her side.

By not sending this bill to committee, we are missing opportunities to improve access to citizenship in general. We are denying ourselves the chance to identify obstacles to citizenship. We are also missing an opportunity to examine how knowledge of the official languages is evaluated in Canada, not just in Quebec. This is a missed opportunity for the provinces and territories as well. We could also have examined the criteria, in particular for obtaining permanent residency.

*Private Members' Business*

That is the very essence of the bill. If it does not go to committee, the claims that this bill would make it difficult to obtain citizenship will remain unsubstantiated. We will not be able to determine whether the bill could help strengthen the French fact and ensure that newcomers will fulfill the duties that come with citizenship and that they will be able to fully and completely participate in all that citizenship entails, such as the right to vote and the right to run in elections.

● (1740)

**Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill C-223, which would amend the Citizenship Act to require that citizenship applicants who ordinarily reside in Quebec must demonstrate an adequate knowledge of French and must pass a test on the rights, responsibilities and privileges of Canadian citizenship in French.

This bill would also increase the age range of applicants who must meet the language and knowledge requirements to 18 years of age or more but less than 65 years of age, compared to the current age range of 18 to 54 years.

In 2017, we amended the Citizenship Act to make it easier for immigrants to build successful lives in Canada, reunite with their families and contribute to the country's economic success. The goal was to encourage immigrants to develop a permanent sense of belonging and to become full-fledged members of Canadian society by getting their citizenship more quickly. These changes to the act reduced the age range for language and knowledge requirements from 14 to 65 to today's 18 to 54. By asking only applicants between the ages of 18 and 54 to meet the language and knowledge requirements, we are making life easier for immigrants to Canada and reducing barriers to citizenship for our oldest and youngest populations.

This flexibility also helps support the reunification of families by helping children, their parents and their grandparents obtain citizenship more quickly. That is an important step in enabling immigrants to develop a deeper sense of belonging to our society and become more active citizens.

By proposing to raise to 18 or more, but less than 65, the age range of people who have to show that they meet the language and knowledge requirements, Bill C-223 would undo the changes made in 2017 and restore the barriers to citizenship for older applicants. This would also have an adverse effect on the naturalization rate in Canada, which is currently one of the highest in the world at 85.8%.

We encourage all immigrants to become full members of Canadian society and we know that one of the most important pillars of a successful integration into Canadian society is obtaining citizenship. The success of our immigrants is our success as a strong and united country.

The proposed changes in this bill that would expand the age range and eliminate the choice of language would have a disproportionate and adverse effect on refugees, women, older newcomers and other vulnerable populations who might consider the obligation to meet the language and knowledge requirements in French only to be a barrier to citizenship.

These are populations that need our support and compassion and not additional barriers that have already been exacerbated by COVID-19.

We know that the intention of this bill is to protect and promote the French language in Quebec. Our government values Canada's linguistic duality. French and English are a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian identity, and we know how important it is to promote both official languages.

● (1745)

French and English are fundamental characteristics of the Canadian identity, and we know how important it is to promote our two official languages. We are committed to promoting French across Canada and to preserving and protecting the French language in Quebec.

The Government of Canada has committed to helping all newcomers get the French- or English-language skills they need to integrate into their communities and contribute to the Canadian economy. We know that immigration plays a key role in supporting francophone minority communities across the country and in maintaining Canada's bilingualism. We also know that established immigrants who obtain Canadian citizenship have a very strong sense of belonging to Canada.

Citizenship is a key element that opens doors to greater economic opportunities and encourages full participation in Canadian society. We have implemented measures to attract francophone newcomers to Canada and are working hard to support their integration and retention. This approach has helped strengthen the capacity of francophone communities across the country. By consolidating the francophone integration pathway, our government is committing to the principle of "*par et pour*", ensuring that settlement services for francophones are offered by francophones.

It is important to note that Quebec selects all immigrants settling in that province except those in the family reunification for protected persons category. Under the Canada-Quebec accord, the Government of Canada gives the Province of Quebec an annual amount to administer and deliver services for the reception and linguistic, cultural and economic integration of immigrants who settle in Quebec, including resettled refugees.

Statistics show high rates of French acquisition over time among permanent residents who remain in Quebec, which reinforces the ultimate goal of French language acquisition. Census data show that, 10 years after arriving in Quebec, over 90% of those in the economic immigrant category, over 70% of those in the family reunification category and over 83% of refugees speak French. That means the vast majority of immigrants residing in Quebec end up speaking French.

I think we can all agree that that is good news. Given the importance of French in Canada and Quebec, we should do and are doing everything in our power to maintain and support Canada's rich linguistic duality. However, becoming Canadian should be as inclusive and equitable as possible, no matter where one lives in this great country.

• (1750)

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this evening's important discussion on Bill C-223.

I have been listening to my colleagues speak in the House for a little while now, and I think we all agree. The bill's objective is clear. We support the objective, which is entirely laudable and noble: to stand up for the French language, for the place of the French language and for the demographic weight of francophones. As a New Democrat, a Montrealer and a Quebecker, I fully endorse those objectives.

However, we believe that this is the wrong tool to achieve a good objective. In that regard, I think the bill completely misses the mark in terms of its original intention, and for several reasons. A bill can be judged on several criteria, and I will name three of them: its enforceability, its effectiveness and the unintended consequences that might arise from the application or non-application of the bill. Unfortunately, what is being proposed here today would be difficult to enforce and not very effective and could have a harmful impact on some people.

Essentially, there are three main immigration categories, which my colleague mentioned earlier: family reunification; refugees who are in distress and fleeing violence; and economic immigrants, who represent the vast majority of immigrants welcomed into the country for economic development reasons, to mitigate labour shortages and to stimulate the economy by growing communities. Quebec already has the exclusive power to select its economic immigrants. There is also a whole series of factors that are taken into account when determining whether an applicant should be accepted as an economic immigrant.

For years, under various governments, Quebec has used a points system that gives more points for knowledge of French. The questions are extremely easy. By and large, that has worked well. Quebec is already able to attract francophone immigrants because it has total control over the system. The federal government also provides support in the form of French integration and French language classes for those who need it. Quebec is fully autonomous in that regard and has made decisions aimed at increasing the percentage of francophone immigrants. This is working fairly well, and I think this is the type of approach that should be taken, where incentives and resources are provided to help immigrants learn French.

The two other immigration categories stem from something else entirely, with objectives that are quite different. Family reunification is fairly clear. However, we accept refugees out of humanitarian duty, solidarity and compassion for people experiencing oppression, discrimination, violence and civil war, as is currently the case in Yemen. I would not want to withhold Canadian citizenship from someone fleeing Yemen because there is little chance that they speak French. We prioritize immigrants from northern Africa, Bel-

### *Private Members' Business*

gium, Switzerland and France because they are awarded more points to come work here and contribute to Quebec's economy and society. I believe we should be able to make this distinction.

What is the objective of the program and the end goal? I do not think it is right to put obstacles in the way of refugees seeking citizenship just because they do not speak French or have difficulty learning French. I believe that those people need help, not additional obstacles, even if we agree on welcoming more francophone immigrants. I think it is completely inappropriate to apply these provisions to refugees, and refugee advocacy groups are concerned about that approach. It is not just the idea of saying that we do not want them to come here, it is that they will not obtain citizenship, and if they never get citizenship, they will not become engaged citizens and will not be able to vote in elections. It is like telling them to come here because we want to help them, but warning that they will never have the right to vote unless they learn French.

• (1755)

Is that really the message we want to send to promote French?

Some refugee advocates, including lawyer Guillaume Cliche-Rivard, with whom I spoke recently, told me they were very concerned, because this proposal assumes that a refugee coming from a war zone does not have a learning disability or PTSD, and that he or she is on an equal footing with an economic immigrant who comes here to start a business or work for Quebec companies. These are two completely different scenarios, and the bill before us is very broad in scope.

That is why I said it could have unintended consequences on certain categories of immigrants, such as refugees and people who come for family reunification. This concerns us, when Quebec already has a system that works well for economic immigrants.

It would also be difficult to enforce and ineffective, because it does not really take into account the fluidity of interprovincial moves.

A French test might be a prerequisite for citizenship in Quebec, but many immigrants who do not speak French will go to Toronto, Halifax, or Moncton, New Brunswick. They get their Canadian citizenship there, and three months or six months later, they move to Quebec to find work.

That means some people have to take the test and some do not. The latter can still move to Quebec because nobody stops them at the border to ask them what test they had to pass to get citizenship. Given that interprovincial moves were not considered, we find ourselves with a double standard. What should we do about that?

*Private Members' Business*

We share the same goal of defending the French fact. I am actually very proud that a motion I moved in the House of Commons a few weeks ago regarding the fragility of French in Quebec and Canada and the need to strengthen and promote it received the unanimous support of the House.

The NDP has a history of defending French. I want to mention a former member of ours from the Quebec City area, Alexandrine Latendresse, whose hard work resulted in a real victory. Because of the bill we introduced and got passed in the House of Commons, all officers of Parliament, such as the environment commissioner and the Auditor General, must be able to understand and speak French. This is a great example of a very tangible and very practical victory for the rights of francophones across the country.

For the past 10 or 12 years, we have been saying that Bill 101, the Charter of the French Language, should apply to federally regulated businesses in Quebec. As I mentioned earlier, when I was talking about contradictions and double standards, the situation right now is a little strange. For example, a Caisse populaire employee is protected by Bill 101, but a Royal Bank employee does not have the same protections to communicate in French. If Bill 101 applied, all workers in Quebec would have equal rights, no matter which company they work for. The NDP has been advocating for this since before Jack Layton was our leader, and we are still advocating for it under our current leader.

We are also calling for and requiring that Supreme Court judges be bilingual, that they be able to understand French and speak it well. It is a matter of equal legal rights for people pleading their case in court. I am sure that my Bloc Québécois and Conservative Party colleagues agree with us on that. Unfortunately, the Liberal government does not seem to be listening when it comes to these two files, namely, the application of Bill 101 in Quebec and the bilingualism of Supreme Court judges.

Another issue on which we could take meaningful action to change things is the modernization of the Official Languages Act. That is something that was promised by the Liberals, who have been in office for five years. Rather than a new bill, we might see a white paper or a discussion paper tomorrow. The more time passes, the further behind we fall on this issue. This law has not been modernized in nearly 30 years. I think it is time to look at what we can do to give the Official Languages Act more teeth, to give it more power and authority to defend vulnerable francophone communities in some parts of the country.

• (1800)

We want to give rights to francophones working in federally regulated businesses outside Quebec, but we are somewhat concerned that this is only possible where warranted by the concentration of francophones. Information was recently leaked to the media that seemed to indicate that if immigrants may not have this right if they are not sufficiently francophone. It is like a Scotiabank employee in Moncton having certain rights and an employee of the same bank in Calgary not having them.

The Liberals must do better.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Resuming debate.

As no members are rising, I invite the hon. member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou to use her right of reply. She has five minutes.

**Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise once again to conclude the debate at second reading of the bill that I introduced.

I had the opportunity to hear from members of the different parties and I am disappointed that the Liberal Party and the NDP do not seem to want to give this bill a chance to be examined in committee. I am disappointed because many studies clearly show that French is in decline in Quebec, particularly in Montreal. I am disappointed because it is essential that we put a stop to this trend and it is by passing bills like Bill C-223, combined with other measures, that we will be able to prevent this disaster. Quite frankly, I am not sure what the Liberal and NDP members did not understand. During the debate, we heard them say all sorts of things that had nothing to do with the bill. Sometimes I wondered if they even read it.

As we know, only 55% of allophones in Quebec make the language transfer to French. In English Canada, approximately 99% of allophones make the language transfer to English. To maintain our relative weight, 90% of allophones in Quebec would have to make the transfer to French.

I therefore invite my colleagues to vote in favour of Bill C-223 because it recognizes the primacy of French in Quebec, it is consistent with recognition of the Quebec nation, it contributes to sustaining French in Quebec, it restores the status of French in Quebec, it acknowledges the importance of speaking the language to exercise all the rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship in Quebec, and it is an additional means to slow the decline of French in Quebec.

As for the Liberals, especially the ones from Quebec, I do not really understand why they would vote against this bill. I have to say that all I heard from the Liberals were weak and unconvincing arguments that often had nothing to do with my bill. As usual, the Liberals are using empty words to hide their unwillingness to take action. This bill in no way prevents anyone from immigrating to Canada, because citizenship is the final step in the immigration process. Our bill does not prevent anyone from seeking asylum in Canada. It does not prevent anyone from applying for permanent residence, a study permit, a work permit or a visa.

The Liberals have offered us false arguments. I get the feeling the Liberals do not actually have a reason to oppose the bill. They are against it because they are against it. They are against it for ideological reasons. They just do not like it when opposition parties come up with good ideas.



I think it makes perfect sense for people who immigrate to Quebec to demonstrate sufficient knowledge of French, just as it makes sense to know English in Great Britain, German and Germany and Mandarin in China. Making knowledge of French a prerequisite for obtaining Canadian citizenship in Quebec just makes sense.

Members of the House of Commons who vote against the very principle of Bill C-223 will be proving two things. First, they will be proving that Canada's bilingual nature is not important to them, by rejecting a minimum requirement for ensuring the vitality of French in North America. Second, they will be proving that Canada's constitutional framework cannot ensure the full vitality of the Quebec nation. It is important to make French the common language, as well as to ensure that everyone is included in order to build a coherent and inclusive society.

I therefore ask all of my colleagues in the House to do the right thing and support my bill.

• (1805)

**The Deputy Speaker:** The question is on the motion.

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

The hon. member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou.

**Ms. Sylvie Bérubé:** Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to order made on Monday, January 25, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, February 24, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[*English*]

It being 6:08 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 37, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Bill C-234 under Private Members' Business.

\* \* \*

### INCOME TAX ACT

**Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC)** moved that Bill C-234, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (home security measures), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is something my constituents have been talking about. It is an issue that is near and dear to their hearts, one they have been dealing with over the past few years. They are glad to see that something is finally being done.

I am proposing Bill C-234, an act to amend the Income Tax Act (home security measures). It was reinstated from second reading in the previous Parliament. The bill would help make home security more affordable for Canadians by creating a home security tax credit. This non-refundable tax credit would be applied to the installation, maintenance and monitoring of a security system installed in an individual's home. This would include any structure that is separate from an individual's home, such as a garage or a barn. The maximum dollar amount eligible for the tax credit application is \$5,000 a year.

I am proud to mark the first hour of debate on this important piece of legislation, which would make a real difference in the lives

### *Private Members' Business*

of Canadians, especially those in rural areas. Like many parts of rural Canada, my riding of Prince Albert continues to suffer from increasing crime rates, and my constituents have made it very clear that they expect action on this file.

The bill came about through a variety of different ideas and consultations among colleagues in the Conservative Party. More importantly, it came to fruition through a meeting I had back in 2016. I have to give some context for the meeting.

On a Friday afternoon I got a phone call from a guy named Terry in my riding, who was very mad. He was upset. He informed me that he had another break-in. Someone broke in on his farm. His insurer was telling him that it may not be able to reinsure him, and he wanted to talk about it. I told Terry I was in the Christmas parade in Prince Albert, and I suggested we get together Saturday morning after the parade and talk about it.

When I was in the parade, I remember quite vividly that all of a sudden my phone went off. I hit the speaker button and Terry said there was going to be a few other people at the meeting. I told him it was not a problem; it was fine. He said some neighbours wanted to talk about it too.

I got to my office after the parade and there were 25 people in my office. This was with six hours of notice. They proceeded to tell me their property had been vandalized. They had been targeted, had things stolen out of their shops and had gas and vehicles stolen. They felt the police force was not doing anything about it and the legal system was letting them down.

They wanted action. They were upset. Of course, a lot of the actions are not federally regulated; they are provincially regulated. Having said that, they wanted to vent and let people know what was going on, and to look for solutions.

We came to the conclusion that we would hold a town hall meeting, so we put together a meeting at the Prince Albert Golf and Curling Centre for the next Saturday morning. They asked me not to advertise it, because they did not want the criminals to know they were not going to be home. I did not advertise it. I just let them spread notice of it by word of mouth.

That Saturday morning when I got to the hall I was nervous. All of a sudden, there were cars in the parking lot and it was full. There were cars parked all the way down the street. I got downstairs and there was probably 200 to 300 people packed into this hall. We had no sound system, no speakers. We were expecting maybe 25 to 35 people, but it was a huge crowd.

I have to thank the mayor of Prince Albert. He quickly grabbed his sound system and brought it back so we could present. We brought together RCMP, city police, provincial colleagues, MLAs in Saskatchewan and Crime Stoppers, and we proceeded to talk about the options and what was available.

*Private Members' Business*

As we went through the meeting, there was a recurrent theme: People's property had been broken into once, twice or three times. Some felt a lot of this was gang-related, and some felt it was drug-related. People were looking for solutions. They seemed to know exactly where these culprits were coming from. The police were looking for advice on how they could best handle it, and even the municipalities wanted to know what they could do.

People knew that the one place where the criminals were hanging out was the only place on that road, so one solution came up: Maybe the road should not be graded. They wanted to let the snow blow in to keep the criminals home. Different ideas were tossed around, but what became very apparent was that people wanted to see action on this issue.

This is not unique to Prince Albert. In Alberta, former Alberta justice minister Doug Schweitzer wrote to the Minister of Justice asking for more serious penalties for rural crime. There was an Alberta task force, and the issues in my riding were issues right across Alberta. They are issues right across Saskatchewan, right across rural Ontario and in Quebec. They are right across the country.

One thing that was really unique, which the RCMP made me aware of, was the addictions issue and what they had seen or suspected when we had a slowdown in the oil patch. People who were making good money were all of a sudden out of work or no longer had a job, but they still had addictions. They still had issues.

• (1810)

What did they do? They resorted to crime, to stealing or whatever they could to feed their addictions.

There are many different issues in the background that need to be addressed and there are different things that we should be looking at as parliamentarians on how to solve this problem or make it better for our constituents. This is just one way. We will hear other ideas and suggestions from the Conservative Party to deal with this in a holistic manner.

One may ask what a home security system does. It actually does a lot. When one thinks of the idea of a tax credit for a home security system, first, people would have a good security system in place. What does that system do? It deters people from breaking into facilities or homes. That is one thing. Second, if people do break in, it allows police to have good identification factors to make the appropriate arrests, and hopefully those identification factors will stand up in a court of law. It provides a chance to identify who the culprits are. In a lot of cases, they are repeat offenders who are already known to the RCMP or the police, and the police need the evidence to proceed with arrests and to put the accused through the courts and to get convictions. That is one thing.

There is another thing that has come about, which I did not expect. It was a surprise. It should not shock me now, but it did at the start. People want action. They want us to do something. They want us to take action. Not only that, they want us to acknowledge that there actually is a problem. They want Ottawa to realize that they are in a situation for which they cannot seem to get a resolution. More people talk to me now, since the announcement of this bill, about how they have been personally impacted. I encourage all members to go to people not only in the rural areas but also in

towns and cities, and they will find all sorts of examples of break and enters and crimes where a security system might have been the thing that would have deterred that action.

The head of the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association called me on Saturday. He wanted me to know that the company was going to send a letter of endorsement for my bill and that he had been talking to APAS and SARM, who were thinking of doing the same thing. We are starting to see the need for action for people in rural Canada. They are looking for hope and this would give them some hope. This bill would allow us to talk about the issue, and it is a good issue that we should be talking about. This is very relevant to pretty well everybody in rural Saskatchewan, rural Canada or even in urban centres or cities. People want to feel safe in their homes. They want to make sure their families are safe, that their homes are their castles that will not be violated by any means. This will be one step in doing that. This will provide some of that comfort and safety for families. It is something that we should look at doing.

It is not just the family home. Like I said, it is the garage, the barn or the outbuildings that farms may have on their acreage. The bill would allow people to position the appropriate tools in the appropriate place so they can get the appropriate coverage to do what they need to do. This looks to me like a small step moving forward to deal with rural crime.

I look forward to hearing the debate and this bill's going to committee. This is a bill that people can work with quite easily. It is very simple: it is a \$5,000 tax credit, which is easy for people to include on their tax returns. It shows them that we care and it starts the conversation about exactly what we need to do on rural crime. We are going to see different examples and ideas come from our colleagues in all parties on how to address this issue and hopefully find some solutions. If this bill gets people talking about it, then it is a success. I am looking forward to its going to committee, and if there are some things the committee wants to do to expand it or make it better, I look forward to those, too.

At the end of the day, when this bill hopefully passes and all parties agree that it makes sense and is something we want to do, I hope we can look our constituents in the eye and say that we started down the road of fixing this problem. Hopefully we will be creative enough as parliamentarians to discuss what we are going to do about the other parts of the problem, namely, what we will do about addictions, what we will do about the economic situations that a lot of people have been forced into, and what we will do about getting people jobs so they do not have to resort to crime in order to feed their families. Those are the types of things that we also need to discuss, and not just home security systems or home system monitoring and protection. Hopefully this is the start of those types of conversations among ourselves.

*Private Members' Business*

• (1815)

I hope to have intelligent conversation on this. This is something we can all look at and say we can get behind: that it makes sense and we can move it forward. If we can make it better, let us make it better. I have never been one to say that it is my way or the highway, and I am not about to say that with this bill.

I look forward to the spirit of the bill being recognized and appreciated, and the spirit is that we need to be doing something to help our constituents in rural areas and cities to protect their houses, to protect their families and to provide the security that they need. We are seeing lots of groups and individuals stepping on board. They are looking at this and saying this is a start.

As I said, when I talked with Arnold for about 15 minutes, he gave me an example of cattlemen in a rural area. People had gone out to their farms and shot cattle. We had a scenario just outside of Saskatoon, I think this spring, where somebody went in and shot some buffalo. They actually cut the gates and let them go. Buffalo wandering around in small towns is not something good. Again, we can see there is a recurring theme here that we need to provide better protection for people in rural Canada.

I want to stress that it is not just rural Canada. There are other examples. A person called me today saying that in urban centres they could use something like this bill to protect themselves. It would just provide that extra sense of safety.

I do not think I need to go on to use my full 15 minutes. I will stop there and I look forward to seeing support from all parties on this. I look forward to this moving through the House, to the debate and to positive suggestions that all members may have, participating in this dialogue to address things like rural crime and break and enters, and see some resolution and benefits for all our constituents.

• (1820)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for bringing this bill forward and for doing the work that goes into it. Having tabled and gone through the process of a private member's bill, I know there is an incredible amount of work that goes into this.

I also want to thank him for identifying an issue that was incredibly important in his community, and for the manner in which that came to light, but I absolutely fail to understand how this bill would improve the situation of the people he represents. To me, it is nothing more than a boutique tax credit that is going to be used by a particular demographic: those who can afford these systems. I fail to understand how it would increase the safety of the people he is trying to affect by this. All it would do is make the systems slightly cheaper because they do not have to pay tax on them.

I know the member said specifically that somebody said they need more serious penalties on rural crime. Although I do not know if I would support that, at least that might be something that aims to address the issue here.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Mr. Speaker, those are valid questions. Those are things that we thought about. Where this came from was not necessarily my idea. This actually came out of the rural task force out of Alberta. This is from constituents getting together and

asking what the possible solutions are to address these issues. This is one of many solutions they thought would be a start.

This would allow people to afford a system and get appropriate coverage in their house, or to get the appropriate footage on the garage or on the barn, but it also would be a deterrent. I want to make that very clear. When people know that they are on camera they act totally different than when they are not on camera. When they know there is a possibility that their face has been captured and that the RCMP or police would be able to use that and make an arrest and use it in a court of law, it is a way of dealing with these people.

In dealing with them, there are all sorts of things to consider. Is this an addiction issue? Is somebody just a bad person and needs to go to jail, or are a variety of factors behind it? Until they can catch them, they cannot deal with them, so this would help to catch them.

**Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague caught my interest with the discussion around this being not just a rural issue, but that there are pockets, particularly in large urban centres, that have significant crime issues. I think of Edmonton Centre. They call it the red zone of crime.

Does the member think that there would be an opportunity to expand the reach of this bill into those areas where there are significant pockets of crime, and give either businesses or individual residents some security, or at least let them feel that they have some level of support from the government in trying to combat crime and that they have some safety?

• (1825)

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Mr. Speaker, that is a comment I have heard coming out of Saskatoon. I have heard it coming out of Regina and other areas across Canada. Yes, this would actually go to individuals' businesses, so they could put in the appropriate tools to cover their facilities. It would include garages and barns on the farm, but it could include a garage at somebody's house or a storage area for a business.

I think we can be creative, and I think that is something committee could do. The committee could help to define that a bit better, so that people understand where it can be used and not used.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech about his bill. I do however have some reservations about it. I come from a rural area. We decided to get rid of our home security system because the police told us that the area they must cover is too large for the number of patrols. It is fine to have an alarm system but if there are not enough police officers to respond, it is not very effective. It gives a false sense of security.

*Private Members' Business*

Going further than that, I believe that we should invest more in provincial policing, in the RCMP. Money should be transferred to Quebec and the provinces for provincial policing. Moreover, we have talked about violence against women in rural areas at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. I believe that the solution is to implement different supports, such as providing increased assistance to indigenous communities, which also have this problem.

Why not allocate funds to implement the program for murdered and missing indigenous women and girls? I believe that the money would be better spent on other measures than on tax credits.

[*English*]

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Mr. Speaker, again, this is just one part. There are many parts to the solution to rural crime and dealing with the issues in rural Canada, including rural Quebec. This, for example, would allow people to make it more affordable to put in the appropriate cameras. Yes, maybe it will not be an alarm going off or buzzing. In fact they would actually be videotaping the person in the act. I think once criminals realize they are being videotaped, they will hopefully hesitate and say it no longer makes sense for them to proceed down this path.

The member does raise an issue that is very common right across Canada, and that is the lack of police services. In fact, we have situations here in my riding where all of a sudden there are only one or two RCMP officers on duty because of lack of personnel. We have talked to the provinces about that, and they are looking for solutions for that. That includes not only putting more people through the college here in Regina for training, but also having the funding in place to make sure they are actually located in areas that have high crime.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to this issue. Some issues that I have ongoing discussions about with constituents seem to never end. For example, I could talk about health care and community health, our public education system and crime. No matter what area of the riding I happen to be in, there is a great deal of concern about crime.

I am interested in getting a better sense of what the member is proposing. In his comments, he makes reference to us listening to what our constituents want, or at least that is what he seemed to imply, that we should be saying something to our constituents about his bill.

I do not know if my constituents would support me voting for his bill. There are a couple of reasons for that. If we were to take a look at the area I represent, a significant percentage of people would love the opportunity to invest in security measures.

When I have had meetings with community police officers, they always tell me to ensure we get deadbolts and lighting. Lighting is really important. They want to ensure windows are secure. They often say that if we can get security cameras and things of this nature, it would be helpful.

I suspect that a good number of my constituents, who are concerned about community crime activities, would not be able to get the credit to which the member has referenced. It seems that the member is trying to establish a tax credit, but it is targeted to a group of individuals, people who have that disposable income and came make use of that credit. It is not just rural versus urban or anything of that nature. I am not convinced that this is the way to go.

When I think of the crime in the communities I represent, there is no doubt in my mind that purchasing and acquiring security systems would provide a higher sense of security and a great deal of comfort to my constituents. I am open to that debate, to talk about what government can actually do and what role it might be able to play. I just do not think a tax credit is the way to go on this.

We could have some discussions with municipalities, both rural and urban, and even with our provincial entities and look at areas where there is a greater demand for having these measures and collectively consider what we might be done to support that higher sense of security in our communities.

I often talk about a specific file. I was knocking on doors a while ago. While I was walking away from the house of a lady who lived on Pritchard Avenue, I could hear her banging on the window. It was around two o'clock in the afternoon. I turned around and went back to the door. She had moved the couch, which she had up against the door, away from the door. She feels more comfortable sleeping during the day time. She is scared to even walk out of her yard. As I told her, we should all feel comfortable and secure in our communities. Whether people live in the inner city, or in the suburbs or rural communities, we should have that sense of security.

● (1830)

I applaud the member for recognizing a very important issue and that it is universally applied. It is not just rural Canada. We have what I would classify as hot zones, and those are not words I made up. I have heard law enforcement officers make reference to hot zones. We need to look at ways to provide more support.

Some members have already made reference to policing. I am a big fan of community policing. I was quite upset when we lost our community police office because of cuts by the provincial government a number of years ago. As opposed to having a tax credit, for example, we could look at ways to support municipalities and provinces and, most important, the constituents who we represent. Rather than providing a tax break, I would rather see more community policing. Maybe we can invest some of those scarce tax dollars we get into supporting our law enforcement agencies, whether it is Canada's finest, the Winnipeg police, the RCMP or other entities of law enforcement. My gut feeling is that it would be a wiser use of tax dollars and it would benefit all communities.

My friend is correct. There are many rural communities in which a great deal of theft takes place, whether it is on a farm or in a cottage environment. We hear about it every year, especially once things start to warm up. There are ways that governments could work together and prioritize and put in additional resources to support enhancements for our communities, particularly those hot spots.

When we talk about the broader issue of taxation and tax credits, we have to be very careful when we start to have special taxes that help some more than others to the degree that it becomes somewhat unfair. I liked it when we got rid of some of those boutique taxes from the past in favour of giving a straight tax cut for Canada's middle class. One of the very first pieces of legislation that the House of Commons voted on was the reduction of taxes for Canada's middle class.

When we talk about dollars, there are ways we can invest those monies. If we look what we have done over the last five or six years, we have the balance right where we have recognized ways to increase disposable income in a fair fashion for all. We can ensure we invest in areas that will provide that additional level of comfort. We could see government spend on resources to increase community policing or to increase programming for more young people to put them on a better course where we have less crime in our communities.

As much as the bill comes across as being very proactive, it has somewhat missed the mark even though I agree with the member that crime in our communities is a very serious issue. I thank him for taking the time to bring this bill forward.

• (1835)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill C-234.

This bill amends the Income Tax Act to create a home security tax credit.

First, I wish to inform you that the Bloc Québécois will be voting against this bill. Our party and I recognize the challenge of home security, especially in rural areas. I come from a rural village called Saint-Jean-de-Matha. I commend the great passion that the hon. member for Prince Albert, for whom I have a great deal of respect, put into his speech.

This issue is very important, but we believe that the solution proposed in this bill is not effective enough.

We believe that the bill would only push people to spend more on security systems that would not adequately protect them. I am talking about keeping people safe, not property. As far as property is concerned, I do not know if the same thing happens in Saskatchewan, but in Quebec when we install security alarm systems, our insurance costs go down. There is also compensation for this. I will therefore focus on personal security.

Instead, we think that the money that would go towards subsidizing the purchase of these kinds of systems would be better spent by giving it to provincial police, indigenous police and the RCMP, as members have pointed out in discussions on this bill so far. I remind members that first nations police services are in serious need of resources and that the government needs to start funding them properly to help remote communities.

This bill would amend the Income Tax Act to establish a non-refundable personal tax credit for purchasing a home security system. The credit is for a maximum of \$5,000 a year and includes the total of all amounts spent on home security. We have heard a number of

### *Private Members' Business*

arguments in support of this bill. One such argument is that crime in rural areas has risen higher than in urban areas. The member shared some compelling stories about people with addictions who resort to crime after losing their jobs. Since these areas are sometimes poorly served by law enforcement, residents may choose to install security systems, such as cameras or alarms.

The argument I want to advance here is that, as we see it, if the police are already having a hard time responding, investing in a security system that alerts the police would be an ineffective way to protect people, as I said, because police intervention is too slow to prevent the crime and keep people safe anyway. Let me reiterate that we appreciate the significance of this issue, but we think it would be better to invest more in supporting the RCMP, police services in Quebec and the provinces, and first nations police services. We think that introducing this tax credit will encourage people to spend money on systems that will probably not do much to prevent crime. From our perspective, it will actually give people a false sense of security.

I also want to reiterate that indigenous communities are sorely lacking in resources and are often poorly served by police forces. We think the money tied to this bill would be better spent on community security and safety, especially in first nations communities.

More fundamentally, the Bloc Québécois believes that the best way to fight crime is to fight inequality too. For example, although Quebec's social safety net is not perfect, it acts as a good foundation to ensure Quebeckers are protected. We have social programs to support families and those most in need, including support to help women access the job market through family policy, such as subsidized child care and parental leave, which help combat poverty, since the two are linked. There is also the public school system, which has been mismanaged in recent years, not to say decades, but which is very important and has a wealth of knowledge and competence.

• (1840)

On that topic, this week is Hooked on School Days, so I salute all the young people and encourage them to continue their studies. I also commend the commitment of teachers in this mission.

Quebec's social safety net is part of a strong state that redistributes wealth. As we know, the Quebec model lies somewhere between those of northern Europe and western Europe. I actually have two books to recommend to any of my colleagues who would like to understand more about the importance of the state in the fight against inequality and in crime reduction.

*Private Members' Business*

The first one, which I do not believe has been translated into French yet, is called *Combating Poverty: Quebec's Pursuit of a Distinctive Welfare State*. Published by the University of Toronto, this comparative analysis explains how Quebec moved away from Canada in its approach to its social safety net in response to the federal government's budget cuts of the Chrétien and Martin years. Despite those cuts, Quebec managed to create important and bold new programs in health and social services. Elsewhere in Canada, services to the public were declining because of federal disengagement, but Quebec expanded its offerings.

The Bloc Québécois is obviously watching very closely to ensure that the current deficit is not reduced through the same Liberal practices as those used in the second half of the 1990s.

The second book I will refer to that could be of interest to my colleagues was written in 1990 by the Danish economist and sociologist Gosta Esping-Andersen. In *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, he explains the various reasons behind Quebec's choices regarding the best ways to establish public policies to fight social inequality, which, I should mention, the Bloc Québécois believes is directly linked to the crime rate.

I believe that rather than covering the cost of security systems, the money that would be allocated under the bill could be put to better use by increasing transfers to the provinces and to Quebec for police services, especially those in indigenous communities. In that regard, the Speech from the Throne took a first step by recognizing the latter as essential services. They were the only ones not deemed essential up to that point. The First Nations Chiefs of Police Association, supported by the Assembly of First Nations, called for this recognition, as well as for funding provided in a more stable manner than through agreements, which only last two to five years and must be constantly renewed. We expect that recognizing these police services as essential services will be accompanied by the funding required to ensure they can continue their operations and work on crime prevention.

Again, from our point of view, this bill does not really help reduce harm. Instead it offers a tax credit to those who install these devices, which could lower their property insurance premiums, as I was saying at the beginning of my speech. In Quebec, having an anti-theft system may lower our insurance bill by tens or hundreds of dollars a year and reduce the risk of theft when we are away.

However, what is even more dangerous than having someone break in while the homeowner is away, to steal valuables or commit the crimes my colleague from Prince Albert was mentioning, is to be home when it happens. Even with the best system, the danger is not reduced if the police fail to show up.

In closing, I want to reiterate that we are of course very sensitive to this issue. I have a great deal of respect for all the remarkable work that my colleague from Prince Albert does, including in the area of agriculture. It was clear from his speech that he is listening to his constituents. However, we do not believe that a tax credit is the best solution. Again, we are more in favour of additional support for law enforcement, starting with indigenous police services, and we strongly encourage ramping up efforts to reduce social inequality, which would reduce crime.

• (1845)

[English]

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising to speak on Bill C-234, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, home security measures.

I want to start by saying that I have a lot of respect for the member in question. I have worked with him, and I disagree with him profoundly on many issues, as he is well aware, but I respect the work he brings to the House of Commons. Also, having travelled through his riding numerous times, going into northern Saskatchewan and coming back as well, I understand the importance of this issue of folks feeling secure in their own community.

I will preface my remarks by saying that I certainly understand why the member has brought forward the bill. However, that being said, we believe that it is the wrong direction to take, and I will explain why.

First off, when we are talking about a non-refundable tax credit, we are actually talking about a tax credit that benefits those who have higher incomes. This is the same problem we are seeing with the disability tax credit, which is non-refundable. As members are well aware, it means that many people with disabilities, often the poorest of the poor, cannot access the disability tax credit because it is non-refundable.

As a result of that, and we saw this most recently during this pandemic when so many people with disabilities were struggling, in so many cases, they are not able to access the \$600, which is a minimum amount to actually provide supports for those people with disabilities. Therefore, when we are talking about non-refundable tax credits, we are talking about people at the higher income threshold who will benefit from them.

That being said, this proposed tax credit for home security measures has been evaluated at costing close to \$250 million. That is the starting point. The evaluation by the PBO is at \$220 million, but that is rising, and with inflation we are talking about \$250 million. However, if we are going to spend a quarter of a billion dollars, then what is the best way of making investments to protect and support our communities right across the country?

I will reference the valuable report that was put forward, and the NDP's complementary report a little later, but I do have to flag, because it is important, how a smaller amount made an extraordinary difference in community safety right across the country. That was with the crime prevention programs, which were actually stopped by the former Harper government when it cut \$100 million from crime prevention programs and basically wiped them out right across the country. However, crime prevention programs, often staffed by very dedicated volunteers, made a huge difference in ensuring that community safety was paramount.

Every dollar that was spent in these crime prevention programs actually saved six dollars in policing costs, court costs and prison costs. Every dollar spent in crime prevention saves six dollars elsewhere and prevents crimes from being committed in the first place. I am a strong supporter of crime prevention programs. The ones we had in New Westminster and Burnaby, and the ones that existed right across the country, were an extremely important way of providing more safety and security for everybody in the community.

The former Harper government slashed and eliminated those programs, and the NDP caucus spoke out vehemently against that. It made no sense at all. It certainly was not cost-effective. We know without crime prevention programs, the costs in policing and court costs are much higher than it would be to actually make those investments in the first place. It is important to note that for less than half the cost of this particular income tax measure, we could be seeing far more safety and security right across the country.

This is a stain on the record of the Harper government, which I do not think will ever go away. However, it is surprising to me that a new Liberal government, now five years later, has never acted to put back in place the crime prevention programs that were so effective right across the country. It is a tragedy.

● (1850)

The NDP, which has presented a building safer communities policy, has believed all along in those investments. Because they are cost-effective, and because they demonstrably lead to better community safety right across the country, they are the way to go. We disagree with the old parties that believe in being simply punitive after the fact. We believe the best route to public safety is ensuring that crime does not take place in the first place. That means removing the massive and growing inequalities we are seeing across this country.

During this pandemic, Canada's billionaires have increased their wealth by over \$60 billion, yet so many Canadians are struggling to make ends meet. Investing in crime prevention programs, reducing inequality and putting in place a broad social safety net are all tools to ensure a broader level of community safety and security for everyone.

[*Translation*]

Earlier I said I wanted to reference a report on the topic of public safety in rural areas. This is very important, because this topic was studied by a House of Commons committee a few years ago. I want to reiterate that we are talking about a quarter of a billion dollars. Better investments could help make everyone safer.

The NDP's dissenting report was quite clear. Former NDP MPs Georgina Jolibois and Christine Moore were also part of the process. Our report addressed the indigenous situation and suggested investing to ensure that indigenous communities have the resources they need to improve quality of life, health and safety in each of these communities. The report also spoke about awareness raising and suicide prevention in rural areas. This is a problem that is becoming increasingly serious across the country.

My colleague, the member for Timmins—James Bay, also called for a national suicide prevention action plan. Rather than spend a

### *Private Members' Business*

quarter of a billion dollars on a tax credit for the wealthy, investing in a suicide prevention plan can make a huge difference.

There is also the issue of supporting victims, meaning women in rural areas who are victims of sexual or domestic violence. As we know, on any given day, 400 women in Canada are unable to find shelter from this kind of violence. That is appalling. This is something the NDP caucus has been calling for for a long time. Keeping people safer means making those investments. We have to invest to ensure that those 400 women have a safe place to go. Even if they are experiencing violence, that would make a huge difference. That is the kind of investment that counts.

Moreover, in the NDP's dissenting report to the committee's report, we brought up access to 911 emergency service. That service has to be available so that people in rural areas can call to get emergency services.

Although relatively inexpensive, all of these things could make a big difference in the safety of people living in rural areas.

Clearly, if we are talking about \$0.25 billion, \$220 million and then \$250 million over the next few years, there are much more effective ways to spend that money on safety in rural areas and for everyone. Of course, this begins with using what has worked in the past, such as crime prevention programs. They were cut by the former Conservative government. The NDP will surely reinstate them if it ever gets the chance.

● (1855)

[*English*]

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, before I begin my remarks, I want to take a moment to talk about my friend and Conservative colleague from Prince Albert who introduced this private member's bill, Bill C-234. I know that my colleague from the NDP touched on a lot of different areas, but this bill focuses on one issue that can make a difference.

Since he was first elected in 2008, the member for Prince Albert has worked tirelessly on behalf of his constituents. I have worked with him in some of these areas, particularly on crime, and witnessed first-hand his commitment and enthusiasm on the many issues near and dear to my constituents as well, whether it be agriculture, international trade, or anything else he has worked on with regard to the United States, including transport, and now this particular rural crime issue.

Across the Prairies, we have seen a steady increase in criminal activity in recent years. Criminals are no longer just stealing gas and diesel for their vehicles, but more expensive items such as farm machinery, tools and trailers.

*Private Members' Business*

In the last Parliament, my colleague from Lakeland, Alberta, passed her private member's motion, which instructed the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security to undertake a study on rural crime. In response to that study, I held five rural crime town halls throughout my constituency to get a better understanding of the types of crimes being reported.

Being proactive in these five town halls, I actively sought people's policy proposals to improve public safety, not only for themselves but also their entire community. Soon after, I wrote the public safety committee outlining 13 proposals, because it was doing the study at the time, and one of them happened to be this very bill we are debating here today.

Before I speak about why I am supporting this legislation, it is important to highlight what happened with the public safety committee study on rural crime back in May 2019, almost two years ago. After eight committee meetings, the Liberals at the time used their majority to ensure that the report would contain absolutely nothing of substance.

In all my years in politics, I have never seen a committee report that was that thin. The Liberals did not allow a single recommendation to be included in that report, and after hearing from a multitude of witnesses, the entire report was just two and a half pages long. I do not know how much it cost to do, but I imagine it was almost \$100 a word.

Worse yet, due to the committee's report being so short, the opposition filed a dissenting report that was no longer than the report itself, which prevented the opposition parties from including substantive additions to the report to improve it. I cannot think of any better example of how little time the Liberals have for some of these prairie issues. It was clear from the results of the last election.

Having said that, every MP in the Prairies knows this is a growing problem, and it is not just a prairie problem either. For example, police-reported crime rates are higher in rural than urban areas. In some cases, and I know my colleague from Joliette mentioned this in his speech tonight as well, crime is even 30% higher in rural areas than in urban areas.

In my constituency, we have seen an increase of property crime violations. We have also seen a rise in break-and-enter crimes. I met and spoke with individuals who were the victims of these crimes and they shared how violated they felt after someone broke into their home, farm or business.

In one instance, the thief was brazen enough to break into the home in the middle of the night while the family was sleeping, stole the car keys and drove away with the vehicle. While luckily no one was hurt in this instance, the fact remains that someone broke into their home while they were sleeping in their beds. They woke up the next morning with the frightening realization of how vulnerable and exposed they were.

People living in rural and remote communities know that due to their distance from major urban centres, response times by the RCMP, fire and ambulance are not as quick as they are in communities like Brandon or Prince Albert. Thieves and criminals also know that, which I believe is part of the reason they are now preying on rural communities.

Those who have ever lived on a farm or in a small town know that the relationship and connection with those in their community is something truly unique. They rely on their neighbours, they look out for each other and they make sure that when something needs to be done, they raise their hand to volunteer and get it done. That is what has been happening across the Prairies as rural crime watches have been resurrected.

● (1900)

People are now taking extra precautions, such as taking notice of vehicles are entering people's yards and reporting suspicious activity to law enforcement. I know many who used to pride themselves on not having to lock their doors or even leaving the keys in the console of their vehicles. Sadly those days are pretty well over.

The reality is that criminals are getting better organized. We found out that they are even using drones to check out people's farmyards to see if anyone is home, or to go hunting for what they want to steal next. No one who lives on a farm expects the RCMP to be able to respond to a call within 10 minutes.

This private member's bill will provide a financial incentive for families to better protect themselves. By creating a non-refundable tax credit for home security measures, it will help reduce the costs of getting a system installed. This tax credit would be applied to the installation, maintenance and monitoring of a security system installed on an individual's property to monitor structures such as homes, garages and barns.

As the adage goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. By making it just that much more difficult for thieves or criminals to go undetected, it will undoubtedly discourage future crime from occurring and provide valuable evidence to help solve a crime. By increasing the risk of the criminal getting caught, either by catching their face or a vehicle on a camera, or by alerting law enforcement of the crime in real time, this bill is a common sense bill that will produce results.

If this bill is passed, it is my hope that the security companies will also help communicate this new tax credit to the public, in the same vein as what happened with the home renovation tax credit. I firmly believe encouraging this conversation about steps families can take to better protect themselves and their property will have a tangible impact on crime rates.

This bill is just one step to curb the rising rural crime rates. Our Conservative caucus knows there is still so much more work to be done. Solving this rural crime epidemic will take all three levels of government working together.



I want to applaud the Government of Manitoba for adopting one of the recommendations that came out of my rural crime town halls. Under the leadership of the former minister of justice, the Hon. Cliff Cullen, it established a dedicated RCMP rural crime task force in Manitoba, which the province calls the RCMP crime reduction enforcement support team.

It has already been involved in numerous province-wide operations, including the seizure of \$76,000 from illegal goods and 150 weapons, and more than 20 recovered stolen vehicles. The team's good work and investigations have led to criminal charges against 43 people. This concept is something that both the Alberta and Saskatchewan governments have already implemented, and I suspect they are seeing similar results.

In closing, I urge all of my colleagues in the House to support this legislation. It is time for action and leadership on this issue. The Liberals are spending hundreds of millions of dollars on a very ill-thought-out buyback program, which only impacts law-abiding firearms owners and sport shooters. Instead, let us spend time and resources on something that will make a big difference.

I thank my colleague from Prince Albert for all of his efforts on this file. I will be voting in favour of Bill C-234. As I said earlier, this is only one of the solutions in a vast suitcase of things that can be done and differences that we can make, but I think it is a big one. I believe that my colleague brings this forward in a responsible manner, which will be able to an impact on rural crime across Canada, never mind just on the Prairies.

• (1905)

**The Deputy Speaker:** The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. The order is now dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

---

## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

### FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to talk about the importance of affordable child care, not just in my riding but across Canada.

This is related to a question that I raised in the House of Commons around the need for a national, universal, affordable and accessible child care program that is also a quality program to be developed here in Canada.

We have been hearing, for 50 years, from the government that it plans to develop a program for early childhood education that is universal: right across the country. We have not seen the government do that. We keep hearing more and more lofty commitments. The government's secretariat, which they have announced they will spend \$20 million on over five years, just does not cut it.

### Adjournment Proceedings

We know that provinces like British Columbia are looking for federal commitments on this front so that we can deliver a child care program not just in British Columbia, but right across Canada.

What I am hearing from small business owners is that they do not need the removal of red tape or lower taxes. Their priorities and needs are for affordable child care and affordable housing. They want to see pharmacare and dental programs to help support their workers and themselves. Costs for private insurance are going through the roof. We know that it saves money when we invest in people. Their priority is a healthy environment, because they are on the ground and they care deeply about their communities.

We saw what it was like under a decade of the Conservatives. They did not prioritize social infrastructure. They did not understand the importance of that for the local economy. We have heard a lot of lip service from the Liberals when it comes to affordable housing. We have seen non-market housing fall in the last 27 years, under the Liberals and Conservatives, from 10% to 3%. In Europe, they are upwards of 30% in most jurisdictions.

When it comes to investing in strong supports, we have also seen strong economies in those areas as a reflection of that. We know that the government is considering a tax cut instead of investing in and opening up child care spaces. We are hearing from stakeholders across the country, including economist Armine Yalnizyan, the Atkinson Fellow on the Future of Workers. Regarding a federal tax credit, which we know the Liberals are considering, in a Global News report from February 13, she states:

I think it is the path of least resistance, because it means they don't have to get involved in the quality or the standards of care, but it does not create one more new space that is high quality.

We need the government to actually commit to quality, affordable and accessible child care.

The Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce in my riding has identified it as the number one priority. In Quebec, when they brought in a child care program that was universal, 70,000 women went back to work. The GDP went up 2%.

We know that the majority of job losses have affected women, and that women have been disproportionately affected. If we are truly going to have a recovery, we need to create more spaces for affordable child care. The NDP has been calling for that in our budget submission. We cited the importance this would have to any economic recovery regarding the pandemic and post-pandemic. This is going to be critical for women especially who are participating in the workforce.

We have seen other countries do it, and it has worked. Whether it be in Sweden, Norway or Slovenia, other countries have seen how important it is to have that stability and that infrastructure in place, not just for the economic makeup of their economy, but for their recovery.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

The NDP is calling on the government. As the critic for small business and tourism, I want to express how critical this is for our commitment to small business in Canada.

• (1910)

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want first to acknowledge how refreshing it is to see someone who has a business portfolio in a critic's job and be talking about child care. We do not build strong businesses in this country if we do not tap into the full array and spectacular diversity of our workforce, and we cannot get that if we do not support families and women as they move to make sure that those with skills can access the best jobs possible. We do not do that if families are not fully supported, and child care and early learning is a critical part of that.

I will also say that child care and early learning are essential to developing a future workforce. Every study shows that the sooner we get kids into early learning environments, including head start programs, and attach child care to educational systems, the better the outcomes, and we know this.

With knowledge, once we know something, the choice is in how we act on it. Our government did not wait for the pandemic to invest in child care. In our very first mandate, we put a national child care accord together. We negotiated with the provinces and territories, and now all provinces and territories have signed on to a \$7-billion program. That is already producing results in communities right across the country, but what the pandemic showed us is that this is not enough.

I agree with my colleague opposite, and I could quote to him from the throne speech where we commit to a national system of child care, a national system of early learning and to working with provinces and territories to deliver this, but also to working with cities and communities and, most importantly, indigenous communities, because for the first time ever, our government has established an early learning and child care strategy with, by and for indigenous communities, led by and for indigenous communities right across the country.

That said, the issue is knowing the next step. The member opposite has suggested that we are looking at a series of tax credits to achieve this goal. I agree with him that tax credits will not achieve this goal. We do not build child care capacity if we do not build child care spaces, if we do not fund training to a high quality and make sure we achieve on that front. We also do not do it if we do not understand that close to 83% of the cost of child care is salaries, and therefore training and developing the workforce has to be part of a national strategy.

Let me assure the member opposite that the commitments that have been made in the throne speech are serious and that the budget submissions our ministry has made to the process are just as serious, and we intend to deliver on this commitment in a very profound way.

I will also say this: It was refreshing to hear the leader of the New Democrats in the House stand up and say that he will not defeat the government just as we get to the finish line on this critical

issue, and it gave me hope that this system will come into existence. That is good news.

While neither one of us was an MP in the House in 2005, I was a journalist covering the fall of the Martin government. When we lost that government and when that government was not re-elected, for whatever reason we lost a fully funded national child care plan, and we have never recovered from that moment in time. I am glad to hear that the NDP is going to put good policy in front of politics and is going to put kids into child care spaces. I am glad to hear that the NDP is not looking at putting New Democrats into the House as a way of achieving this, but instead is looking at working with us to deliver the commitments we will fulfill in the upcoming budget.

Child care is critically important to families in this country, critically important to women in this country, and critically important to a pandemic recovery that is just for everybody. We will not recover from this pandemic if we do not understand that. I join the member opposite in demanding a national child care program, and I do that as the parliamentary secretary to the minister who will deliver such an accord.

Luckily, because we took action in our first mandate and because we invested \$7.5 billion, we have an accord that we can build on to deliver this program quickly and we have a table with first ministers right across the country, including with indigenous governments, to work on this and deliver the results that the member opposite spoke to, for exactly the right reasons and for exactly the issues he raised.

Let us put the past behind us. I will not talk about 2005 if he does not talk about whatever decade of broken promises that were there before my kid came along. She is now out of university, but I mean the promises made before she was born. She is now graduated. I would have loved to have had a child care program in 2005 for my son, trust me.

Let us put the past behind us, let us look to the future and let us make sure that the future is female.

• (1915)

**Mr. Gord Johns:** Mr. Speaker, while it is encouraging to hear my colleague talk about the importance of building a child care program, what we do not want to see is a program that is rolled out over decades.

We have heard this talk for six years. I do not want to go back; as he said, let us move forward. However, what we need is an actual commitment from my colleague that he is willing and that his government is going to commit to a universal child care program that is affordable, that is accessible and that is of high quality for all Canadians, not just in certain pockets and with a long rollout.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

We have heard the Liberals talk about affordable housing. Even their recent announcement around urban centres was talking about years and years from now. We need to know that they are going to absolutely commit to a universal child care program in this budget so that we can help build an economy that is going to bring women back to work, that is going to bring greater participation in the workplace for all Canadians, all parents, and ensure that young people get the early childhood education they so deserve, because we know that inequality often starts between the ages of three and five years old.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** Mr. Speaker, as committed to in the throne speech, we are working on a program that will start as soon as the opposition supports our budget process. We are in a minority Parliament, so the parties on the opposite side have responsibilities to these aspirations, not just in stating them and championing them with bumper sticker slogans, but in actually working with us to deliver programs.

We are not going to talk about the past, but the vote in 2005 was profoundly destructive to the goals and programs the member opposite speaks about. He has given us his word that he is not going to spring an election on the budget. I am giving my word that we are doing everything we can to deliver the day care system that he speaks about and dreams of.

We all need to work together to get this done. Voters have given us a minority Parliament. Let us make it work. Let us make it work for children and for child care, and let us not let them down.

We have a commitment from the member's party. We have my minister's commitment to deliver on the accords we have built. Let us move together to realize early learning and child care, and let us make sure we work with the provinces and territories to realize this dream as soon as possible.

## COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I am raising an issue today in our Adjournment Proceedings that I originally raised on December 10 during question period.

We have been blaming the pandemic for the financial anxiety and poor living conditions people are facing, but the truth is that these conditions were already there. The pandemic certainly exacerbated inequalities, but they were already there. The poverty, the financial anxiety and the homelessness exist in every riding across this country, and I am sure my colleagues can relate to this with the calls they receive in their offices on a weekly basis. The ones that break my heart and that I lose sleep over are the ones for which there is no solution except to implement a guaranteed livable income.

Why do we need a GLI now? At the beginning of this pandemic the government made it clear that Canadians who found themselves suddenly without work required \$2,000 per month to live. Does the government realize that in my home province of New Brunswick I have constituents living on \$564 per month?

The pandemic has inflamed income insecurity, particularly for low- and minimum-wage workers. It has resulted in a run on rents, as my colleague, the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, has been saying. Those who qualify for government relief benefits are doing

okay, but what about those who never qualify or those whose benefits are about to expire?

The Prime Minister often says that no one will be left behind, but in truth this patchwork approach to financial support is leaving countless Canadians behind, and at a high cost to taxpayers. I am more than confident in saying that a GLI is the solution to so many of the problems we face. In one swoop, the government could end poverty.

I think of the person living on a fixed pension or on disability benefits for whom the cost of living goes up every year, outpacing what little inflation those benefits receive. I think of the people trying to sleep in Wilmot Park in Fredericton, who are being moved along by police. They could be able to afford rent. I think of the senior who spent years of her life providing unpaid care for everyone around her, now scraping by on pennies in her elder years. I think of the woman fleeing intimate partner violence for whom escape no longer needs to mean poverty or the risk of losing her children.

A GLI is also the solution to some systemic inequality. Our current patchwork programs have problems with systemic racism, ableism and misogyny. If the government is truly serious about addressing these insidious issues, a GLI is the most effective way to start that work.

Let us not ignore the economic benefits. A GLI would reduce Canada's growing poverty crisis, thereby reducing the demand for social services, law enforcement and health care. A report by the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis shows that a GLI could be a sustainable investment that grows our economy by \$80 billion per year, creates hundreds of thousands of jobs and supports Canada's businesses, all while lifting 3.2 million Canadian families out of poverty. We have seen this work with the child tax benefit. It is time to take it a step further.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Finally, I also believe a GLI is the best opportunity to fight for our planet. There is an innate privilege in the environmental movement because people cannot get involved in fighting the climate crisis if they have to focus on their basic needs and day-to-day survival. Individuals and communities cannot make changes to how they live and work, to transition from fossil fuels and to build a sustainable and low-emission economy while building back from COVID-19 and living in crushing poverty. A GLI would provide a financial safety net for all persons in Canada, especially through major economic shifts, natural disasters, major industry automation, job loss and global pandemics.

We are told to brace for more, but without adequate universal supports, what do we expect people to hold on to?

• (1925)

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is the first time I get to answer a question from the new member.

I worked in a newsroom with someone called Bob Hunter, He was the person who termed the phrase “Greenpeace” and in fact had membership card no. 1. He never joined the Green Party. Part of the problem was the wonky approach the party used to have using Conservative-style tax credits to achieve environmental goals and nothing else. I am glad to see the Green Party joining the social justice conversation with good ideas and with individuals who have broadened the conversation around what justice looks like in a social context. Therefore, I welcome this question and the idea.

The member talked about seniors, people with disabilities, the homeless and people stuck in the gig economy, whether the tech gig economy or the seasonal employment that defines parts of New Brunswick.

She also talked about the success of and what the child benefit had taught us, because it is a form of guaranteed income. It guarantees income for all families. It is means-tested in a way that is sensitive. It has delivered hundreds of thousands of kids out of poverty because it is there for them day in and day out, month in and month out. Those are policies the Green Party supported in our first budget whereas the NDP did not.

I was the parliamentary secretary to the minister who was in charge at the time, but he is now the head of the Treasury Board. He talked about changing the social safety net into a trampoline, about pulling the cords apart to understand which ones needed to be thicker, not to catch people but to bounce them back up. The federal government provides several different forms of income supports that when looked at as a collection is a form of basic income. However, because they are separate programs, there are cracks between them, and those are the very cracks the member opposite is talking about people falling between. We saw this with people with disabilities during the pandemic.

The federal government did not have a coordinated single database of people receiving the benefit because of this patchwork of tax credits and provincial programs, veterans benefits and CPP. When we knitted that back together again, we found we could do more with a cohesive and coordinated approach as opposed to that

patchwork approach or those single strands in the social safety net, which are good enough for some but not good enough for all.

Therefore, we have started to look at seniors pensions, boosting the OAS and looking at how seniors poverty rolls through generationally as seniors grow older. We are taking a look at the disability pension and have done it through the lens of the disability rights legislation we passed in the last Parliament.

We have strengthened the national housing strategy from the \$40 billion the Prime Minister referenced earlier this year now closer to \$72 billion, and the rapid housing initiative is filling those gaps and making a difference in the lives of people in Fredericton and New Brunswick in particular.

Regarding the gig economy and the child benefit, I agree. We had a meeting today at the human resource committee of Parliament. We looked at the way EI does and does not function. It is built for an employment structure from the last century, with a computer system that is almost even older than that. It is time for a massive reform. Whether we call it basic income, guaranteed income, universal income, the name is not so important. I do not care about the bumper sticker; I care about the policy. It is time for all of us as parliamentarians to take a look at how the new economies have emerged in our ridings. Whether in the north, the remote, the coast, downtowns, small towns or small municipalities across the Prairies, we have to find a way to reform EI, to restructure the income streams of the federal government supports and to achieve the goals about which the member has spoken.

Who gets the credit, whose bumper sticker is best, I could not care less, but the issues the member is raising are the right ones. The issues we are working on are the same ones. I hope she sees us moving toward that goal even if we do not achieve it necessarily under the banner she has given us. What COVID has taught us through this process is that we can do better because “better is always possible”, to quote the Prime Minister.

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin:** Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful for the words the parliamentary secretary just shared, and I feel that momentum. Really, though, the question for me is this: What kind of society do we want to live in and raise our children in? That is what we are grappling with right now, especially as we face the COVID-19 recovery.

For me, we should be making government decisions based on quality of life measurements. Every Canadian has the right to live in dignity, with access to a livable income; accessible and affordable housing; food security; expanded health services, including mental health services; and the resources they need to meet their basic human needs, no matter their status in life. A GLI is a pillar to ensure well-being.

Without the creation of the CERB and other emergency benefit programs, millions of people in Canada would have been in dire straits. It is not a leap to suggest that the CERB kept people alive. Even with these emergency benefits, too many people are still falling through the cracks without support as the pandemic continues, as the member mentioned. The question is this: What will replace these benefits when they are gone?

The parliamentary secretary mentioned reform, and I feel a GLI is here for us. There have been many pilot projects and we have lots to draw from.

A common criticism of a GLI is that it may make it difficult to recruit workers. We know, based on study results, that this is not true. We could actually see a 17% increase in part-time workers, according to an Alaskan study.

Once again, the momentum for building a GLI across party lines and within civil society is there. However, we cannot rebuild a house on a foundation—

**The Deputy Speaker:** We will have to leave it at that.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** Mr. Speaker, I would encourage my colleague to reach out to the member for Markham—Stouffville. As a provincial minister in Ontario, she built a basic income pilot project in Hamilton, only to see the Conservatives destroy it, despite the fact it was showing great promise. Before it was allowed to report out fully and had its work destroyed by the Ford government, one of the early findings was that it actually encouraged people to work and that people actually saw a way to use social benefit to improve their standing in their own lives.

I agree with her that the time has come for concerted action, and I hope she would reach out and discuss the findings of that report, because the member in our caucus is a wealth of information, as is the minister from the treasury board. It is his life's work, as a professor in Laval. His thoughts on it are absolutely phenomenal.

The issue is that basic income alone will not solve problems. Basic income alone does not create a housing system that someone can afford just because they have the rent money. We have to design systems for basic income to work within. Housing in particular is one of the key drivers of poverty. It is one of the key drivers of health outcomes, and of the justice of which she speaks. Without the housing system in place, and without intentionally building affordable housing, if we put all the money into basic income and do not spread it through those other systems, access to child care, access to health care, access to housing and access to this country's wealth are limited for far too many people.

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

While we have to achieve on income reform, we also have to build systems around it to make that income reform work better, work harder and deliver real results to those people.

I look forward to our conversations.

● (1930)

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I originally asked the minister about the government's promise to plant two billion trees to combat climate change, and I know there have been a lot of concerns about that program, including the fact that no trees were planted in the first year and whether the trees planted would be in addition to those that would seed themselves. I agree that nature-based solutions will have to play an important role in our efforts to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, and trees are a logical place to start.

There have been some high profile contests, for example those sponsored by Canada's Oil Sands Innovation Alliance and by Elon Musk, to find ways to remove carbon dioxide from the air and put it to good use. While those contests may highlight important new innovations, the organizers could just as easily have saved their time and given the millions of dollars in prize money to trees.

On the face of it, planting trees is a great idea, but we have to have a plan to make sure we are not duplicating the efforts that nature would provide and the efforts industry is obliged to provide after harvest. To truly bring down our carbon emissions through tree planting, those efforts have to be additive. We have to plant the trees in the right places, where they can grow quickly but where they would not be planted without our efforts. We have to plant the right species of trees to match not just the present environmental conditions, but projected future conditions after climate change.

Most of all, we must remind ourselves, and all Canadians, that simply planting trees is not a magic bullet to fix climate change. For one thing, there is a 20- to 30-year delay in positive carbon sequestration when we plant trees in new forests. We are now at over 700 megatonnes of carbon dioxide in emissions. We need to get to zero in 30 years. Calculations show that even if we did everything right, our new trees would not make a significant impact until after 2050, and even if we did everything right our two billion trees would only be sequestering about four or five megatonnes of carbon, according to expert testimony we heard at the natural resources committee.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

It is a small step. It is an important small step, perhaps, but certainly not a big part of any climate action plan. It may help us after 2050, but we should not point to this as one of the actions that will help us meet that “zero by 2050” target. If we want to spend money wisely with nature-based solutions, let us invest it into finding the best land management practices that will yield the best results for climate action, and promote those through co-operation with the provinces that manage our forests.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to discuss our government's commitment to plant two billion trees, especially with my colleague from the natural resources committee, the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay. I know that he has committed his professional life to the environment. In fact, he and his siblings have followed the path of their late father, Stephen Cannings, recognized as one of British Columbia's many great environmentalists. I raise my hat to him.

Our government shares the member's deep concern about our planet's future and especially about the existential threat posed by climate change.

[*Translation*]

That is precisely why we recently announced a tougher plan for fighting climate change so that we can exceed the 2030 Paris Agreement targets and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Planting two billion trees in 10 years is an important part of that plan.

We know that nature is part of the climate solution. A nature-based climate solution, like planting trees, takes full advantage of nature's ability to fight climate change by absorbing and capturing greenhouse gases, protecting coastlines from tides, storms and erosion and by lowering the temperature in cities, while improving water quality and enhancing biodiversity.

In Canada, we are fortunate to have vast, healthy and resilient forestry ecosystems. They provide us with recreational opportunities, whether that means taking a walk in a wooded urban area or a hike with the family in a provincial or national park.

Our forests also contribute to absorbing greenhouse gases. This has allowed Canada to increase its carbon sinks. That is why our government is working hard to begin implementing this Canadian solution.

The project to plant two billion trees is huge. It is a complex undertaking. The plan will include urban and rural regions of Canada. The number of trees planted in Canada will increase by 40% a year. There will also be significant benefits. By the tenth year, our country's forest cover will be twice the size of Prince Edward Island. That will cut overall emissions by 12 megatonnes in the next 25 years, while creating more than 4,000 jobs. There are additional benefits, such as the creation of more habitat for wildlife and improved biodiversity. All of this will enhance our ability to restore habitat for species at risk, such as the boreal caribou and migratory birds.

As I said, this is a complex undertaking and there are obstacles to overcome. We need partners in the production of seedlings, which, as the member said, will take about two years to grow.

• (1935)

[*English*]

We also need partners in order to identify the areas of land and the types of trees to be planted and to prepare sites and monitor trees for survival. Despite these challenges, I want to assure the House and all Canadians that nothing in the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report last month should raise any doubts about our determination. The fall economic statement provided just over \$3 billion, but we have always said that an initiative of this scale requires strong partnerships to succeed.

Our intent for cost-sharing has always been a key feature of this initiative. An article published in the *Scientific American* last week says it best. If we want to fund an initiative that will not just plant trees but enable people to live sustainably in the landscape over time, “it's going to take unprecedented collaboration between governments, organizations and local people.” That is why our government has and will continue to actively engage with provincial and territorial governments, indigenous peoples, industry and non-governmental stakeholders to realize this commitment. We will stay the course because there is no path to net zero that does not include our forests.

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** Mr. Speaker, one of my main concerns with the two-billion-tree plan is that it might simply serve as a distraction from the hard work that we have to do to reach our climate targets. There will be real benefits if we do this right, but those benefits are small in relation to the task at hand. On the other hand, there are greater benefits to be had if we change the way we manage forests, and we should explore those with the provinces.

Every year in British Columbia, for instance, we burn forestry waste. This slash burning puts as much carbon dioxide into the atmosphere as all of the cars in British Columbia combined. Let us stop doing that. When we are measuring the benefits that forests can provide us in our fight against climate change, remember that it is not as simple as how many trees we plant. It is much more complicated than that. It includes how and where we harvest trees, what we do with forestry waste and what products we produce from the trees we cut.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that Canadians just need to look at our track record to recognize that healthy forests are a crucial part of our clean air future.

Early in the pandemic, we pledged \$30 million to help small and medium-sized businesses, including tree-planting companies, to offset COVID-19-related health and safety measures.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

[*Translation*]

This commitment is helping to protect workers and communities. It also supported the planting of 600 million trees during the 2020 planting season. Our government is also funding two separate programs that support the planting of 150 million new seedlings by 2022.

[*English*]

Finally, we also helped fund the Highway of Heroes tree campaign, which has already planted more than 750,000 of a planned two million trees between Toronto and Trenton, Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The motion to adjourn the House is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:39 p.m.)

---





# CONTENTS

Thursday, February 18, 2021

## Points of Order

<b>Safe and Regulated Sports Betting Act</b>	
Mr. Gerretsen .....	4209
<b>Adjournment Proceedings</b>	
Mr. Oliphant .....	4209
Mr. Genuis .....	4209

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### Criminal Code

Mr. Garneau .....	4210
Bill C-22. Introduction and first reading .....	4210
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) .....	4210

### Interparliamentary Delegations

Mr. McGuinty .....	4210
--------------------	------

### Committees of the House

#### Public Accounts

Mrs. Block .....	4210
------------------	------

### Protection of Freedom of Conscience Act

Mrs. Block .....	4210
Bill C-268. Introduction and first reading .....	4210
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) .....	4210

### Fisheries Act

Mr. Scheer .....	4210
Bill C-269. Introduction and first reading .....	4210
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) .....	4211

### Excise Tax Act

Mr. Dubourg .....	4211
Bill C-270. Introduction and first reading .....	4211
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) .....	4212

### Petitions

#### Sex Selection

Mr. Williamson .....	4212
----------------------	------

#### Airline Industry

Mr. Battiste .....	4212
--------------------	------

#### Falun Gong

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) .....	4212
--------------------------------------	------

### Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Lamoureux .....	4212
---------------------	------

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### Business of Supply

#### Opposition Motion—Religious Minorities in China

Mr. Chong .....	4212
Motion .....	4212
Mr. Lamoureux .....	4214
Ms. McPherson .....	4214
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) .....	4214
Mr. Paul-Hus .....	4214
Mrs. Gill .....	4216
Mr. Gerretsen .....	4216
Mr. Cooper .....	4216
Mr. Garneau .....	4216
Mr. Genuis .....	4219
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe .....	4219
Mr. Angus .....	4219
Mr. Chong .....	4219
Mr. Lamoureux .....	4219
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) .....	4220
Mr. Bergeron .....	4220
Mr. Kelly .....	4221
Mr. Gerretsen .....	4221
Mrs. Vignola .....	4222
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe .....	4222
Amendment .....	4223
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) .....	4223
Mr. Kelly .....	4223
Mrs. Vignola .....	4224
Mr. Harris .....	4224
Mr. Chong .....	4225
Mr. Lamoureux .....	4225
Mr. Angus .....	4226
Mr. Van Popta .....	4226
Mr. Morantz .....	4226
Mr. Genuis .....	4226
Mr. Gerretsen .....	4228
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe .....	4229
Ms. Gazan .....	4229
Mr. Morantz .....	4229
Ms. McPherson .....	4231
Mr. Lamoureux .....	4231

### Points of Order

#### Criminal Code

Mr. Deltell .....	4231
-------------------	------

### Business of Supply

#### Opposition Motion—Religious Minorities in China

Motion .....	4232
Ms. Normandin .....	4232
Mr. Lehoux .....	4233
Mr. Angus .....	4233





## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

### Citizenship Act

Bill C-223. Second reading .....	4273
Mr. Rayes .....	4273
Ms. Normandin .....	4274
Ms. Dhillon .....	4276
Mr. Boulerice .....	4277
Ms. Bérubé .....	4278
Division deferred .....	4279

### Income Tax Act

Mr. Hoback .....	4279
Bill C-234. Second reading .....	4279
Mr. Gerretsen .....	4281
Mr. Cumming .....	4281
Ms. Larouche .....	4281
Mr. Lamoureux .....	4282

Mr. Ste-Marie .....	4283
Mr. Julian .....	4284
Mr. Maguire .....	4285

## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

### Families, Children and Social Development

Mr. Johns .....	4287
Mr. Vaughan .....	4288

### COVID-19 Emergency Response

Mrs. Atwin .....	4289
Mr. Vaughan .....	4290

### The Environment

Mr. Cannings .....	4291
Mr. Lefebvre .....	4292



Published under the authority of the Speaker of  
the House of Commons

### **SPEAKER'S PERMISSION**

---

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

---

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité  
du Président de la Chambre des communes

### **PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT**

---

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

---

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :  
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>