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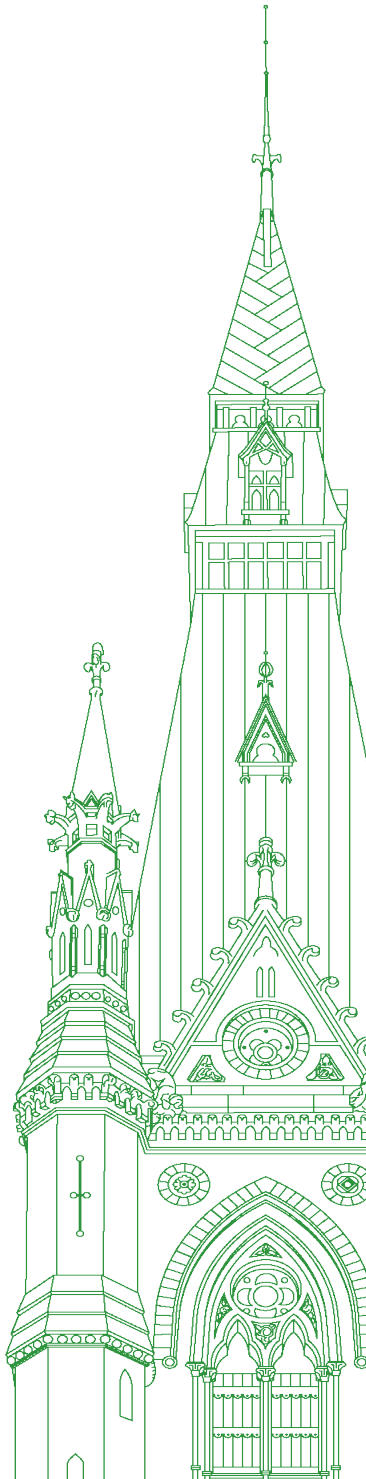

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 7, 2021

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1105)

[*English*]

CANADIAN MULTICULTURALISM ACT

The House resumed from December 9, 2020 consideration of the motion that Bill C-226, An Act to amend the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (non-application in Quebec), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the private member's bill, Bill C-226, introduced by the member for Montcalm, whom I have always found to be an intelligent and respectful debater, even if we do not share the same vision for our Canadian federalism. He always makes his interventions about ideas, and that is fundamental to a healthy democracy.

Bill C-226 asks the House to support an amendment to the Canadian Multiculturalism Act that would make the act not applicable in Quebec. It is important to mention that official bilingualism and multiculturalism in this country share the same origins. That is the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, which did its work between 1963 and 1969. The commissioners believed, in fact, that official bilingualism and multiculturalism could be mutually reinforcing, and they were so very right.

Through its multicultural policy adopted in 1971, the federal government recognized diversity as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society and as a pillar of our value system. However, it was also made clear that the advancement of multiculturalism throughout Canada had to be made in harmony with the national commitment to the official languages of Canada. Built not only on the contributions of indigenous peoples and the two official language communities, French and English, the fabric of Canada owes much to the contributions of the many ethnocultural communities and new immigrants who have come to make a life in this country over the span of decades.

By way of background, the Canadian multiculturalism policy was enshrined in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act in 1988, and all provincial and territorial governments are subject to its application, including Quebec. The act, which is now 33 years old, provides the framework for federal responsibilities and activities designed to bring Canadians closer together and promote mutual respect and appreciation among Canadians of different backgrounds. The act has been central in creating harmonious relations among Canadians of different backgrounds, and it has helped strengthen the country's social fabric.

Quebec is the only province in Canada that promotes interculturalism as an approach to integration and cross-cultural understanding. Broadly speaking, Quebec's vision and policy of interculturalism propose a model of integration that aims to ensure the continuity of the francophone identity and culture, while still respecting minority cultures, that is, diversity, and the contributions they make to modern Quebec society.

In 1990, a policy statement on immigration and integration entitled “Let's Build Quebec Together” set the parameters of Quebec's policy of interculturalism. Developed by the Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion of Quebec, the document reaffirms that interculturalism and adapting institutions to the values of diversity and reasonable accommodation are key parts of Quebec's approach to integration.

As the Prime Minister often says, “we are strong not in spite of our differences, but because of them.” As many scholars and academics have noted, linguistic duality is at the heart of our Canadian values of inclusiveness and diversity. Accommodating two languages has fostered greater openness in Canadian society toward other cultures. The Official Languages Act and the Canadian Multiculturalism Act go hand in hand in defining the values that Canada represents on the world stage.

[*Translation*]

In 2021, we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of Canada's multiculturalism policy, which was introduced in the House of Commons by former prime minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau. This will be an opportunity to remember who we are and what unites us.

It is important and, indeed, crucial to note that multiculturalism and interculturalism are not incompatible. They are not really opposites. One does not exclude the other. Both attach great importance to integrating and respecting common civic and democratic values, and both have been invaluable to Canada's social fabric since the 1970s.

● (1110)

I would add that Canada's federal multiculturalism policy is flexible enough to allow for the two concepts, multiculturalism and interculturalism, to coexist. It is very important for the Government of Canada that Canadians in all provinces and territories act in accordance with the country's core values, such as openness to diversity, inclusion and respect for others. In that regard, multiculturalism, like our official languages, is often perceived to be a fundamental social pillar that the government is committed to defending and promoting.

Bill C-226 reminds us that Quebeckers form a nation and therefore possess all the tools and power needed to define their identity and protect three common and essential values, namely, the protection of the French language, the separation of church and state and gender equality. For those reasons, the member for Montcalm is suggesting that the Canadian Multiculturalism Act should not apply to Quebec. However, if we analyze the federal legislation carefully, we see that those three principles hold a very important, and even fundamental, place in it.

First, the application of the act does not exclude the protection of the French language. Immigrant heritage languages cannot be enhanced, as suggested in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, without strengthening the status and use of both official languages. What is more, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, like the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, guarantees freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, while ensuring those freedoms are not endangered.

Second, because of this interpretation of pluralism, which is based on reasonable accommodation, the federal government has the ability to maintain the neutrality of the state, since it does not favour majority religious beliefs over minority ones.

The Multiculturalism Act repeatedly points to gender equality as a fundamental principle of Canadian society. Exempting Quebec from the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, as called for in Bill C-226, could have major consequences.

It would reduce access to the multiculturalism funding program by Quebec's ethnocultural and religious communities. Exempting Quebec from the Multiculturalism Act would also compromise the federal government's ability to promote a consistent shared set of national values and support the overall objectives of the act. Passage of this bill will most certainly lead to discussions about competing anti-multiculturalism ideologies across the country, which is hardly desirable.

This bill is also an attempt to undermine the application of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in Quebec, given that section 17 of the charter officially refers to multiculturalism as a Canadian value. The bill is actually trying to do this without invoking the section 33 notwithstanding clause, which requires an official request by the province. I would note that the Government of Quebec has made no such request.

I will conclude by reminding the House that the position put forward by Bill C-226 is not supported by all Quebeckers and all Quebec governments. In 2017, the Quebec government published an official document that outlines its vision of itself within Canada. The document, entitled “Policy on Québec Affirmation and Canadian Relations”, remains current and has been endorsed by two successive governments. It states, “Québec has been able to grow and develop its national identity within the Canadian federal framework.” This clearly implies that the Canadian Multiculturalism Act is not impeding Quebec or its development in any way.

● (1115)

The Canadian Multiculturalism Act makes Canada a stronger, more united and more inclusive country, and it must be protected.

[*English*]

Whichever way we cut it, we are a country of minorities. This reality, and the awareness of this reality, is what gives us, as Canadians, our wise perspective, a perspective that in my view is the recipe for success in the postmodern world. It is what keeps us from the—

The Deputy Speaker: We will have to leave it there. The time is just over the expiry of the hon. member's time.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to say how much I appreciate Quebec, its culture and its people.

Quebec makes an enormous contribution to Canadian culture. I understand that some Bloc members doe not really like multiculturalism, but I personally believe that Canadian multiculturalism helps Quebeckers preserve their culture and share it with the rest of the country.

As a result of Canada's openness to different cultures, including French culture, we have French-language schools across the country, including in my riding of Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan in Alberta.

My riding also has English-language, Christian and other educational institutions, which offer students a diverse range of educational options. Having other schools does not have a negative impact on our local French-language school, because all these schools coexist.

We can say the same thing about the global culture of Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan. My riding has a diverse population with people of different backgrounds, but we stand united behind our Albertan and Canadian identity while maintaining personal cultural traditions. That is multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism is not new to Canada. There are hundreds of indigenous nations in Canada. The French and the British arrived later in this country, followed by other Europeans. We were already a multicultural people before Confederation, and when Canada was founded, people started to share their nationalities with others from different cultures and religions. It goes without saying that this process was not seamless, but we must accept that a multicultural society is not a utopia.

Nothing in this world is perfect, but I believe that the advantages of a multicultural society outweigh the disadvantages. I support the principle of pluralism, which is a political philosophy holding that people of different beliefs, backgrounds and lifestyles can coexist in the same society and participate equally in the political process. I believe that Canada is an example of a successful pluralism, in which people from all cultures, beliefs, faiths, races and sexual orientations are proud to call themselves Canadians.

As some may know, multiculturalism is something I am passionate about. Quite often I feel like we underestimate it both in terms of what it demands of us and the possibilities it represents. Multiculturalism can be challenging when it calls on us to live with and understand things that are unfamiliar to us, but it also provides us an enriching opportunity to have a deeper and intimate understanding of a much broader range of human experiences that we get through different cultures and traditions.

In a society with limited diversity, we would be ignorant without knowing it. In a more diverse society, ignorance can lead to moments of discomfort, but those moments of discomfort can give us the opportunity to learn and grow if they are associated with grace and humility.

When diversity leads to learning and growth we end up with a society where we all know much more about the world around us, one where we can not only savour all sorts of differences, but where our thoughts and conversations can be imbued with the wisdom of teachers and statesmen around the world.

The creation of this type of multicultural society that works has value and presents tremendous opportunities.

Multiculturalism and the knowledge that is gained from it can make us better artists and philosophers, better able to search for individual and collective happiness because we have access to more data, thanks to our personal relationships and conversations. Multiculturalism can help us resolve more problems by applying various problem-solving techniques, allowing us to become unique world leaders who use our cultural understanding to negotiate peace agreements that previously would have been unimaginable. Finally, multiculturalism is an opportunity to create wealth through our ability to engage in respectful trade with countries from all over the globe without being intimidated or manipulated.

● (1120)

There is a lot more we need to know to practise multiculturalism properly, but the knowledge that we gain about other cultures along the way will help us to do much more than simply avoid offence. When we do not understand a culture, it is easy to make erroneous snap judgments and engage in xenophobia. It is important to be open-minded when trying to understand people. If we do not, we will never have a successful, diverse society. That is why diversity of opinion is so critical. It enables members of an ethnically diverse society to co-exist and understand each other.

I would like to take a moment to talk about the Canadian Multiculturalism Act and explain why it is important that it apply to all of Canada, including Quebec.

The purpose of the act is to preserve and enhance Canada's cultural diversity. It was introduced in 1971 with the hope that it would guarantee the cultural freedom of all Canadians.

Freedom is a Canadian value. I am someone who values freedom, and that is one of the reasons why I am opposing this Bloc Québécois bill today.

I always oppose attacks on freedom. That is why I am also against Bill C-10. The government says that Bill C-10 seeks to advance diversity, but, in my opinion, freedom of expression is essential to do that.

Quite frankly, I am concerned about the repercussions on religious minorities if the Canadian Multiculturalism Act does not apply in Quebec.

Discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities is a problem in all regions of Canada. Conservatives understand the constitutional jurisdictions of each level of government, but we will always act within the federal jurisdiction to protect minority rights.

I do think it is important to recognize that the discourse on the issue of multiculturalism is a little different in Quebec than in other provinces. Given that Quebec francophones are a minority in Canada, I can understand why they want to protect their culture and especially their language.

Unlike some members, my Conservative Party colleagues and I recognize that the French language in Quebec is in decline, and this issue must be addressed. However, unlike some other members, I do not believe that assimilating minority communities or opposing multiculturalism are effective responses to this problem.

The fact is that many immigrants who settle in Quebec speak French, especially those from Haiti, Africa, Morocco and Algeria and from Middle Eastern countries such as Lebanon. All these cultures are proud of their French while maintaining their cultural and religious traditions.

Multiculturalism can be a major asset for Quebec when it comes to attracting new francophone immigrants and strengthening the presence of French in North America.

I would now like to briefly address the issue of religion in this debate because it appears in the preamble to the bill. I understand that when an individual or community has a negative experience with a religious organization, that causes pain and a desire to get as far away as possible from the source of that pain. However, hypothetically, repression in the name of secularism can happen too and can be just as harmful as repression in the name of a given religion.

I believe that the political community should focus on freedom, pluralism and freedom of religion. I do not think the state should impose a particular point of view on religious matters or practices. That is the real idea behind the separation of church and state. The idea is not about actively marginalizing people for practising their faith; it is about giving people the ability to decide what they believe in and how they interpret these beliefs.

Multiculturalism and pluralism are an expression of the universal human desire for freedom of choice and freedom to seek the truth on fundamental issues without interference from the state. Multiculturalism is important and must not be exercised at the expense of Quebec's rich culture. I think it can even improve Quebec culture, especially with respect to the French language and the fact that more immigrants speak French.

● (1125)

Although I am in favour of preserving Quebec's rich culture, I do not support a bill that could wind up leading to cultural assimilation. We need to work on improving multiculturalism—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Jonquière.

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I gather from my colleagues' speeches that they will not be supporting the bill. Many of them constantly repeat that they recognize Quebec's nationhood. Unfortunately, now that it is time to put their money where their mouth is, it is radio silence.

Before I begin, I would like to review the origins of multiculturalism. The scene is 1960s Quebec, at the dawn of the Quiet Revolution, as Jean Lesage makes an important statement: the Quebec state will be the driving force of our emancipation. By saying this, Lesage creates a specific political context in which Quebec now has not only a unique cultural identity, but a political vision as well.

This frightens the federal government. In 1963, Lester B. Pearson attempts to bring Quebeckers back on side by proposing the concept of two founding peoples. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, also known as the Laurendeau-Dunton commission, is convened with the mandate of recommending what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races.

What happened to biculturalism and bilingualism after that? Biculturalism fell by the wayside, and Canada became a bilingual, multicultural country. Biculturalism disappeared because it offered recognition to Quebec and gave it the leverage to become a genuinely distinct society, a prospect that has always frightened federalists. For a federalist, there is only one identity possible, and that is the collective Canadian identity.

That does not work for us, not because we reject ethnocultural diversity, but because we have a different identity. This has been shown to be the case many times over the years, during two unsuccessful rounds of constitutional negotiations, as well as in the report of the Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences, also known as the Bouchard-Taylor commission.

I do not know what is going on in the federalist camp, but it does not appear to hear us when we bring up such issues. The Laurendeau-Dunton commission was one of the first rebuffs that Quebec suffered, predating those of the constitutional negotiations. It was the first time Quebec was refused distinct status. Remember this, because I will come back to it later.

It is also essential to understand that multiculturalism has two components: an institutional policy, meaning the multiculturalism we see here, and a liberal theory. The Prime Minister once said that Canada is a postnational state, a phrase he borrowed from thinkers like Will Kymlicka and James Tully. I do not know if he understood what they were saying, but, for these thinkers, multiculturalism involves recognizing not only ethnocultural diversity, but national minorities as well.

Not once has Canadian multiculturalism as it is laid out in our legislation even come close to recognizing national minorities, such as the Quebec national minority and the indigenous national minorities. Over time, it has developed a system of integration that means that if every culture ends up being recognized, none of them really are.

Multiculturalism recognizes different cultures, but not to the point of giving them any real political power. Will Kymlicka, the leading theorist of multiculturalism, divides minorities into two types. Cultural minorities demand recognition, which they are entitled to receive, as they do in Quebec. National minorities demand political autonomy.

The federal government will never be willing to consider the issue. It would rather dismiss it out of hand, since it would mean Quebec would have distinct status and indigenous nations would have a separate government. The federal government has never been interested in moving in that direction.

● (1130)

In my opinion, it is simple: Quebeckers reject multiculturalism. That was proven by the Bouchard-Taylor commission. We are not opposed to diversity, but multiculturalism means denying our nationhood. It offers us no recognition or guarantees.

What really bothers me is that federalists do not understand the principle of duality. As Quebeckers and francophones, we exist as a minority in a sea of anglophones. We need policies to protect us in that specific context. The system of ethnocultural minority integration does not do that.

To add insult to injury, today we are being told that, because Quebecers reject multiculturalism, that must mean they are fundamentally against ethnocultural minorities. That is not true.

I mentioned the Laurendeau-Dunton commission earlier. Canada began recognizing diversity in 1963. I recommend that my colleagues in the House read a short book by Hubert Aquin entitled *The Cultural Fatigue of French Canada*. It was published in 1962, but the author was already writing that Quebec is a polyethnic society with a different culture. That was the foundation for what is still happening today: a pillar of integration in Quebec is that the integration is carried out in French.

Earlier, my colleague said that a secular state is one of the worst violations of individual freedoms. It is important that a state be secular. I do not think that the French are against ethnocultural minorities or that they are hostile to freedom, yet France is a strongly secular state. Secularism is another very important pillar of Quebec's identity.

I was forgetting language, which is essential. Integration in Quebec must be carried out in French. These three pillars can be found in Quebec's policy, which is an interculturalism policy. The House could do something bold and commendable by recognizing that Quebec is a minority nation in Canada, a nation that needs safeguards and protections and that may need its own model of integration.

According to Gérard Bouchard, a co-chair of the Bouchard-Taylor commission and professor emeritus at my alma mater, the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, the interculturalist model of integration is probably the most appropriate system for Quebec's circumstances. Why? Because it recognizes duality and the arrival of ethnocultural minorities, but it also recognizes that there is a national minority and that, if this national minority wants to survive and move forward with its own political projects, it must have a form of integration that suits its identity.

Unfortunately, multiculturalism does not do that today. Not only does it not do that, but it is a constant reminder that, at a time when Canada could have recognized us, it rejected us instead. Canada preferred to adopt biculturalism, the idea that there are two founding peoples. It preferred to adopt this idea, only to eventually set it aside and turn to multiculturalism. This integration policy constantly reminds us that we are in some way second-class citizens in the Canadian federation.

I think that the best thing my colleagues could do is to right a historical wrong against us, recognize that multiculturalism should not apply in Quebec and agree that interculturalism is the right policy for Quebecers.

● (1135)

Ms. Annie Koutrakis (Vimy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak to Bill C-226, which was introduced by the hon. member for Montcalm.

The bill seeks the support of the House for an amendment to the Canadian Multiculturalism Act to provide that it does not apply in Quebec. Bill C-226 states that Quebecers form a nation and therefore possess all the tools needed to define their identity and protect their common values, including as regards the protection of the French language, the separation of state and religion and gender equality. The bill also implies that observing Canada's version of multiculturalism would now allow for compliance with these three basic principles, and that therefore this federal law should not apply in Quebec.

Since the Canada's multiculturalism policy was introduced in 1971, many Quebec political scientists and then several premiers have asserted that the federal multiculturalism policy is unsuited to the majority francophone province and that there could be no dissociation between culture and language in Quebec. The enactment of the Charter of the French Language, or Bill 101, in 1977 crystallized the differences between the Canadian and Quebec models. According to some, Canada's concept of citizenship, which is multicultural, bilingual and open to other heritage immigrant languages, conflicts with the protection of the French language in Quebec and interculturalism.

Clearly, Quebec's vision of society involves the protection of the French language and culture. More than that, it recognizes that Quebec society constitutes a unique cultural and linguistic minority, often described as endangered in North America. For many francophones in Quebec, Bill 101 addressed the concern that the absence of a strong language law asserting the primacy of French would lead newcomers to choose to integrate into the more attractive anglophone community because of its demographic weight and to preserve their identity. Quebec nationalism owes much to this fear of decline. For many francophones in Quebec, the promotion of cultural equality proposed in multiculturalism would diminish the importance of French and English contributions to the Canadian Confederation and undermine the development of the francophonie in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada.

It must be said that Quebec nationalism was greatly strengthened by the statement made in the House by prime minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau in 1971 when he introduced the policy of multiculturalism, specifically giving immigrants the choice to learn either official language and fully integrate into Canadian society. For a majority of Quebeckers, this free choice was incompatible with the cultural and linguistic specificity of Quebec.

This situation was corrected in 1978 under the Cullen-Couture agreement, when the Government of Canada granted Quebec the responsibility of choosing its economic immigrants, giving the province an additional tool for integrating newcomers and protecting francophone culture. In 1981, with the large influx of immigrants, the Government of Quebec proposed a policy of cultural convergence entitled "Autant de façons d'être Québécois" or "Québécois – Each and Every One". Its principal objective was to "ensure the maintenance and development of cultural communities and their specificities, make French-speaking Quebecers aware of the contribution of cultural communities to our common heritage and finally promote the integration of cultural communities in Quebec society and especially in sectors where they are particularly underrepresented".

Several researchers and analysts pointed out that the Government of Quebec's program policies that have been developed since the 1980s to promote the development of the province's ethno-cultural communities are an awful lot like multiculturalism in a francophone context and therefore similar to what the federal government itself had proposed 10 years earlier in 1971.

● (1140)

In 1988, the preamble of the Multiculturalism Act reiterated the primacy of human rights and gender equality and the importance of fighting all forms of racial discrimination.

The act reasserts the country's official bilingualism, which has been governed by the Official Languages Act since 1969, by emphasizing the importance of expanding the use of official languages to ensure their development.

The Canadian Multiculturalism Act also reaffirms freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, freedoms that cannot be violated. This interpretation of religious pluralism has led many experts to conclude that this system de facto supported the separation of church and state.

In many ways, Bill C-226 and the Canadian Multiculturalism Act are based on similar parameters, which must be enhanced and promoted. That is also the view of the authors of the Bouchard-Taylor commission's 2007-08 final report on reasonable accommodation in Quebec. They said that this truncated version of multiculturalism was essentially a caricature and it may have led its critics in Quebec to conclude that Canada's multicultural model had not evolved in Canada since its adoption and that it was incompatible with the Quebec model.

The authors of the report state that in Quebec "multiculturalism is presented as though it solely takes into account recognition and affirmation of difference with no regard for integrating elements such as the teaching of national languages and intercultural exchange programs."

[*English*]

Canadian multiculturalism is obviously not a model that is immutable and fixed in time. Its flexibility allows not only for the integration and enhancement of the common values and founding principles of Canadian society, such as official bilingualism, human rights and the principle of reasonable accommodation, but also for the development of programs and tools adapted to the new realities of Canadian society.

In the most recent Speech from the Throne, the government defined the Canada of today and tomorrow, and in articulated the main Canadian values of reconciliation, the fight against systemic racism, the protection of official languages, the welcoming of immigrants and the strategic positioning of Canada in the world. In that text, the government also recognized the particular situation of French in the country and its intention to protect and promote French, not only outside Quebec, but also in Quebec.

This is a strong commitment by the federal government. These overall values and objectives also find a prominent place in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act. A multicultural Canada is not incompatible with the future of a French-speaking Quebec and the flexibility of the laws that govern our country also allow Quebec to flourish.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate.

Seeing none, I will now invite the hon. member for Montcalm for his five-minute right of reply.

The member for Montcalm.

● (1145)

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when I introduced this bill in the previous legislature, it elicited contempt. There were 10 Bloc Québécois members in the House at the time, but now there are 32. The contempt has turned into the following question:

Why should multiculturalism not apply in Quebec?

It is because Quebec constitutes a nation; a nation that is still French-speaking on American soil; a nation that I deeply love for its talents, creativity, and resourcefulness; a proud, welcoming, engaging nation; a close-knit and diverse nation. It is a nation open to difference because it is itself in search of recognition and respect for its own difference. It is a nation that has the right to say that it wants to base its way of living together in society and the harmonization of diversity on three fundamental principles: gender equality, the separation of state and religion, and French as the common language in the public space.

The federalist parties like to confuse cultural diversity with multiculturalism. Diversity is a fact of modern societies; Canadian multiculturalism is a political ideology that will slowly but surely lead to the assimilation of francophones. Although many federalist members of Parliament consider multiculturalism an incontestable virtue, it is more of a state dogma, a political ideology imposed on Quebec in the 1970s and enshrined in 1982 in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Constitution, which we never signed. This federal dogma managed only to juxtapose a multitude of cultural solitudes and ghettoize difference. On this, Boucar Diouf writes the following:

> It is impossible to live together without truly embodying the word "together". Multiculturalism is much more like living side by side and harbouring frustrations with one another, with results that fall far short of the ideal presented by politicians.

I have just heard from the politicians.

The model might work for Canadians. In an anglophone country on an anglophone continent, new immigrants will naturally want to integrate in English. As my colleague from Joliette pointed out in a previous debate on this issue, even great English-Canadian thinkers like Kymlicka and Kallen agree that multiculturalism, while it might be good for English Canada, cannot work in Quebec, because natural integration is done by the majority, dominant society and not by a minority nation. Francophones are a minority in Canada, and represent only 2% of the population of a majority English-speaking continent. Why would newcomers want to integrate into a continental minority?

The truth is that multiculturalism rejects the idea of a common culture, encouraging the coexistence of multiple cultures side by side. It favours cohabitation based on indifference rather than on recognition and the respect of differences, which invariably leads to the ghettoization of cultures. That is why it is important that Quebec have as much leeway as possible to apply its own integration and citizenship policy.

Clearly, only independence will give us enough leeway to put an end to this confusion. After independence, a newcomer who chooses to come to Quebec will no longer be coming to a Canadian province, but to a francophone country. Until then, however, Quebec must be exempted from the Canadian Multiculturalism Act. Quebec must have all of the tools it needs to integrate newcomers and help them integrate into Quebec.

I invite all those who recognize the Quebec nation on more than a symbolic level, who cherish Quebec culture and the Quebec identity, to support this bill, which will allow Quebec to choose its own integration model. When it comes to interculturalism, cultural convergence or a common cultural core, it is up to Quebec to decide.

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, the question is on the motion.

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

The hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou.

● (1150)

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Mr. Speaker, we request a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to the order adopted on Monday, January 25, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 9, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Deputy Speaker: It being 11:50 a.m., the House is now suspended until noon.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:50 a.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 12 p.m.)

* * *

● (1200)

[*English*]

POINTS OF ORDER

BILL C-10—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now ready to rule on the multiple points of order raised on Friday regarding the time allocation motion for the committee stage of Bill C-10, an act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other acts.

Immediately after the motion was moved, the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands asked whether a motion of instruction was not a more appropriate way for the House to direct the work of a committee.

Speaker's Ruling

The Assistant Deputy Speaker indicated that the time-allocated motion was in order.

The member for Lethbridge then argued that the time allotted under the terms of the motion was insufficient, as all previous examples of time allocations under Standing Order 78(3) at the committee stage had been up to 10 further hours, while the present motion provided only five additional hours. As the standing order provides that the amount of time allocated may not be less than one sitting day, and since committees do not have standard sitting days the way the House does, she contended that the House should be guided by past practices and allot at least 10 further hours.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker repeated that the motion was in order and that she would return with a more detailed ruling after the 30-minute period for questions and comments.

This was followed by multiple points of order by many members who continued to challenge the admissibility of the motion and the approach the Chair was taking. These continued until the House began Statements by Members, and resumed after question period until the House began Private Members' Business.

[*Translation*]

There are four points I would like to address in relation to this matter. The first is whether this time allocation motion is in order. The second concerns the manner in which the Chair considers points of order before coming to a decision. The third relates to respect for the Chair's authority. Finally, I would like to address the status of the time allocation motion, on which proceedings were not concluded.

First, it is clear to the Chair that it is possible to move a time allocation motion in relation to the committee stage of a bill. As the member for Lethbridge acknowledged, there are three previous examples of such motions under Standing Order 78(3) for bills before standing or legislative committees, all of which providing for 10 additional hours of study by the said committees. Time allocation was invoked under the terms of Standing Order 78(3)(a) for the purpose of setting a deadline, and I quote:

> …in respect of proceedings at the stage at which a public bill was then under consideration either in the House or in any committee…for the purpose of allotting a specified number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at that stage; provided that the time allotted for any stage is not to be less than one sitting day...

[*English*]

The standing order makes no distinction between the stages of a bill, except for the possibility of moving one motion to cover the proceedings at both the report and the third stages. Moreover, while it is possible to allot a specific number of hours or days for the consideration of a stage, the minimum length of time is expressed in sitting days.

Speaker's Ruling

The member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan argued that the Chair should look at the times at which committee meetings are normally organized in the course of a day, suggesting that this could be more than 12 hours. An argument could even be made that the usual length of most committee meetings is two hours. Truth be told, while the House is set to meet and to adjourn, this is not the case in committees. Thus, the Chair can only conclude that the intention was indeed to specifically refer to the length of a sitting of the House.

● (1205)

What, then, is the equivalent of a sitting day when a motion is expressed in hours?

In a ruling made on June 18, 2012, a previous Speaker, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, offered a historical review on the application of Standing Order 78. In his conclusion, he stated that the average length of time for the consideration of Government Orders in a typical week is approximately 4.7 hours per day, and that accordingly a motion allotting a rounded-up number of five hours was the equivalent of a sitting day. There have been multiple examples of time allocation motions under Standing Order 78(3) allotting five hours for the second reading stage, for report stage and for third reading stage.

For all these reasons, the Chair does not see why the committee stage would be any different. I therefore rule that the motion is in keeping with the requirements of Standing Order 78(3).

[*Translation*]

The member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan expressed concerns that the motion would prevent him from proposing amendments in committee that he considers important. Indeed, one of the consequences of a time allocation motion may be that certain amendments and arguments will not be presented at the committee consideration stage of a bill. In fact, the Standing Orders provide for such situations. It is not for the Chair to consider the consequences of a motion properly before the House. That is a decision for the House. The Chair's role is limited to determining whether the motion is in order.

[*English*]

The second point I wish to address is the power of the Chair in relation to points of order.

Some members argued on Friday that the Chair is required to hear as many points of order as are raised, even equating a failure to do so with censorship or a suspension of the Standing Orders. Certain members also asserted that the Chair is required to give reasons for decisions, and that a failure to do so immediately enables members to continue questioning the Chair’s ruling. This is not the case.

[*Translation*]

In a ruling given on June 4, 2018, at page 20170 of the Debates, my predecessor, the member for Halifax West, stated, and I quote:

> It is well established that when making a case on either questions of privilege or points of order, members are expected to make brief presentations on the issue being raised. The Chair, once satisfied that sufficient information has been given, may inform the member accordingly....
>
> Acting Speaker Devolin explained this well on June 13, 2012, at page 9374 of the Debates, when he stated, “...the floor is not the members' until they choose to stop. The Speaker has a right to terminate that discussion....That is left to the judgment of the Speaker.” This is to say that members do not have unlimited time to speak.
>
> Additionally, once the Speaker has ruled or determined that sufficient information has been presented, it is not in keeping with our practices that members use new points of order, for it can be perceived as undermining and questioning the authority of the Chair.

This makes clear that the Speaker has the authority to decide how long to listen to an intervention in order to ascertain the argument being made. The Speaker can also decide how many points of order to hear on a matter before closing the discussion. Members do not have an unfettered right to raise as many points of order as they want for as long as they want.

● (1210)

[*English*]

I wish to especially insist on this point in the context of our hybrid sittings. By activating their own microphones, members can interrupt the proceedings, cancelling out the audio of the members duly recognized, and making it impossible for the interpreters to do their work. When the Chair has indicated that a decision has been made and the discussion is over, members are expected to respect the statement and not persist in raising points of order.

When considering a point of order, the Chair may rule right away or take the matter under advisement and return with a decision later. However, it is also possible for the Chair to provide an immediate ruling and return with more detailed reasoning at a later time.

For example, on March 21, 2007, Speaker Milliken ruled that an opposition motion on the Notice Paper was out of order, returning with a more detailed explanation as to why on March 29, 2007. An even closer parallel would be on June 12, 2012, when the Deputy Speaker heard several points of order in the middle of the question and comment period on a time allocation motion. She gave a brief ruling at the end of the period, allowing the vote on the motion to proceed, with the Speaker providing a more expansive ruling on July 18, 2012. This is the ruling I referenced earlier about the length of a sitting day. Therefore, it was perfectly acceptable for the Assistant Deputy Speaker to proceed as she did on Friday.

[*Translation*]

This brings me to my third point, about the need to respect the authority of the Chair. The Speaker is elected by members to apply and enforce the rules that members themselves have adopted to govern the conduct of business in the House. In this, I am assisted by the three other Chair occupants, but to carry out our work, we rely on the support, co-operation and good will of all members.

House of Commons Procedure and Practice, third edition, reminds us at page 641 that, and I quote: “Once the decision is rendered, the matter is no longer open to debate or discussion and the ruling may not be appealed.” It also states, at page 620, and I quote: “Reflections must not be cast in debate on the conduct of the Speaker or other Presiding Officers. It is unacceptable to question the integrity and impartiality of a Presiding Officer.”

[*English*]

The tone of debate has recently taken a turn for the worse. This past week, both sides of the House openly challenged rulings of the Chair. On Friday, derogatory remarks toward the Chair were heard. I recognize that there are moments when tensions run high and when disagreements are strong. However, disregard for our rules and established practices is not only disrespectful to those entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining order and decorum in deciding procedural questions, it is also disrespectful to the House as a whole.

On March 14, 2008, in a similar context, Speaker Milliken said, at page 4183 of the Debates:

> Like all Canadians, and indeed all hon. members, I realize and respect that political exigencies often dictate the strategies adopted by parties in the House. However, as your Speaker, I appeal to those to whom the management of the business of the Parliament has been entrusted—the House leaders and the whips of all parties—to take leadership on this matter....I ask them to work together to find a balance that will allow the parties to pursue their political objectives and will permit all members to carry on their work. I am confident that working together in good faith they can come to an agreement that will return us to the equilibrium that our procedures and practices have been designed to protect.

● (1215)

[*Translation*]

I come now to my final point, which concerns the status of the time allocation motion moved Friday. For the first two decades of their existence, time allocation motions were subject to a two-hour debate. However, since 1991, such motions are no longer subject to debate. In 2001, following a recommendation of the Special Committee on the Modernization and Improvement of the Procedures of the House of Commons, the House instituted a 30-minute question and comment period when a time allocation motion is moved under Standing Order 78(3). The intent of this change was to promote accountability and to require the government to justify its decision. This change did not, however, render a time allocation motion debatable, set down on the Order Paper and carried over from sitting to sitting. It is to be decided forthwith, meaning immediately, that is, during the sitting in which it is moved.

Time allocation motions and closure motions are non-debatable motions where the question is not put on them right away because of the 30-minute question and comment period. What then is to be done when the House cannot complete this period?

[*English*]

The Chair has looked at a variety of precedents. On March 7, 2012, the House began a question and comment period at approximately 5:10 p.m. Proceedings were not interrupted at 5:30 p.m., but instead continued until 30 minutes were completed. On April 30, 2015, the question and comment period was interrupted for the first time in order to proceed to Statements by Members. In so doing, the Acting Speaker stated that he was only doing so as there would be an opportunity to complete the proceedings after Oral Questions. On June 6, 2017, the Speaker interrupted the proceedings at 5:30 p.m. to move to Private Members' Business, but the sitting hours had been extended and there was an opportunity to return to the motion later that day.

In those cases, the House resumed the question and comment period where it had left off, completed it and proceeded to the vote. Friday was the first occasion where the proceedings were interrupted for Private Members' Business and the House had no opportunity to resume the question and comment period before adjourning. In the future, the question and comment period on a time allocation motion or closure motion will be interrupted only if there is an opportunity to conclude proceedings in the same sitting. Where this is not possible, the House will continue with proceedings until a decision is made on the motion.

The Chair's role, as I said earlier, is to apply the rules the House itself has adopted. The House has provided for the time allocation motions on bills, including at committee stage, and has provided that they are to be decided forthwith after a question and comment period of 30 minutes. In the case of this motion, the appropriate notice was given, the form of the motion respects our Standing Orders, the motion was duly moved and seconded and the question and comment period began. So far, six and a half minutes have been used in that period. The appropriate course of action is now to conclude the remaining 23 and a half minutes and then proceed with a vote.

I thank the members for their attention.

Questions and comments.

● (1220)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do apologize, but reflecting on the events of the day in question, first, I wish to thank you for the clarity you provided. I was the first to rise on a point of order, because, as the motion was read out, and based on the quick research I was able to do before we began, it seemed to me that the motion was not in conformity with the Standing Orders for a motion to instruct a committee. However, I did immediately accept the Speaker's ruling.

The difficulty before us, Mr. Speaker, if you check the record, is that I do not believe we can say six and a half minutes elapsed, because I was not able to hear anything from the questions or the comments that were being put to the hon. minister. I respectfully think we should restart the clock with the full 30 minutes, because this is a rather important matter. There are important motions that the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith has before the committee in clause-by-clause.

The effect of passing this motion on Bill C-10 may be to preempt putting forward important amendments that could improve the bill. I do think it requires a full debate. I do not wish to dispute anything you have said, but I think, if you check the record, we did not have six and a half minutes of usable, comprehensible questions and answers.

The Speaker: I do rely on the information that is given to me by the table, and they do keep track of time. If the member does not mind, I will consult with the table for a moment before making a decision on that.

I want to thank the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, but a decision has been made and, in all fairness, it was done with the information we have. It is final and we will continue.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

BROADCASTING ACT

BILL C-10—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

The House resumed from June 4 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since coming to power, the government keeps saying over and over again that committees are independent and the government can never interfere with a committee. This government motion means that it recognizes the existence of the standing order that has been used on three occasions. The government is using its power to interfere directly in the work of committees, although it keeps saying the opposite. It is odd that some opposition parties agree with the government on the issue of closure, since that is what we are talking about now. The government wants to muzzle parliamentarians. The fact that some opposition parties are okay with this is beyond comprehension.

I remember when I was at the National Assembly, I was advocating for stricter measures regarding the red squares, but I denounced the fact that we were put under a gag order. That was why I even suggested that question period be suspended so that the premier could go and speak with the student leaders who had come to the National Assembly.

My question to the government is very simple. Why invoke closure on a bill that clearly attacks freedom of expression?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his question. I will remind him that the motion is before the House and that it is the House of Commons, and not the government, that will make the decision.

Why did we proceed in this fashion? I tried to answer this question last week, but I will try again. During the first four Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage meetings where Bill C-10 was being studied, the committee made it through 79 amendments. In the 11 subsequent meetings, when the Conservative Party began filibustering, the committee was able to review and vote on only seven amendments. If the committee can resume its initial pace, there is ample time to get through all of the amendments still before it.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, back in 2015, I recall the Liberals saying that they would change practices, that they be more open in Parliament and allow for more of the fulsome debate that they saw being denied under the former Harper government. It is important to note that this manoeuvre that the government has put into place is something that even the Harper government did not try. We are talking about new ground with respect to not allowing the kind of debate that is so important.

I will be voting against this closure motion, because it would not allow the appropriate fixes to be made to the bill. When we look at it, the reality is that this has been a communications disaster. The minister has not clearly communicated, he has contradicted himself and has badly explained parts of the bill.

Is that not the real reason the Liberals are invoking this unprecedented closure motion? Is it not because the communications around Bill C-10 have been a disaster?

● (1225)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question. I have a lot of respect for him but, in all honesty, I am a little surprised by the NDP's position on this matter.

Thousands of artists across the country signed a petition. The signers include francophone artists, anglophone artists, indigenous artists, and artists from racialized communities, as well as cultural organizations like the Canadian Independent Music Association, which testified before the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. Like many other organizations, CIMA, which is headed by a former member of the NDP, is asking that we pass Bill C-10 as soon as possible.

However, the NDP is siding with the Conservatives to deprive artists of $70 million a month. I never thought I would see such a thing. I am speechless.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, using time allocation to speed up our work is a drastic measure that should be used sparingly.

However, it was the right choice for Bill C-10. Dozens of amendments have been adopted. The Bloc Québécois critic was extremely effective and had several amendments adopted that greatly improved this bill.

We cannot allow the Conservatives to block this bill and jeopardize the future of our cultural sector. It is important because every week spent debating represents the loss of millions of dollars. Quebec's cultural sector and Quebeckers are calling for this bill to be passed before the end of the session. That is why we agreed to proceed in this way.

I have a simple question for the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons. Should time allocation motions continue to be used only in exceptional circumstances?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the question. I completely agree with him on the significant support for this bill in Quebec and across the country. In Quebec, the National Assembly unanimously called for the adoption of Bill C-10, deeming it a major step forward for the artistic and cultural sector.

To quickly answer my hon. colleague's question, I think that time allocation motions remain exceptional measures that we use in exceptional circumstances.

[*English*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister, this is offensive to intrude on committee work. We have a fiction in this place that the committee is the master of its own destiny. It is increasingly a fiction from the day when, in the previous government, Stephen Harper instructed that every committee pass an identical motion that affected people such as members of Parliament in unrecognized parties, such as all Greens and independents, in that we were coerced to show up in committee 48 hours before clause-by-clause began. That process made a mockery of the notion that committee is the master of its own destiny and its own work. This intervention is another offence to this notion. This is the first time in more 20 years that this particular standing order was been utilized to get a committee to report back more quickly than it is normally able to do.

I do think that these principles matter. The irony here is that the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith who, within the Green caucus, carries the work on Bill C-10 and has done a tremendous amount of work, is right now in clause-by-clause in the heritage committee on Bill C-10 and cannot be here to defend his right to put forward every single amendment that we have worked on so hard.

I am sorry, but we have a bit of an interference—

● (1230)

The Deputy Speaker: An hon. member's audio is on, and I would ask that we try to cancel that.

We will go back to the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands to finish her question.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I sympathize enormously with the position the minister finds himself in. I was very uncomfortable moments ago in the ethics committee with how rudely he was being treated. It is inappropriate. However, for all of us in this place to operate with decorum and with respect for one another, this kind of motion on time allocation will do real damage to this place, not just today, not just tomorrow, but in the coming years, when we will find this used more and more to whip committees into shape. I ask the minister to think again and step back.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows of the friendship and admiration I have for her. I respectfully disagree.

Frankly, it is not about me, it is not about how rude some Conservative Party committee members have been either in the House or in committee, it is about artists. Every month that passes, we deprive our artists, musicians and technicians across the country of $70 million, every single month. Why? It is because we want some of the wealthiest companies in the world to pay their fair share. I just do not understand. Yes, it is an extraordinary measure, but these are extraordinary circumstances.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is quite absurd for the minister to suggest the only way he can help artists is by attacking freedom of speech. One of the problems with the debate that has happened on this bill at committee and elsewhere is that the minister has, frankly, not been able to answer some critical questions about the nature of the bill. We can understand why Canadians continue to have more questions when the minister is not answering them.

One question was asked of the minister by one of my colleagues, and I will re-ask it. Does the government give the CRTC the power to regulate social media algorithms through this bill? Many experts have said, yes, it does. When I asked this question at committee, the minister said it is not a "yes" and it is not a "no". What is it, then?

I will ask the minister again because it is very important for Canadians looking at this bill and coming to conclusions. Is the government giving the CRTC the power to regulate social media algorithms through this bill?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Mr. Speaker, I will use an analogy which my hon. colleague may understand. What we are interested in is the vehicle, the car, preferably electric, and how fast it can go. We are not particularly interested in what is happening under the hood.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, honestly, it is very unfortunate that it has come to this. We have been working on Bill C-10 in committee for months. Things have been going well for months. Actually, I should say things had been going well for months.

There was goodwill from all parties to move forward on this bill. Everyone agrees that it was not perfect at the start, but once we begin working on a bill in committee, we agree to move forward and improve it. That has not been the case for several weeks. In committee, our Conservative friends have been filibustering on the somewhat false basis that the bill could potentially violate freedom of expression.

Recently, on *Tout le monde en parle*, Quebec's most-watched Sunday program, the Minister of Canadian Heritage said that the cultural sector was losing about $70 million a month without this law. I do not know if the cultural sector is losing $30 million, $50 million, $70 million or $100 million a month without this law, but it has been on the losing end for years since the digital giants entered the market.

We must revisit, review and revamp this act, which is over 30 years old. We must pass Bill C-10. The Quebec National Assembly is unanimous on this. The time for games is over. We must move forward and work on this bill with all the goodwill we can muster.

How long does the minister think we will need to wait before passing a bill like Bill C-10 for our cultural community?

● (1235)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

He referred to an estimate put forward in committee by Canadian Heritage about the expected outcomes in terms of funding for the arts and culture sector from web giants. This would be around $830 million per year. If we do the math, we see that that is where the $70 million that the sector loses per month comes from.

I could not agree with him more that Bill C-10 must be passed as quickly as possible. That is what the cultural communities in Quebec and across the country are asking us to do. That is what the Quebec National Assembly wants, and that is what the majority of Canadians want too.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think it is too bad that it has come to this.

It all started with a botched bill, a job half done. It seems as though the Liberal government wants to continue to do things halfway when there are 34 important amendments left to consider.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage spoke about the importance of making web giants contribute. We agree with the principle of that. In fact, we voted in favour of the bill at second reading. That is not the issue.

We are currently debating the use of a gag order to deprive parliamentarians of their right to continue the work in committee. That is what we are talking about right now, not the principle of the bill or the contribution of web giants to help artists. Is there a reason this approach has been used only three times in this country's entire history?

Even Stephen Harper's Conservatives never dared to muzzle parliamentarians in this way. Why did the government reject the NDP's proposal to continue the work in committee so that we can correct and fix this bill?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Mr. Speaker, what we are hearing from the NDP is rather astounding given that ADISQ, the Coalition for the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the Union des artistes and many other organizations want this bill to pass quickly, saying that it is a good bill. The Quebec National Assembly has said that Bill C-10 should pass because it is a good bill.

The NDP is saying that it knows the subject better than anyone and that Bill C-10 is a bad bill. It is rather astounding. I would have expected that from the Conservatives, but I am amazed to hear it from the NDP.

If the committee can resume the same pace as before, there is ample time for it to adopt all the amendments presented, if it so chooses.

[*English*]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday was D-Day and Canadian men and women fought and died for the rights and freedoms that we are talking about today, including the freedom of speech. The minister is taking away not just the individual freedoms to post what people want, but in addition, shutting down debate here in Parliament and now infringing upon committees' rights.

Does he not appreciate the fact that people won these freedoms with their lives? Why is he trying to erode the freedoms and rights of individuals of Parliament and of the committees?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite and the Conservative Party of Canada know full well that Bill C-10 has nothing to do with content moderation and what people can and cannot post online. In fact, professional independent civil servants from the Department of Justice, including the deputy minister, came to committee to testify to that effect.

It looks to me like the Conservative Party is continuing to mislead Canadians deliberately or unwillingly. I do not understand. It is simply not true. I do not understand why the Conservative Party would not want to force Google, one of the wealthiest companies in the world, to pay its fair share for Canadian artists.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport-Côte-de-Beaupré-Île d'Orléans-Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let me just say how very proud I am of my leader, my colleague from Drummond and their position on Bill C-10.

I did not get into politics because of partisanship. I got into politics because I want to serve the people of Quebec and because I love our culture and the French language. I do not like partisan games. I have no interest in that. What I want is what is best for the people I serve.

What my colleague and my leader did was to put the best interests of Quebec culture ahead of partisanship. I think that is incredibly noble, and I applaud them for it.

I know closure is never a good thing. However, given that the people in the arts and culture sector who are suffering and who have been calling for this legislation for so many years are my friends, I cannot help but applaud the Bloc Québécois's position.

Does the government acknowledge that the Bloc Québécois has done excellent work in committee to improve the broadcasting bill and ensure it gets passed?

● (1240)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. I almost thought she was going to congratulate the Department of Canadian Heritage for its excellent work, but maybe next time.

She is quite familiar with the realities of artists since she is part of the arts and culture community. Who in Quebec could forget Pierre Lapointe's strong statement a few years ago pointing out how platforms like Spotify and YouTube pay our artists hardly anything?

That is exactly what we want to address with Bill C-10. We want these huge multinational corporations to pay their fair share. We are not asking them to do more than everyone else. We are simply asking them to pay their fair share, as Canadian broadcasters already do.

[*English*]

Ms. Lenore Zann (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to say congratulations to the Minister of Heritage because I, as a former artist for 33 years of my life, say good on him and I thank him so much. This is exactly what artists across Canada need. We just had the Juno awards last night and saw how much great talent there is in this beautiful country. As a former actor, I can say the actors union is behind this. We are all behind this. We are cheering the minister on and we want to get this passed as quickly as possible.

Could the minister please expand on why it is so important to get this done now?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Mr. Speaker, since the last time the Broadcasting Act was reformed, we have seen the important and ever-increasing role of platforms on the television, movie and certainly on the music side of things. Our laws and regulations simply have not adapted to this new environment, which is costing our artists, musicians and technicians tens of millions of dollars every year. Bill C-10 aims specifically at correcting this so we can continue to have a thriving artistic and cultural ecosystem in Canada.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on my earlier question, which was bizarrely not answered, which again reveals the problem here. The government is eager to shut down debate and cannot answer basic questions about what the bill does.

Is the government seeking, through Bill C-10, to give the CRTC the power to regulate social media algorithms, yes or no?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Mr. Speaker, I did try to answer my hon. colleague's question many times. Maybe it is not the answer he wanted to hear, but I have tried time and again to answer the question. What we want is an obligation of results. That is what we are looking for. It is what we are aiming for.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the NDP, for a long time, has been calling for taxing the web giants, but muzzling a committee is not the way to go.

The minister keeps citing the sense of urgency, but his government has had six years to get a bill tabled and before committee and get the work done. What is so urgent right now, and not getting this right and not letting the committee do its work, when the government has over two years left in its mandate? Is it that it actually wants to go to election and not deliver on the commitments it has made in this budget, like child care or raising the minimum wage? Maybe the government is not serious about all of that.

Maybe the minister can speak to us about whether there is intention to go to election early and leave all of those promises to the wayside when people are counting on them, especially small businesses that are saying they do not want an early election. They want to get back to work and they need us working collectively together. I am hoping the minister can address that.

● (1245)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Mr. Speaker, what I find unexplainable is the fact that throughout the question and preamble of my hon. colleague he did not mention artists once, not once.

Yes, there is a sense of urgency that I am feeling and that our government is feeling regarding the adoption of Bill C-10, but that urgency comes from artists themselves. We have heard artists from coast to coast to coast saying to get Bill C-10 adopted, and there stands the NDP with the Conservative Party saying that they know better than the artists, the technicians and the musicians. I am baffled by the position of the NDP.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House.

[*English*]

The question is on the motion.

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

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, call in the members.

● (1330)

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

(Division No. 130)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra	Anand
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Baker	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bergeron
Bérubé	Bessette
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blois
Boudrias	Bratina
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Carr	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Champoux	Charbonneau
Chen	Cormier
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz

Easter
Ellis
Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Garneau
Gerretsen
Gould
Hajdu
Holland
Hussen
Iacono
Jaczek
Jones
Jowhari
Khalid
Koutrakis
Lalonde
Lametti
Larouche
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Lemire
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Marcil
May (Cambridge)
McDonald
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Michaud
Monsef
Murray
Normandin
Oliphant
Pauzé
Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski
Ratansi
Robillard
Rogers
Sahota (Brampton North)
Sajjan
Samson
Savard-Tremblay
Schiefke
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Spengemann
Tabbara
Thériault
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El-Khoury
Fergus
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Fry
Gaudreau
Gill
Guilbeault
Hardie
Housefather
Hutchings
Ien
Joly
Jordan
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lefebvre
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
Maloney
Martinez Ferrada
McCrimmon
McGuinty
McKenna
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller
Morrissey
Ng
O'Connell
O'Regan
Perron
Plamondon
Qualtrough
Regan
Rodriguez
Romanado
Saini
Saks
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sorbara
Ste-Marie
Tassi
Therrien
Trudel
Van Bynen
Vandal
Vaughan
Virani
Wilkinson
Young
Zann

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Albas
Allison

Aitchison
Alleslev
Angus

Arnold
Atwin
Baldinelli
Barrett
Bergen
Bezan
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Block
Bragdon
Calkins
Carrie
Chong
Cumming
Dancho
Davies
d'Entremont
Doherty
Dreeshen
Duvall
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Gallant
Gazan
Genuis
Godin
Gray
Hallan
Harris
Hughes
Jeneroux
Julian
Kent
Kmiec
Kurek
Kwan
Lawrence
Lewis (Essex)
Lloyd
Lukiwski
MacKenzie
Manly
Masse
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean
McPherson
Moore
Morrison
Nater
Patzer
Poilievre
Rayes
Reid
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Ruff
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Epp
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Findlay
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Généreux
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Johns
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Lobb
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Mazier
McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Melillo
Morantz
Motz
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Qaqqaq
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Rood
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
Scheer
Seeback
Shin
Singh
Soroka
Steinley
Stubbs
Tochor
Van Popta
Vidal
Vis
Warkentin
Webber
Wilson-Raybould
Yurdiga

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

[*English*]

POINTS OF ORDER

DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THE TRANSFER OF EBOLA AND HENIPAH VIRUSES TO THE WUHAN INSTITUTE OF VIROLOGY

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am following up on an order made by the House last Wednesday as a result of the opposition motion brought forward by the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. Allow me, if you will, to read the relevant sections of the motion:

> That an order of the House do issue for the unredacted version of all documents produced by the Public Health Agency of Canada in response to the March 31, 2021, and May 10, 2021, orders of the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations, respecting the transfer of Ebola and Henipah viruses to the Wuhan Institute of Virology in March 2019, and the subsequent revocation of security clearances for, and termination of the employment of, Dr. Xiangguo Qiu and Dr. Keding Cheng, provided that:
>
> (a) these documents shall be deposited with the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel, in both official languages, within 48 hours of the adoption of this order;
>
> (b) the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel shall promptly thereafter notify the Speaker, who shall forthwith inform the House, whether he is satisfied the documents were produced as ordered....

The motion goes on from there, but I want to focus on those two points. Part (a) stipulates that the documents shall be deposited with the law clerk within 48 hours. The order was adopted on Wednesday, June 2, 2021, at approximately 4:25 p.m., which means the documents were due to be delivered by Friday, June 4 at 4:25 p.m., after the House had adjourned for the week. Part (b) stipulates that the law clerk shall notify the Speaker, who will "forthwith inform the House, whether he is satisfied the documents were produced as ordered".

My simple question to you is this: When do you plan to inform the House as to whether the law clerk and parliamentary counsel is satisfied that the government has produced the documents, as ordered by the House?

The Speaker: I want to thank the hon. member for his intervention.

I do not have any information at this point, but I will endeavour to look into what has come of the information and return to the House as soon as I have something.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from May 31 consideration of the motion that Bill C-6, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (conversion therapy), be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

It is always an honour to rise in the House, even the virtual House, on behalf of the people of Skeena—Bulkley Valley. In fact, in some ways it is even more significant to rise on their behalf in this way because, if I turn my head to the right, I can see the people of this wonderful place walking by outside my office, and it reminds me of the sacred responsibility that I have to do well by them in this place.

I have spoken to LGBTQ youth about what it was like growing up in small rural towns in northern British Columbia. Most of them who grew up in towns like Smithers, where I live, in the 1980s and 1990s say it was not a very tolerant place. Many of them left as soon as they could, off to places where they were more free to be themselves. That is changing, and that is a very good thing.

My office is half a block down from Smithers's rainbow crosswalk, first painted in 2016. As mayor at the time, I was proud to help make the crosswalk happen, but really it was the work of a woman named Anna Ziegler, who wrote to council and got the ball rolling on that initiative.

In the following years it has been repainted, and of course, in northern B.C., these things have to be repainted because of our harsh winters, and the road sand and salt that gets put down every year. In the following years the crosswalk was repainted by the fabulous leaders of the local Girl Guides patrol, who had to don Tyvek suits and respirators to survive the perils of the industrial road paint. It was quite a scene.

A couple of years later, in 2018, the group Smithers Pride was formed and the community's first community-wide pride event was held. At the time, Safeway and the BCGEU teamed up to hold a barbecue. We blocked off the street and it was a wonderful event. I thought it might be northern B.C.'s first pride event, but then I learned that the tiny village of Masset on Haida Gwaii not only has a pride event, but it has four rainbow crosswalks.

I mention all of this because the community where I live, and indeed our entire region, is becoming a place where everyone, no matter their sexuality or gender identity or expression, receives the full measure of respect, belonging, safety and rights, and it is worth celebrating.

This month is pride month, a good month to be conducting this final debate on this important bill before us. Before I talk about the bill itself, I want to recognize some of the folks who have been leading the way when it comes to making my home community a more inclusive place, especially Perry Rath, who is a teacher at Smithers Secondary School, and Brianna van Donselaar, Sophie Perodeau and Sarah Payne. I thank them for the important work they have done and continue to do.

Bill C-6 is about protecting people from a practice that has no place in our society. Let us be clear about what conversion therapy is. The definition in the bill before us calls it, "a practice, treatment or service designed to change a person's sexual orientation to heterosexual, to change a person's gender identity or gender expression to cisgender or to repress or reduce non-heterosexual attraction or sexual behaviour or non-cisgender gender expression."

I read the Department of Justice's charter statement on Bill C-6, and its description of the harms of conversion therapy is worth repeating here, because it underlines, I believe, why this bill is so important:

> Conversion therapy has been denounced by medical and psychological professionals as being ineffective and the source of harm and potential harm. Conversion therapy has resulted, or risks resulting, in harms such as distress, anxiety, depression, stigma, shame, negative self-image, a feeling of personal failure, difficulty sustaining relationships, sexual dysfunction and having serious thoughts or plans of—or attempting—suicide. Its continued existence also harms the dignity of LGBTQ2 people by perpetuating myths and stereotypes based on sexual orientation or gender identity—in particular, that the sexual orientation or gender identity of LGBTQ2 people is undesirable and can and should be changed.

● (1335)

The harms of conversion therapy are clear and well established. This practice has no place in a free, tolerant society such as Canada's, and it is incumbent upon all of us as elected representatives to protect the SOGI community from these harms. Everyone in Canada should be free to love whom they love and be who they are, free from stigma, intolerance and coercion.

Bill C-6 would ban the following: causing an individual to undergo conversion therapy against their will; causing a child to undergo conversion therapy; removing a child from Canada to undergo conversion therapy abroad; receiving a financial or other material benefit from the provision of conversion therapy; and, finally, advertising and offering to provide conversion therapy.

It is clear that there are some Conservative members in this place who oppose the bill and will vote against it, and to be clear, I have met with constituents of mine who have deep misgivings. Most of these misgivings purport to be based on the notion that conversations or counsel between parents and children, or between pastors and those they counsel, could be wrongly caught up in the bill's provisions. These are fair considerations for us to discuss in the debate on this legislation.

However, I would note that the justice committee has addressed this by adding a "for greater certainty" clause that highlights what the definition of conversion therapy does not include, namely, "a practice, treatment or service that relates to the exploration and development of an integrated personal identity without favouring any particular sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression". I believe that this should provide some peace of mind as we move forward.

There are two other important amendments I will note. Changing "against a person's will" to the phrase "without consent" utilizes wording that is much more commonly used and understood. Importantly, broadening the scope of the definition of conversion therapy to include "gender identity" and "gender expression" not only makes it consistent with the language used in other legal protections, but also allows it to address new forums of conversion therapy.

I will end my remarks today by acknowledging the member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, whose work on the bill has been exemplary and who, sadly, has been the target of harassment and online hate for his work. He is a champion for the rights of the SOGI community, and his work in this place is creating a legacy of safety, inclusion and protection of fundamental rights. I thank the hon. member.

We have a decent bill in front of us that moves us forward as a country and would provide legal protection for people who deserve it. Love is love, and people deserve to simply be who they are. I will end by mentioning that I spoke about the bill to my 16-year-old daughter. I told her that Parliament was working to make conversion therapy illegal. She said, "You mean it's legal?" That is exactly what I think as well.

I wish members a happy pride month. Now let us make this law.

● (1340)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is pride month, and I am sure that this member celebrates pride in his community, as we have been trying to do in my community.

One of the things we did was send out pride posters throughout our community to some 1,500 people who wanted to hang them in their windows. I got an email this morning, which I will read. It says:

> MP [for Kingston and the Islands],
>
> Thank you SO MUCH for the Pride poster! One of my teenagers is a member of the LGBTQ+ community. I ordered one of your Pride posters without thinking too much about it. I didn't realize it would be so moving for my daughter. It wasn't just that we hung a Pride poster, it was that her own MP provided it and is promoting Pride in our community. She felt seen and valued, by her family and by her government. It provoked a really beautiful conversation and we ended up ordering some additional Pride-related flags. My girl hugged me with tears in her eyes and thanked me for being so supportive.

This bill is about so much more than just banning a harmful practice. It is about changing the attitude and the way that Canadians engage, in particular, with the LGBTQ community.

Can the member provide some insight into why he thinks that having these conversations is so important to changing awful stereotypes that were, unfortunately, more predominant a few decades ago?

● (1345)

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his words and I share his sentiments.

At my constituency office here in Smithers we are proud to have an ally sticker on the front door of our office to show our allyship and our support for the fundamental rights of LGBTQ people in our community.

This bill has created a very important conversation in our communities about what inclusion, acceptance and the rights that people have really mean. I think that is a very positive thing and I look forward to building on that as we move forward together.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think members would agree with many of the sentiments the member expressed. I appreciate the fact that he acknowledges the concerns he has been hearing from some of his constituents with respect to the definition and the desire for greater clarity on that definition.

The member spoke about the "for greater certainty" clause that reflected an NDP amendment at committee. In my view, the "for greater certainty" clause does not provide the greater certainty he alleges. It effectively says that personal opinions are fine as long as they conform to a certain structure: as long as those personal opinions are within certain defined parameters. It is not a general exception for people to be able to express personally held views outside of a quasi-therapeutic context. It is an exception that says conversion therapy does not include personally held views as long as those personally held views are within this particular box. There may be many views that are expressed in private conversations about these issues that I disagree with or that he disagrees with.

Are people not asking for a greater certainty clause that actually says private conversations people have about their views on this, that or the other thing are not going to lead to criminal prosecution?

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that private conversations constitute a practice, first of all, but there may a point on which we disagree with respect to what the member mentioned, which is this. One thing I have learned through this debate, and I admit going into it I did not have a very deep knowledge of conversion therapy, is that a lot of conversion therapy takes place in the shadows. I think we have to ask ourselves, even in the context of conversations between pastors and their faithful or between parents and their children, where the boundaries are with respect to what would constitute conversion therapy. Perhaps in the future the courts will have to weigh in as to where those boundaries are, but I think in this bill it is important for us to state clearly that this is about protecting people and their rights, and that we should not be trying to convince people that they are something other than they are.

Mrs. Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his commitment to stand against coercive and abusive therapies on behalf of vulnerable Canadians.

As 72% of Canadians who were polled support a wait-and-see approach for counselling young people, that means the support is for the right of parents to delay medical treatments for a gender transition until the child is mature enough to understand their repercussions.

Does the member believe that parents should preserve that right or that children as young as age seven or eight have the cognitive ability to understand the impact puberty blockers will have on their health in years to come?

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Mr. Speaker, today's debate is about conversion therapy and those practices that seek to change people from who they are: from the identity, expression and orientation they hold to something other. I appreciate the gist of the member's question; however, I think it departs fairly significantly from the content of the debate before us.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, for sharing his time today.

At the outset, I will acknowledge the LGBTQ community in my riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. I want to put this in the context of the privilege I have of serving as member of Parliament for this beautiful part of Vancouver Island, but also the great responsibility that comes with that. As members of Parliament, we have the power and responsibility to stand up for people in our ridings and communities and across the country who have traditionally been on the margins, who have not been recognized as equals by large parts of Canadian society, and who have been actively discriminated against in the past through our laws and policies.

That is one of the things that we members of Parliament have to do. We have to stand on this incredible stage in the House of Commons to do what we can to change this country so that everyone is equal no matter who they love or what their social background, race or origin. We have to stand up and be champions for every member of our communities. I take very seriously that responsibility and the privilege I have had over the last nearly six years in this role.

We are speaking today about the government's Bill C-6. I want to acknowledge and thank the Minister of Justice for bringing forward Bill C-6. I know he held many consultations. My NDP colleague, the member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, was part of those consultations and I would like to thank him for his advocacy in the House.

The bill before us, Bill C-6, would amend the Criminal Code. It got me thinking about federal criminal law power in general, because it is a powerful tool of the federal government. We know from previous rulings of the Supreme Court of Canada that a valid criminal law power requires, number one, a prohibition; number two, a penalty; and number three, a valid criminal law purpose. Those have been traditionally listed as peace, order, security, morality and health. Those are the broad areas in which federal criminal law power can be applied.

Bill C-6 and the practice it is trying to prohibit fall very clearly under security and morality, because it is so morally wrong to force people to undergo a change from who they are. It also applies under section 7 of the charter: security of the person. Individuals are being denied security of the person by being forced to go through conversion therapy. We know this is an extremely harmful practice. We have heard testimony about how it has ruined lives. As many members who have spoken to Bill C-6 before me have said, when I speak with constituents they always express surprise that this practice is still ongoing in Canada.

Reparative or conversion therapy is a very dangerous practice that targets LGBTQ youth and seeks to change their sexual or gender identities. It has sometimes been called reparative therapy, but I hate the fact that we are even using the word "therapy". Therapy, in my mind and I think in the minds of most Canadians, indicates a practice or some sort of counselling that is going to help someone get to a better place. This does not do that in any way. It is a range of dangerous and discredited practices that falsely claim to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity or expression and it has been found by all experts to be fraudulent and harmful. In fact, the practice has been rejected by every mainstream medical and mental health organization for decades, but because there is continuing discrimination and societal bias against LGBTQ people, some practitioners continue to conduct this practice.

● (1350)

We know that minors are especially vulnerable, and that being forced to undergo conversion therapy leads them to experience depression, anxiety, drug use, homelessness and, in worst cases, death by suicide. We heard powerful testimony at the justice committee from survivors of conversion therapy, even before the bill began its formal process of debate, documenting what this practice had done to their lives. The fact that it is still going on in Canada leads to a lot of shock.

To show how much the world has changed in a short time, but also the changes that we still need to see, until 1990 homosexuality was considered by the World Health Organization to be a mental disorder. Today we are in the unfortunate position where gay sex remains illegal in 68 nations around the world. In those countries homosexuality has very serious penalties, including the death penalty and complete ostracization from mainstream society.

Canada has an important role to play on the world stage to show that we accept people for who they are and that we do not judge. We also have to be a voice of moral clarity on the world stage and speak out against those harmful practices. We do that to some extent.

The societal pressure of forcing gay and trans people to become heterosexual, or to be some kind of a societal norm, has been extremely harmful. Many conversion therapy practices have been based on religion, and have included talk therapy, hypnosis and, in some cases, electrical shocks and fasting.

It is incumbent upon us in the House of Commons, as the people's elected representatives, to recognize how harmful this practice is and to make our voices heard and say, "No more." We are going to use the full force of the federal criminal law power, make a stand and declare how harmful this practice is, and we are going to take steps to prohibit it.

Particular sections of the bill include prohibitions against forced conversion therapy, against causing a child to undergo conversion therapy, against advertising conversion therapy and against materially benefiting from conversion therapy.

I want to take a moment to address the concerns that have been raised by some of my colleagues in the House. In each of those prohibitions, we see the phrase "conversion therapy." This bill has taken the time to provide a definition of what conversion therapy is. In response to some of the current concerns, the greater certainty clause of that definition was expanded, and it now says it does not include:

> The exploration and development of an integrated personal identity without favouring any particular sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

That means the definition does not include a practice, treatment or service that relates to those specific things. This helps provide that clarity for conversations between parents and their kids, church ministers and parishioners or people who simply want to have that conversation in a semi-formal setting. It does not in any way prohibit conversations from occurring.

In my mind at least, I believe that the concerns have been dealt with, and the harms that come from this practice warrant that this bill be passed.

In conclusion, I would like to say clearly and unequivocally that I will be supporting Bill C-6, and I hope my colleagues will join me so we can send this to the other place for royal assent in short order.

● (1355)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford will have five minutes for questions and comments when the House next returns to debate on the motion.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

WOOLWICH HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was proud to meet with Woolwich Healthy Communities, an organization in Kitchener—Conestoga that is doing outstanding work locally to help protect our environment. Woolwich Healthy Communities has several working groups that are dedicated to making a difference in our riding.

I spent a beautiful sunny day in Elmira this weekend, planting over 300 trees with my daughter Brooklyn and other volunteers from the group Trees for Woolwich. I thank all the volunteers who celebrated World Environment Day by helping to create habitat, supporting species at risk and biodiversity, enriching the soil and sequestering carbon dioxide.

Thousands of trees will be planted for this nature reserve, with benefits and rewards decades away. The shade of these trees will not be enjoyed by the volunteers who planted them, but rather future generations to come.

The selflessness and commitment to improving our community is what makes Kitchener—Conestoga such an incredible place to live.

● (1400)

MENTAL HEALTH

Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the past decade, we have thankfully made huge strides reducing the stigma around mental health, which is one of the reasons our present circumstances are so frustrating. These ill-advised lockdowns have been devastating to Canadian's mental health. Even the inconsistent WHO has stated that protracted lockdowns cause more harm than good.

Sadly, those most victimized by the lockdowns are those who were already struggling with mental health and have now been pushed over the edge, and tragically this group is joined by our children and youth.

The social isolation, inability for a long time to even use equipment at our parks and the closure of schools have driven heretofore healthy young people to eating disorders, self-harm, ideation of suicide as well as increased actual suicide attempts. Hamilton Health Sciences a month ago reported youth suicide attempts had increased threefold.

With all this devastation, the Liberal government's answer to increased health care requests from the provinces was a flat no. At a time when mental health struggles are so significant, Canadians have been sorely let down by their leadership, and they deserve better.

* * *

[*Translation*]

STÉPHANIE BELLAVANCE

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the ongoing pandemic has brought out the resourcefulness, creativity and determination of our entrepreneurs. I would like to share with the House the story of Stéphanie Bellavance, from Saint-Quentin.

[*English*]

Her hair salon had to close for two periods because COVID-19 cases were increasing in her area. Being a hairdresser for 16 years, she has not given up and instead has managed to diversify and expand her business.

[*Translation*]

Stéphanie wanted to expand her services by selling a new product, modified hair extensions exclusive to her salon. In addition, she developed an online coaching program about one of her passions, healthy living.

[*English*]

She rolled up her sleeves and followed online courses to develop and increase her business. Therefore, if in the future her business must close due to COVID-19, she will still be able to sell her product and offer online coaching.

[*Translation*]

To all the Stéphanie Bellavances in Canada, I say well done. I congratulate them for their perseverance and their contributions to our economy.

JOCELYNE BATES

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, her name is Jocelyne Bates, but I can only refer to her as "Madame". This year, this exceptional woman, known for her striking smile, is celebrating 30 years in municipal politics. It is not nothing to spend 30 years working at a level of government that involves such close contact with constituents.

Madame Bates is passionate about her work, and she loves her town of Sainte-Catherine the way a mother loves her child. She knows everything about her municipality. She defends it, she takes up arms and goes to the front, she stands up for her community. She is simply extraordinary.

This may be a first in the House, but my Liberal colleague from Brossard—Saint-Lambert and I agreed to speak one after the other to applaud this amazing woman. That too is politics: knowing when to come together to acknowledge good things, regardless of our political stripes, as long as we are doing it for the common good. I would say that this approach of setting partisanship aside for the common good represents Madame Bates's attitude very well.

I will pass the baton to my colleague and again commend the outstanding dedication of Madame Bates, mayor of Sainte-Catherine. I wish her a happy 30th anniversary.

* * *

JOCELYNE BATES

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the hon. member for La Prairie, just paid a glowing tribute to the political career of a woman we deeply admire.

The longevity of Jocelyne Bates's political career is due in large part to her undeniable knack for bringing people together. In that same spirit, I join my colleague in congratulating Madame Bates for a political career marked by her desire to rally residents around projects that benefit the entire community. I especially want to acknowledge her determination to revitalize the waterfront in Sainte-Catherine. The St. Lawrence River and Seaway are vital engines for development, and Madame Bates never lets us forget that.

I was one of her constituents for seven years, and we have been friends for over 20 years. I know that having to juggle multiple roles over the past 30 years has always helped Jocelyne Bates strike the right balance between reaching for the stars and keeping her feet planted firmly on the ground.

Congratulations, Jocelyne.

* * *

● (1405)

[*English*]

HUT 8 MINING

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize both Hut 8 Mining, an industry-leading bitcoin miner, and the city of Medicine Hat, where the mine is centred.

Hut 8 is a great story, from its penny stock beginnings to its all-female leadership team, very unique in the tech industry. Medicine Hat has a long history of entrepreneurial acumen and willingness to pioneer with new opportunities.

As a bitcoin miner, reliable electricity is a critical consideration, which is one of the many reasons Medicine Hat was chosen as the city owns its own electric utility, from generation to distribution. This enables Hut 8 to access low-cost electricity involving a clean environmental footprint using a natural gas combustion turbine.

Hut 8's operations in Medicine Hat provide highly skilled jobs, with 80% of its team based locally. As a sustainable leader in bitcoin mining, Hut 8 contributes excellent value to the local community and the economy.

It is important that Canada harness innovation and value behind emerging technology such as blockchain and foster a regulatory and commercial environment that promotes companies such as Hut 8 within Canada and abroad.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL ROOFING WEEK

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week, the Canadian Roofing Contractors Association and its 400 corporate members are celebrating National Roofing Week. The objective of this national week is to increase awareness across Canada about the significance of roofs to every home and business.

[*English*]

Let us remind ourselves that the roof is one of the most important components of every structure and is also the first line of defence against natural elements.

[*Translation*]

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize one of its members, an entrepreneur from the Outaouais, Alain Raymond, president and founder of Raymond Group. Mr. Raymond is an accomplished businessman who was named person of the year by the Gatineau chamber of commerce in 2018. His company now has more than 300 employees across Quebec.

As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, I am proud of my work with the construction industry across Canada. I am delighted to wish all roofers in the Outaouais and Canada a happy National Roofing Week.

* * *

LGBTQ2S+ ORGANIZATION

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is International Pride Month, and I want to take this opportunity to recognize the outstanding work that is being done by many LGBTQ2S+ organizations in my riding, particularly Fondation Émergence.

Fondation Émergence held the first day against homophobia in 2003, and it fights every day to educate and raise the awareness of Quebeckers with regard to the realities of the LGBTQ2S+ community.

As a government and as citizens, we have the responsibility to ensure that everyone can live as they see fit without discrimination, no matter who they are or who they love. That is why our government introduced Bill C-6, which seeks to protect the dignity and equality of members of the LGBTQ2S+ community by criminalizing conversion therapy. That is one of the most progressive and comprehensive legislative responses in the world, because no one should try to change anyone else's sexual orientation or gender identity.

I would like to once again thank Fondation Émergence for the important work that it does in my riding to combat discrimination against members of the LGBTQ2S+ community in Hochelaga, in Quebec and around the world.

* * *

[*English*]

BIRTHDAY CONGRATULATIONS

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the upcoming 80th birthday of James Ross Hurley, the founding director of the Parliamentary Internship Programme.

In 1969, Mr. Hurley, a young academic at the University of Ottawa, worked with the Canadian Political Science Association and the late Alfred Hales, MP for Wellington, to develop a new program that would allow recent university graduates to serve as assistants to MPs and to study Parliament during a 10-month internship.

Thanks to Mr. Hurley's dedication, more than 500 Canadians have benefited from this unique non-partisan program, which continues to this day. The current interns will finish their placement this month. I, myself, am proud to have been an intern in 2010-11.

Mr. Hurley eventually moved on to a distinguished career with the Privy Council Office, but remains a dedicated supporter of the internship, most recently helping to establish the Hales and Hurley Parliamentary Foundation to raise funds on its behalf.

We congratulate him on this milestone and thank him for his contributions to Canada and our Parliament.

* * *

● (1410)

[*Translation*]

HIS EXCELLENCY BISHOP IBRAHIM IBRAHIM

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise in the House to talk about the crucial role of His Excellency Bishop Ibrahim Ibrahim, the eparch of the Melkite Catholic Church of Canada, consecrated by Pope John Paul II to serve members of his community across Canada.

As leader of his diocese for 18 years, he has worked tirelessly and with respectful openness to build bridges among all men and women of goodwill and among religions. Employing his talent as a communicator and acting for the common good, Bishop Ibrahim is a builder and presided over the construction of a magnificent Byzantine cathedral in Montreal, a dream at long last realized thanks to his vision and leadership.

Bishop Ibrahim is an eastern bishop in Canada. He has not forgotten his roots in his native land, Lebanon, and stands with the Middle Eastern countries that are suffering.

* * *

[*English*]

PEACE COUNTRY EDUCATORS

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I want to pay tribute to Peace Country educators, who have met the unprecedented challenge of this past year and deserve our thanks. These past months have been challenging for all of us, but teachers have navigated some really unique obstacles. The unexpected shutdown of in-person learning forced teachers to innovate and learn new technology skills so they could continue to teach their dispersed students at home and create ways for students to connect with one another.

Families across the Peace Country have faced the pain of financial pressure, job loss and isolation, and I know that educators and staff have helped students navigate these realities while many faced these same challenges in their own homes. These past months have been unprecedented in our lives, but Peace Country teachers, staff and administrators have met the challenges.

As we come to the end of this school year, on behalf of myself and our family and on behalf of Peace Country residents, I want to thank them for their dedication and service to our kids as we look forward to more normal days ahead.

* * *

[*Translation*]

VICTORIAVILLE TIGERS

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the prestigious President's Cup of the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League is back in my region.

Nineteen years after their last victory, the Victoriaville Tigers were tournament champions on Saturday, thanks to a spectacular victory against the Val-d'Or Foreurs. I would like to sincerely congratulate them.

Well done to the players, who were exhilarating to watch over the past months, despite COVID-19. I would also like to acknowledge the work of Carl Mallette. Nineteen years ago, he shot the winning goal in the final game as captain of the team. This weekend, he raised the cup as its head coach. Bravo, Carl.

Congratulations to his assistants, Maxime Desruisseaux and Sébastien Charpentier, to the general manager, Kevin Cloutier, to the president, Charles Pellerin, and to all those who contributed to the team's success.

On behalf of myself and all of the fans, I say, "Go, Tigers, go! You are champions and we are proud of you."

* * *

[*English*]

MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT'S COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as we slowly and cautiously emerge from the pandemic, I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and recognize a remarkable young woman from my riding: Spencer Middle School student Kylee Booth.

The last 15 months have been incredibly difficult for our youth. At a time in their lives that is supposed to be about learning and experiencing new things, they have had to completely readjust their time at school. They have been cut off or distanced from their social circles and many have struggled, but some have stepped up to community service.

With help from her mom Collette, Kylee started learning to use the family sewing machine and took it upon herself to start designing and creating masks for the community, which she gave out for free. In her words, "The community has done a lot for me and I thought it would be a good time to give back."

I thank Kylee for this dedication to making her community safer, and I congratulate her.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL STUDENT PARLIAMENT

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address my counterparts, the members of the student parliament at La Traversée alternative school.

Esteemed colleagues and community representatives, my visit with you showed me an inspiring model of civic engagement. Your gender-balanced parliament sets an excellent example, considering that we still have a long way to go here in the House of Commons. Perhaps one day Évelyne Rochefort, Ellie Landry and Korali Lebœuf will join me in the green seats of the House.

I am equally certain that Julien Funk, Zac Bérubé and Hugo Morin would also make excellent elected officials, as they helped mobilize the school to support the mission of Pacte de rue in Salaberry-de-Valleyfield. It comes as no surprise that Vox Populi has recognized your school's thriving democratic engagement. I wanted to officially congratulate you.

To my hon. colleagues of the student parliament, please extend my sincere congratulations to Sabrina Dubé, Suzanne Blouin and your school principal, Isabelle Perron.

It will always be a pleasure to collaborate with you, hon. members.

● (1415)

[*English*]

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, six years before the Conservative government apologized for residential schools and launched the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2008, I wrote my undergrad thesis on the system's harms and the government's responsibility.

Last week, 215 lost children were found. There are more. That so many Canadians were shocked shows a long, painful road behind and still ahead. So many open hearts and minds give hope. History's importance is poignant and clear.

In Lakeland, Blue Quills Indian Residential School once helped break spirits, languages, faiths, traditions and families. Today, it is Canada's first indigenous-owned school for 50 years, and it offers degrees in first nations languages, job skills and intergenerational healing.

After visiting, one Albertan said, “My uncle...was sent to a residential school, so I thought I understood. His time...was never spoken of, so I thought I understood. [My wife's uncle] taught at Blue Quills...so I thought I understood. Until I listened to the words and heard the stories, I did not know.”

Indigenous people deserve peace, safety, freedom and jobs. MPs should raise awareness and make real changes for their well-being and outcomes in their lives.

* * *

MICHAEL O'REILLY

Hon. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Ottawa has lost a true legend. Michael O'Reilly, the remarkable local artist, musician and comedian, has passed away. Born in England to a Canadian World War II serviceman and a Devonshire girl, Mike was raised in Ottawa. He studied at Glebe Collegiate and the University of Ottawa, and then earned a teaching degree at Queen's University.

Mike O'Reilly was a world-class bluegrass performer and a true festival favourite. He wrote more than 200 songs and formed many bands over the years. He was the front man for Cody, The Radio Kings and Bolt Upright. Mike O'Reilly was also half of the comedy duo Delmer and Cecil, known for gems like “Meadow Muffin Blues”.

To his wife Rosemary, his children Rylan and Devon, his mother Mary and his many, many friends and fans, Mike's legacy will live on in our countless happy memories of this amazingly talented artist.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister promised one million jobs by the end of June. Here we are, almost at the end of June, and the numbers are painting a very different picture: 300,000 jobs lost in the last two months because of the Liberal vaccine failure. While in other countries, like the U.S. and the U.K., economies are roaring back, here Canadians continue to live locked down at home without a paycheque and continue to see their savings emptied.

When will the Liberals finally release a detailed plan to reopen our economy and get Canadians back to work?

Hon. Mona Fortier (Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the Conservatives want to talk about the economy, let us talk about the economy. As of May 2021, over 2.4 million of the three million jobs lost at the peak of the pandemic, which is eight out of 10, have already been recouped. On April 26, S&P reaffirmed Canada's AAA rating. Just last week, Moody's also reaffirmed our AAA rating. Our plan is sustainable and responsible, and it is working.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, does that member not look around and see businesses shut down across the country? The Liberal third wave has brought our economy to a halt. While Canada bleeds jobs, the U.S. job numbers continue to climb. In the last month alone, the U.S. created 500,000 jobs, which is almost double what we lost.

The fact is that Canadians should not take the Liberal government seriously. After all, we can see that the Prime Minister and the finance minister are more focused on planning their travel itineraries than getting Canadians their freedoms back and getting them back to work. Is that not the truth?

● (1420)

Hon. Mona Fortier (Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for giving me another opportunity to discuss our government's growth plan and how it is working for Canadians.

As I am sure the member opposite saw last Friday, Statistics Canada released its Q1 GDP number, and it is good news. The economy grew at the annual rate of 5.6% in the first quarter of the year, much better than the predicted 3.6% growth for Q1 in the budget. Budget 2021 is a growth budget that will deliver for Canadians.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is very sad to see the Liberals so out of touch with the suffering that Canadians are going through. Canadians are running out of hope and they are running out of money. The Liberals have had months to plan a road map to get our economy back on track, but they have failed to act. The U.S. has a 42% vaccine rate where its total population has been vaccinated. Ours is 7.6%. Let us be real: The Liberals have failed on all fronts, and it is Canadians who are paying the price.

Why can the Liberals not give Canadian families and businesses some certainty and present a clear plan to end the lockdowns so Canadians can get back to work?

Hon. Mona Fortier (Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be perfectly clear that our government will always stand up for Canadian workers and families. We have supported and helped maintain over 5.3 million Canadian jobs through the wage subsidy, and our government intends on extending that vital program through to next summer.

In budget 2021, we announced that we would introduce the Canada recovery hiring program to support eligible employers by providing subsidies to offset a portion of the cost during the reopening and the hiring of more staff. We know there is still much more work to do, and our government will continue to support Canadian workers and families.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the best way to restart the economy is to get Canadians back to work. Unfortunately, that is not what is happening.

Last Friday, we found out that 68,000 people did not have the job they hoped to have. That is 68,000 jobs lost. That is three times more than projected. What is the government's plan to get Canadians back to work?

Hon. Mona Fortier (Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member across the way for giving me another opportunity to talk about our government's growth plan and the way it works for Canadians.

As the member opposite certainly knows, on Friday Statistics Canada published the GDP numbers for the quarter and there is good news. The economy grew at an annual rate of 5.6% during the first quarter of the year, which is much better than the 3.6% growth projected in the budget for the first quarter.

Budget 2021 is a growth budget that will benefit Canadians.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about work and returning to work. Canadians want to earn a paycheque, but that is not what is happening.

In the United States, 500,000 new jobs have been created, but almost 300,000 jobs were lost in Canada during roughly the same period. The employment rate is 3% lower than before the pandemic because of government measures forcing thousands of Canadians to stay home rather than go to work. Once again, what is the government's plan for getting Canadians back to work?

Hon. Mona Fortier (Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am going to be perfectly clear. Our government is standing up for and will always stand up for Canadian workers. We have taken steps to protect 5.3 million jobs through the Canada emergency wage subsidy, which our government plans to extend.

In budget 2021, we also announced the introduction of the Canada recovery hiring program to support eligible employers by providing subsidies to cover part of the cost during reopening and the hiring of new staff.

We know that there is much more to do, and that is why our government will continue to support workers and Canadian families.

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OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec wants to apply Bill 101 to federally regulated businesses because it wants to protect French as the language of work. The Minister of Official Languages keeps repeating that she will extend the application of the Official Languages Act instead, but that legislation protects bilingualism.

Newsflash: Quebec is not bilingual; it is French, and the use of French is in decline. The government itself knows this and has acknowledged this. What is the minister going to do, use Bill 101 to protect the French language or use the Official Languages Act to protect bilingualism?

● (1425)

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague that the use of French is in decline in Quebec and Canada. Naturally, we must do more to protect our beautiful French language.

Under the circumstances, we also want to recognize that Quebeckers and francophones living in regions with a strong francophone presence across the country have the right to work in French, to be served in French and to be protected from discrimination because they are francophone. That is why we are moving forward with the modernization of the Official Languages Act.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebeckers do not want the right to work in French; they want French to be the language of work. There is a difference. Quebec is not bilingual. It is French.

The federal government is bilingual. Francophone federal public servants say that they are uncomfortable working in their language. The federal Commissioner of Official Languages said that it is not a very inclusive culture. All too often, French becomes a translation language.

What is more, the federal government is the winner of the year when it comes to complaints for failing to comply with the Official Languages Act. Who would want to extend that model to Quebec rather than applying the Charter of the French Language? If Quebeckers had to choose, they would go with the Charter of the French Language. Why does the minister not agree with that?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that we need to do more to protect the French language and institutional bilingualism within our government. That is why, in our reform document, we said that the Commissioner of Official Languages should have more power. We also need to make sure that a central agency within our public service ensures compliance with the Official Languages Act.

Ultimately, we must also be able to extend the application of the Official Languages Act to federally regulated private businesses. This will be the first time that the Official Languages Act is applied to the private sector. In that sense, I think that this is a huge step forward for francophones and francophiles in Canada. Of course, the government also wants to work with the Government of Quebec to ensure that the rights—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 215 is the number of voices forever silenced. That number, 215, now represents the innocence lost to savage, racist acts. Sadly, these 215 victims are just the start. We are only beginning to understand the magnitude of the gaping wounds caused by genocidal acts in Canada.

The Prime Minister can no longer talk his way out of this. If he truly understands the suffering of indigenous peoples, he must stop taking residential school survivors to court. Will he vote for or against our motion today?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we support many aspects of the motion, but measures relating to legal matters are complex. Issues around jurisdiction and privacy require broad collaboration with first nations and cannot be resolved unilaterally.

As our government stated, individuals affected by historical inequities in first nations child welfare will receive fair and equitable compensation.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the Prime Minister's record on first nations children.

He was found guilty of “wilful and reckless” discrimination against indigenous kids. He has ignored 19 non-compliance orders and spent over $9 million on lawyers, yet this weekend he was saying he was not in court fighting any first nations kids. In reality, his lawyers are arguing that children who suffered reckless discrimination are not eligible for any compensation whatsoever. That is their argument. Children have died on the current government's watch.

When is the Prime Minister going to end his toxic legal war against indigenous kids?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be crystal clear. Children who have suffered discrimination at the hands of the first nations child welfare system will receive fair, equitable and just compensation.

An hon. member: You are making that up.

The Speaker: I want to remind the hon. members that heckling is not parliamentary, especially during virtual proceedings.

I will ask the minister to answer his question again, before he was interrupted.

Hon. Marc Miller: Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister has said time and time again, and as this government has said time and time again, we want to be crystal clear.

Every first nations child who has suffered discrimination at the hands of the failed child welfare system will receive just, fair and equitable compensation.

* * *

● (1430)

TAXATION

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the weekend we learned the finance minister surrendered Canada's ability to set its own tax rates. We strongly support efforts to make multinationals pay their fair share, but that should never mean giving up sovereignty over our own tax system. The global minimum tax—

The Speaker: I am going to interrupt the hon. member. We are having some troubles.

[*Translation*]

I would like to remind all members to mute their microphones.

[*English*]

The hon. member for Abbotsford can take it from the top.

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, over the weekend we learned the finance minister surrendered Canada's ability to set its own tax rates. We strongly support efforts to make multinationals pay their fair share, but that should never mean giving up sovereignty over our own tax system. The global minimum tax might be great policy for large economies, but it is bad for an economy like ours that is struggling to compete with countries like the U.S.

Does the minister not realize that her global minimum tax has worsened our ability to compete on the world stage?

Hon. Mona Fortier (Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are focused on protecting Canadian businesses and Canadian workers who lose out to multinational businesses that do not pay tax. If the Conservatives believe that big multinational companies should continue to be exempt from tax, they should say so and be honest with Canadians. In 2019 we campaigned on taxing large digital companies, and that is precisely what we will deliver on, as we detailed in the budget. The developments at the G7 finance ministers meeting last week will make sure that Canadians are no longer disadvantaged by big corporations shifting profits offshore so they can escape taxation.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians alone, not the G7, should determine our domestic tax policy.

The global minimum tax is long on promises and short on detail. With the current Liberal government, the devil is always in the details, so how will the government support start-ups and other small businesses with lower tax rates? How will the government fulfill its promise to reduce taxes on green and clean tech companies?

Will the government seek Parliament's approval before imposing a global minimum tax on Canadians?

Hon. Mona Fortier (Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has always stood up for and will always stand up for Canadian businesses and workers from all sectors. Let us be clear what this agreement means for Canadians. It will make sure that Canadians are no longer disadvantaged by big corporations shifting profits offshore so they can escape taxation. We are focused on protecting Canadian businesses and workers who lose out to multinational businesses that do not pay tax. Again, if the Conservatives believe that big multinational companies should continue to be exempt from tax, they should say so and be honest with Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister's answer shows us that she knows absolutely nothing about the economy.

Under this Liberal government, Canada has lost all credibility on the international stage. We have learned that the Prime Minister agreed to let the other G7 countries dictate Canadian tax policy. Not only did Canada cave in to China, now it is going down on its knees before the rest of the world.

Why is this Prime Minister accepting deals that will only put Canada at a disadvantage and benefit the major world powers?

Hon. Mona Fortier (Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are focused on protecting Canadian businesses and Canadian workers who are losing out to multinational corporations that do not pay taxes.

If the Conservatives believe that large multinationals should continue to be exempt from taxes, they should say so and be honest with Canadians.

In 2019, we campaigned on the promise to tax large digital companies, and that is precisely what we are going to do, as we outlined in the budget. The developments at last week's G7 finance ministers' meetings will ensure that Canadians are no longer put at a disadvantage by large corporations that hide their profits offshore to avoid paying taxes.

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FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said, this government's credibility has simply evaporated. It is incapable of defending Canada's economic interests.

A clear and specific example of this incompetence is the Canadian softwood lumber file. The U.S. Department of Commerce announced its intention to double the tariffs on Canadian softwood lumber. That is 76,000 workers in Quebec who could lose even more.

More than 2,000 days have gone by since the Prime Minister promised to negotiate a new agreement. Six years later and there is still nothing. When will the Prime Minister finally take his role seriously and stand up for Canada's forestry workers?

● (1435)

[*English*]

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the hon. member and Canadians in the forestry sector that we will always stand up for them and the hundreds of thousands of workers that they employ across communities in the country.

Let me begin by saying, unequivocally, that the duties against Canadian softwood lumber by the U.S. are unjustified and they hurt workers on both sides of the border. I have raised this issue at every opportunity with the President and the USTR, as well as with the commerce secretary. Our government will continue to work on this issue. We will vigorously defend our softwood lumber industry and our workers.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the U.S. Department of Commerce announced it intends to double Canadian softwood lumber duties. This will be devastating to our forestry sector and further increase costs for Canadians due to our integrated market. The last negotiated agreement by the Conservatives expired in 2015.

The Prime Minister promised then to have a new softwood agreement within 100 days of taking office. It has been over 2,000 days and three U.S. presidents. When will the government get serious on this issue, or is it another Liberal broken promise?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me state, again, unequivocally that the duties imposed by the U.S. on Canadian softwood lumber are unwarranted and unfair.

We will always vigorously defend our softwood lumber industry and workers. We will do this through litigation, whether it is chapter 19 in NAFTA or chapter 10 of CUSMA, as well as at the WTO, and I raise this issue at every opportunity. We will continue to work with the United States on this. We have consistently said, and reiterated, that it is in the best interests of both countries to reach a negotiated settlement.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would say the Liberals are all talk and no action, but there is not even talk.

On Friday, I questioned the trade minister, and she was unable to say she had taken any action whatsoever to raise this issue with her U.S. counterparts. She could not point to a single meeting or call that had taken place since the May 21 tariff increase announcement, despite claiming it was her “top priority”.

When will the minister stand up for Canadians and start doing her job?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a top priority for the government. I have raised this issue with the President and with the USTR, as well with the commerce secretary.

We have been working with Canadian industry, Canadian labour and Canadian communities that this issue impacts. I can assure members that I continue to vigorously defend the Canadian softwood lumber industry and the forestry sector, and we will continue to do this important work.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on April 22, Ottawa announced new greenhouse gas reduction targets of at least 40% by 2030. That same day, the Bloc Québécois asked the government if it would insert that target in its Bill C-12.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage promised this would happen and said, “Yes, we will include Canada's 2030 climate change target in Bill C-12.” His government not only failed to do that, or to tell the truth, but it has also prevented the Bloc Québécois from inserting it in its place. Why is that?

[*English*]

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the best available science tells us that we must achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, and we are committed to meeting this target. With this legislation, we are enshrining into law the commitment. We will be strengthening the law to include a review in 2025 for our 2030 target and interim emissions reduction for 2026, and enshrining the principle of progression of future targets.

This legislation is a win for Canadians who expect their parliamentarians to have a real plan to fight climate change and to build their economy. We look forward to the Bloc supporting this legislation.

● (1440)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if the minister is so sure of his plan, why did he not put the targets in the act? The government is categorically refusing to commit to meeting its own climate action targets.

As a result, these targets are still only about as binding as a New Year's resolution, and the federal government never follows through on its resolutions. It failed to meet its 2012 Kyoto targets, it failed to meet its 2015 Copenhagen targets, and it failed to meet its 2020 Paris targets.

How can we trust the government's word if it refuses to put these targets in the act?

[*English*]

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we flattened the curve on pollution. The Canadian net-zero emissions accountability act provides strong accountability and transparency mechanisms. The bill includes measures similar to the Bloc's Bill C-215, and several amendments already adopted by the committee address many of the Bloc's concerns.

We await the outcome of the committee's work with great interest as we continue to move this important bill for Canadians and for future generations.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at this stage in the study, there are no actual figures in the act. The Minister of Canadian Heritage promised on April 22 that, “Yes, we will include Canada's 2030 climate change target in Bill C-12.”

He made a promise in the House on behalf of the government, directly contradicting the government's refusal to put that target in Bill C-12. The minister made a promise to our constituents, and his government is breaking that promise. Will the Minister of Heritage apologize to the House and to Quebeckers?

[*English*]

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian net-zero emissions accountability act has robust accountability and transparency, just to name a few aspects. It has a legally binding process for the federal government to set climate targets and bring forward plans to meet those targets, rigorous ongoing process reports, yearly reports by the independent advisory body and ongoing audits by the Office of the Auditor General.

As we have previously stated, we are open to amendments. We are pleased to see members from the Bloc and NDP help move Bill C-12 to committee.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the Minister for Crown-Indigenous Relations was asked why it took two years to release $27 million in previously announced funding to uncover what were believed to be thousands of indigenous children buried in unmarked graves at residential schools across the country, the minister said that the communities were not ready. Truth and reconciliation chair Murray Sinclair pointed out that even with limited research, they found several burial sites, yet he said, "Nothing has been done by the government to follow that up."

Why has the money not been made available until now?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in memory of the children who went missing and in support of their grieving families and communities, we have provided $33.8 million in budget 2019 for the calls to action 72 to 76. The calls to action 72 to 73 were through the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to develop registries on deaths and burials in cemeteries. In implementing calls to action 74 to 76, we are engaging with the communities on how to best support them in finding their lost children and how to access the $27 million.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in committee, we heard from Ms. Wesley-Esquimaux of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, who called out the minister's comments that indigenous peoples were not ready for that money. She stated that the minister's comments were simply untrue, that they had been working for many years and that the government had been told time and time again that the need for action was urgent.

In echoing TRC commissioner Marie Wilson's comments last week, could the minister explain why it took the discovery of 215 children to elicit urgent action from the government?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the opportunity to explain the process since the $10 million went to the National Centre on Truth and Reconciliation in 2016. We then had to move forward with the NCTR to figure out what the appropriate amount for the 2019 budget would be, and then it was made clear to us that we had to engage with communities as to what the program design would be. That meant that they wanted indigenous-led, community-based, culturally sensitive as well as survivor-centric, and they wanted flexibility in the program. That is exactly what we are able to deliver now and they will have access to it.

● (1445)

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, within hours of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report being released in December of 2015, the Prime Minister pledged to implement the calls to action. Six years later, the government's own website, not updated since September of 2019, acknowledges a failure to get this done. Only a dozen of the 90-plus calls to action have been completed. When asked when they would be fulfilled, the minister would not offer a specific timeline.

Will the minister promise right here to deliver a comprehensive plan to address calls to action 71 through 76 by July 1?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I want to remind the member that over 80% of the 76 calls to action under the sole or shared responsibility of the federal government are completed or well under way; the recent passage of Bill C-5, as an example, Bill C-8, Bill C-15. This will result in sustained and consistent action to advance Canada's shared journey of healing and reconciliation.

Ms. Mumilaaq Qaqqaq (Nunavut, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, the head of Canada, likes to use buzzwords like "reconciliation" to look good on the world stage without actually fulfilling basic human rights on Canadian soil. The Government of Canada destroyed records on residential schools, erasing vital information. The Catholic church holds the remaining records on these institutions.

If indigenous lives are so important, as the Prime Minister likes to portray, why would he not do everything in his power instead of taking knees and making apologies? Why will the government not force the church to provide information that is rightfully ours?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I totally agree with the member, except for the destruction of documents by the Canadian government, which were all handed over to the National Centre on Truth and Reconciliation.

The residential school survivors and those dealing with it need to hear the Pope apologize explicitly for the Catholic Church's role in this tragedy to unlock the healing and support closure. The Prime Minister formally requested an apology when he met with Pope Francis at the Vatican, and our government continues to call on the Pope to apologize and to release all relevant documents. The Pope's statement on Sunday does not go far enough. The—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it took two years after the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls for the government to release a national action plan without an implementation schedule, what Professor Pam Palmater has deemed is code for "we didn't come up with a plan". Chief Judy Wilson of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs has called it another of the "flowery reconciliation speeches that fall short in action", referring to it as a government delay tactic.

What date will the government release an implementation plan and finally act to end genocide against indigenous women, girls and two-spirit?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her ongoing advocacy. Our hearts are always with the survivors and families of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls and two-spirited, LGBTQQIA+ people.

On June 3, we were with all the contributing partners across Canada when they came together to release the national action plan and the federal pathway to finally end the ongoing tragedy. This is supported by budget 2021, with $2.2 billion over five years to implement the concrete measures that will truly keep indigenous women and girls and two-spirited, LGBTQQIA+ people safe.

* * *

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the pandemic-related lockdown measures dealt a hard blow to the tourism and hospitality sector, the backbone of the economy of West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country. Small businesses throughout my riding have been clear that the Canada emergency wage subsidy has been a lifeline without which they would have had to close their doors for good.

As restrictions on gathering are lifted and our economy can safely reopen, businesses are planning to hire more staff and do their part in creating well-paying middle-class jobs. Could the minister share what this government is doing to support them?

● (1450)

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country for his strong advocacy for small businesses.

We have been there for businesses every step of the way in this pandemic. On the road to recovery, we are investing $600 million with the Canada recovery hiring program. This will help businesses hire new workers, hire back workers or increase the hours and wages of existing workers and support a quicker recovery.

We are going to continue to be there for Canadian businesses and workers.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I ask this question yet again. President Biden ordered U.S. intelligence to investigate two likely theories on the origin of the coronavirus: one that it originated from human contact with an infected animal, or the other that it came from a lab accident at the Wuhan Institute of Virology.

The government says that it supports the U.S. investigation. Given that government scientists at the Winnipeg lab worked closely with the Wuhan lab, will U.S. investigators have access to these government scientists and their relevant documents, including lab notes?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague rightly pointed out, we support President Biden's call to fully investigate the origin of the COVID virus using the best science and information available. We in Canada will help in any way we can.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the government can start helping by answering questions that we have been asking about the national security breaches at the Winnipeg lab. Clearly, there were breaches and we need answers.

When will it start answering the questions we are asking: Why were the two government scientists fired from the Winnipeg lab? Where are these two government scientists? How did a Chinese military scientist get access to this top-level lab in Winnipeg? Were there any unauthorized transfers of materials from Winnipeg to Wuhan?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have written to the chair of the NSICOP committee to refer this issue to the appropriate place to study these questions. As well, the agency has provided the committee the unredacted documents through the House clerk.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has an agreement with China that allowed Dr. Qiu to send information and virus samples to the Wuhan Institute of Virology.

In 2019, less than two months after Dr. Qiu coordinated a shipment of several viruses to China, including Ebola, she was escorted out of the National Microbiology Lab and the RCMP opened an investigation. It is obvious that Dr. Qiu was fired for a far more serious reason than shipping virus samples in accordance with established protocols.

Canadians have concerns, and they want to know why the Prime Minister is not telling them the truth.

[*English*]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, as the member opposite probably just heard, I have written to the chair of the NSICOP committee, which is the appropriate level of security to review items of national security. I have referred this issue to the chair. As well, the agency has provided the unredacted documents to the House clerk to work with that committee.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I see that the minister is trying to refer this issue to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, but that is not a regular parliamentary committee.

We now know that China stole Canadian intellectual property concerning the development of vaccines through CanSino and is now attacking our top-secret laboratories.

When the recipients in Beijing received Dr. Qiu's package on April 1, 2019, they sent us an email stating, "Looking forward to our further co-operation in the future."

If we were already co-operating, what did Dr. Qiu mean? Is the Prime Minister trying to hide information from Canadians?

[*English*]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, researchers across the country have been working together and, indeed, with other international researchers to understand COVID-19, to develop vaccines, to create testing and screening equipment, and understand the virus as it evolves.

As the member knows, in this particular situation, these researchers are no longer with the lab. In fact, the director of the lab has been very clear that there is no connection with their departure and COVID-19.

It is irresponsible of the member to try and draw that link. I have referred this item to the appropriate committee with the appropriate level of security to review the documents.

● (1455)

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, 30 years have passed since the Broadcasting Act was last updated. That was before social media.

Back in 1991, a "web giant" meant a massive spider in a horror movie. The Internet was slow as molasses, and people were more likely to have pagers than cell phones. Thirty years ago, the Conservative Party still had the word "progressive" in its name.

My question is for the heritage minister. Does he think we can afford to waste even more time before we pass Bill C-10 to modernize the Broadcasting Act?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

The answer to his question is very simple. No, we cannot afford to waste any more time before passing Bill C-10. Every month that goes by costs our artists, musicians and technicians $70 million. We are losing $70 million a month. We have to pass Bill C-10 as quickly as possible.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the member for Lethbridge told an Alberta newspaper that Quebec artists support Bill C-10 because they are outdated and rely on government grants as they are not able to make a living off of the art they are producing. She added that Canadians do not want the songs, films and material these artists produce.

Offering a weak apology on Twitter is not enough to make up for insulting thousands of artists across Quebec and Canada.

Will the minister join us in condemning these ignorant comments, which show a complete lack of knowledge of Quebec culture and unbelievable contempt for Quebec creators, and call on the Leader of the Opposition to apologize for his member's misguided comments?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with my hon. colleague. The comments made by the member for Lethbridge are unacceptable. She must apologize to the House.

The Leader of the Opposition must also apologize to the House. I am curious to know whether, according to the member for Lethbridge's criteria, Quebec's Michel Charette, who stars in *District 31*, a show that draws a record-breaking 1.8 million viewers every day, is one of those outdated artists.

Does she think that this is material Canadians do not want? That is unacceptable.

The member for Lethbridge and the Leader of the Opposition must apologize.

[*English*]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government consultation period for the Canada Grain Act ended on April 30. My colleagues and I have heard from many stakeholders who participated in the consultations. On May 13, I sent the Minister of Agriculture a letter explaining that stakeholders are frustrated because of the lack of information available to them regarding the government's next steps.

When will the government tell the stakeholders what the plan is and offer a timeline for releasing the results of the consultation?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure my colleague that we conducted in-depth consultations with stakeholders across the country and we had a great response.

Departmental officials are drafting a report summarizing all of these consultations. We will then have to conduct further studies, because we want to make evidence-based recommendations. Reviewing the Canada Grain Act is a priority for us.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has now been over a month since I sent the immigration minister an open letter, co-signed by 14 businesses in my region, to speak out about the endless delays and unnecessary red tape involved in processing applications from foreign workers. These businesses are waiting for landscapers, welders, mechanics and machinists, and they no longer know where to turn to get their files moving.

Santa Claus is basically their last chance. At least he answers all the letters he receives.

Will the minister finally take action for the good of these businesses?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are on track to reach the threshold established by Quebec in 2021, which includes the family class and temporary foreign workers. We have also added resources. We implemented reunification policies, which are proof of our progress and our work.

I will continue to work with my colleague to ensure that these businesses are able to bring in all the immigrants they need.

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the end of the pandemic is in sight, and thousands of businesses want to participate in the economic recovery. Unfortunately, the Liberal government is unable to find solutions to help these men and women who want to save their businesses by hiring foreign workers.

Setting aside the statistics and the many months of waiting, can the government take measures to give these businesses quick access to labour and thus support hard-working individuals and business owners in Canada?

● (1500)

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for his important question.

This year, we have already admitted approximately 8,500 skilled workers to Quebec, along with thousands of foreign workers. Not only are we going to meet the immigration thresholds established by the Government of Quebec in 2021, but we are also going to recover from the pandemic.

We will always work in co-operation with the Government of Quebec to support the economic recovery.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, whether we are taking a walk in the park or a hike in the woods, green spaces improve our well-being and mental health and provide an escape from everyday life. Our forests also offer numerous environmental benefits, like improving biodiversity and capturing carbon.

Can the Minister of Natural Resources inform the House of the progress our government has made in its ambitious commitment to plant two billion trees over the next 10 years?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

There is no path to net-zero emissions that does not involve our forests. Last Friday, I announced that over 30 million trees would be planted by the end of the year. Some are already in the ground. We are building new, permanent forests, large enough to cover an area twice the size of Prince Edward Island. They are absorbing and storing carbon and creating thousands of jobs.

We are planting today for a better future.

* * *

[*English*]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's Internet costs are among the highest in the world and this is one of the few countries where they continue to rise. On May 27, the CRTC reversed its own decision to reduce the broadband access costs from the large telecoms to the smaller Internet service providers, such as TekSavvy, headquartered in Chatham. Whereas the railway secured Canada's future 136 years ago, Canadians need reliable, reasonably priced access to broadband to secure our future today.

Is the government breaking its own promise to reduce rates, or what is the plan?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would say to the hon. member that we share the same goals of affordability, competition and innovation. That is why we have been relentless in promoting competition to lower prices while working to improve quality and increase the coverage of telecom services across our nation.

As the member knows, we are ensuring that Canadians pay affordable prices for reliable Internet services regardless of where they live in our nation. Every time I have a call with telecom companies or Internet service providers, I always push for better outcomes for consumers and for lower prices. I will continue to do that.

* * *

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal-Bloc coalition cutting off debate on its Internet-censorship bill is an act of cowardice by this government. It is doing this because it is afraid of the public backlash against going down in history as the government that trampled over Pierre Trudeau's Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In my riding of Saskatoon West, constituents have made it clear that they do not want this Prime Minister to censor their social media posts. Bill C-10 will censor Canadians' Facebook and TikTok posts.

Will the government do the courageous thing, reverse course and stop Bill C-10?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, according to the member for Lethbridge, "That arts fund actually goes toward a very niche group of artists that are stuck in the early 1990s because they haven't managed to be competitive on new platforms." She added, "These artists are not able to make a living off of what they are producing, so they require grants that are given by the government."

I would like to know if a series like *Heartland*, in its 15th season and filmed in Alberta, is one of those outdated series. Would the member wish to comment on *Schitt's Creek*, a winner of nine Emmys and also one of those series that is stuck in the early 1990s because it has not managed to be competitive on the new platforms?

* * *

● (1505)

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been reported that more than half of $2.9 billion in Canadian emergency student benefit funds went to those in households with more than $100,000 in annual income. Supporting young Canadians, a group that has been particularly hard hit by this pandemic, is critical. It is also this younger generation that will be paying off this government's record-breaking debt for decades.

Why not target relief to the students who need it the most?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over 700,000 students had help through the Canada emergency student benefit last year and just last week, Statistics Canada released a report saying that our lower-wage workers, women and racialized Canadians were all supported at rates higher than their counterparts. We put forth a $7.2-billion package of measures for students last summer. We added $4.7 billion of support last year in the fall economic statement and we have added more support this year in budget 2021. We will be there for students.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, despite making up only 4% of the population, indigenous women and girls represented 28% of the homicides perpetuated against women in 2019. Two years ago, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls released its final report and calls for justice, which called for a national action plan to end the violence. Last week, contributing partners from across Canada came together to release that national action plan.

Could the minister update the House on the federal component of that action plan?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his exemplary leadership. We honour the strength and resilience of the families and survivors for their decades of advocacy for justice, healing and prevention.

The federal pathway is a key contribution to the national action plan that will lead to lasting and transformative change. It outlines the concrete actions to end systemic racism, sexism, ableism and economic inequality: root causes of violence against indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, who deserve to feel safe wherever they live.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, members of the Canadian Armed Forces strive every day to uphold the highest standards when it comes to military conduct and Canadians trust that they will always do so. However, we have seen repeated failures of senior leaders to uphold those same standards whether we are talking about sexual misconduct, the torture of detainees transferred into local custody in Afghanistan, or now the failure to report possible war crimes by Iraqi troops that Canadians were supposed to be training.

Will the Minister of National Defence break this pattern of looking the other way when it comes to human rights violations, and will he now order an independent inquiry into the failure to report possible war crimes in both Iraq and Afghanistan?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are absolutely committed to making sure that we respect human rights and international law in all of our operations. Training is always done for our members, and any unit that our members train goes through some rigorous training. Every situation like this is rigorously looked at and the current allegations are being looked at by the military police.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, GP): Mr. Speaker, the current generation of youth grew up acutely aware of the urgency to fight the climate crisis and the multitude of challenges facing our planet, from deforestation to environmental racism and pollution generated by plastic waste.

Youth around the world have united. Through their protests they are educating us, but most importantly, they are demanding action and they expect accountability. They want a glimpse of hope and the German High Court handed them a victory: It ordered the government to expand its plan to reduce carbon emissions to zero by 2050 and required lawmakers to make long-term climate commitments.

Will the government demonstrate that Canada is learning from this legal precedent and commit to achieving its 2030 climate goal? Will it formally recognize the rights of this generation and the next generation—

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her continued climate advocacy and passion on the file. We have a bold and ambitious plan to protect our environment, reduce emissions and create a sustainable economy for our kids and grandkids.

In fact, the former leader of the B.C. Green Party and leading climate change scientist, Andrew Weaver, called our pollution pricing plan the gold standard. He described our plan as an innovative and inspiring climate plan, and we agree.

* * *

● (1510)

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Vancouver Granville, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, in 2020, the UN Secretary-General noted that the "approach to and handling of mass graves has too rarely been respectful or lawful". Canada has no legal framework to address the Tk'emlúps site or any other sites that will come to light. The legal framework led to the deaths of these children. That legal framework, the Indian Act, remains in place.

Will the Prime Minister do what is needed and establish a legal framework for mass and unmarked graves that meets human rights norms, including ensuring all records are kept and released, sites protected and criminal investigations conducted so that families can heal and are appropriately compensated?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the opportunity for the clarification.

Kukpi7 Casimir has made it very clear this was not a mass grave, although it is heartbreaking that we learned of the possibility of all the remains of children at the former Kamloops residential school.

We are reaching out to indigenous communities to make sure that all other communities, with the support of the NCTR, will be able to find their lost children, and we will make sure that this is done in a proper and legal way.

* * *

[*Translation*]

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Speaker: The hon. member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup on a point of order.

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during question period, in one of the responses we heard from the heritage minister, the sound quality was so poor that I had to remove my earpiece.

On top of that, on two occasions, two Bloc Québécois members left their microphones on at certain points, one of them continuously, which I think is totally unacceptable after 14 months of using these technologies.

When I was in Ottawa last week, I had an opportunity to observe the tight spaces the interpreters work in, crammed in like sardines, not to mention the awful conditions using technologies that hurt their ears.

Mr. Speaker, I urge you to take the necessary steps to ensure that the technology used to address the House of Commons is used appropriately, and that the sound quality when members are speaking is decent. It is very disruptive.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for bringing this matter to our attention. He is right, it is very disruptive. Every member has a responsibility to ensure that their microphone is on mute when it is not their turn to speak, and I would once again like to remind all members that it is important not to speak when your microphone is on but it is not your turn.

The hon. member is also right about the sound quality. We were having problems, but they have been resolved. I was prepared to stop the minister, but he fixed the situation and the sound was good. If anyone is aware that there could be a problem, it might be worth checking to see if their microphone is working.

[*English*]

DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THE TRANSFER OF EBOLA AND HENIPAH VIRUSES TO THE WUHAN INSTITUTE OF VIROLOGY

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a very short point of order. The House ordered the production of unredacted documents from the Public Health Agency of Canada by the end of day last Friday.

The Minister of Health, during question period, twice indicated that the Public Health Agency of Canada had delivered the unredacted documents to the Clerk of the House. Can you confirm that that is the case, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: I can confirm, and I will be tabling the documents, the letter when we are under the rubric of Tabling of Documents this afternoon.

● (1515)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to point out that the name of the department in French is "le ministère du Patrimoine", not "Heritage".

More to the point, I want to acknowledge that I was having technical problems that I spent several minutes unsuccessfully trying to resolve with the House technicians. New equipment should be sent to me soon.

The Speaker: I would like to thank the minister, and I would remind all members that we have a fantastic IT support team.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: These people deserve our applause.

I encourage everyone to call them for any problem, no matter how small, since they are there to help us.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—ACTION TOWARD RECONCILIATION WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The House resumed from June 3 consideration of the motion.

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

[*English*]

Call in the members.

[*Translation*]

The question is on the motion.

[*English*]

May I dispense?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

● (1530)

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

(Division No. 131)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Alleslev
Allison	Angus
Arnold	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bagnell	Baker
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Benzen	Bergen
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Bittle	Blaikie
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Boudrias
Boulerice	Bragdon
Brassard	Bratina
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Cannings	Carrie
Casey	Chabot
Champoux	Charbonneau
Chen	Chiu
Chong	Cooper
Cumming	Dabrusin
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
d'Entremont	Desbiens
Desilets	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diotte
Doherty	Dong
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Drouin	Duguid
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duvall	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
Ellis	Epp
Erskine-Smith	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Fergus	Fillmore
Findlay	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Gallant	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Généreux	Genuis
Gerretsen	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Gourde	Gray
Green	Hallan
Harder	Hardie
Harris	Hoback
Housefather	Hughes
Hutchings	Ien
Jansen	Jeneroux

Johns
Jowhari
Kelloway
Kent
Khera
Kmiec
Kram
Kusie
Kwan
Lalonde
Lamoureux
Lattanzio
Lefebvre
Lemire
Liepert
Lloyd
Long
Lukiwski
MacKenzie
Maloney
Marcil
Martinez Ferrada
Mathyssen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McDonald
McKay
McLean
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Melillo
Michaud
Morantz
Morrissey
Nater
O'Connell
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Perron
Plamondon
Powlowski
Ratansi
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Robillard
Romanado
Ruff
Sahota (Brampton North)
Samson
Saroya
Scarpaleggia
Schiefke
Seeback
Sgro
Sheehan
Shin
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sloan
Soroka
Stanton
Ste-Marie
Stubbs
Tabbara
Therrien
Trudel
Uppal
van Koeverden
Vaughan
Vidal
Vignola
Wagantall
Waugh
Weiler
Jones
Julian
Kelly
Khalid
Kitchen
Koutrakis
Kurek
Kusmierczyk
Lake
Lambropoulos
Larouche
Lawrence
Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)
Lightbound
Lobb
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacGregor
Maguire
Manly
Martel
Masse
May (Cambridge)
Mazier
McColeman
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
McPherson
Mendès
Moore
Morrison
Motz
Normandin
Oliphant
Patzer
Pauzé
Petitpas Taylor
Poilievre
Qaqqaq
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Rogers
Rood
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
Saini
Sangha
Savard-Tremblay
Scheer
Schmale
Serré
Shanahan
Shields
Shipley
Simard
Singh
Sorbara
Spengemann
Steinley
Strahl
Sweet
Thériault
Tochor
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Van Popta
Vecchio
Viersen
Vis
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson
Wilson-Raybould
Yip
Yurdiga
Zann
Zuberi– — 271
Wong
Young
Zahid
Zimmer

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I appreciate the opportunity to clarify my response in the House earlier.

In one of the questions that was posed to me, I was not as clear as I could have been. To clarify, I meant to say that unredacted documents regarding the National Microbiology Lab were provided to the NSICOP.

The Speaker: I thank the member for the clarification.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1535)

[*English*]

DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THE TRANSFER OF EBOLA AND HENIPAH VIRUSES TO THE WUHAN INSTITUTE OF VIROLOGY

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Wednesday, June 2, 2021, I wish to table, in both official languages, a letter I have received from the law clerk and parliamentary counsel regarding documents relating to the transfer of Ebola and Henipah viruses to the Wuhan Institute of Virology.

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GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 19 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FINANCE

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Finance. It is in relation to Bill C-30, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 19, 2021 and other measures. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

On behalf of the committee, I want to thank all involved and give a special shout-out to the Library of Parliament analysts, who went the extra mile in providing background information, briefing notes and analysis to all members. As well, I thank the research folks of all parties, who prepare their members with background information and questions from often very different perspectives. Finally, I thank the ministerial staff, who also offer advice from their point of view. It all adds up to better information, better legislation now and ideas for the future.

* * *

PETITIONS

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to table two of the same petition today, which were initiated by constituents in Nanaimo—Ladysmith. The petitioners are really concerned about protecting British Columbia's endangered old-growth ecosystems from clear-cut logging. They know these old-growth forests provide immeasurable benefits in fighting climate change and in supporting biodiversity, as well as cultural, recreational and educational values. Over 160 people have been arrested trying to protect these forests.

The petitioners are calling upon the government to work with the Province of British Columbia and first nations to immediately halt the logging of endangered old-growth ecosystems, fund the long-term protection of old-growth ecosystems as a priority for Canada's climate action plan and reconciliation with indigenous people, support value-added forestry initiatives in partnership with first nations to ensure that Canada's forestry industry is sustainable and based on the harvesting of second- and third-growth forests, ban the export of raw logs and maximize the resources for local jobs.

The petitioners are also calling for a ban on the use of whole trees for wood pellet biofuel production, which is contrary to any climate action measures. It is really a horrible practice.

OPIOIDS

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I am presenting one petition on behalf of the constituents of Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon. The petitioners outline that every two hours there is a death from opioids in Canada. The opioid crisis is out of control.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to take steps to end the overdose deaths and injuries, provide supports for recovery and play a larger role in funding such supports.

DEFIBRILLATORS

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to present my very first petition, petition e-2317, initiated by one of my constituents in Winnipeg Centre, Mackenzie Campbell. In order to save lives in Canada, the petitioners call on the government to direct all departments, agencies and Crown corporations to install and maintain AEDs in all employee workplaces and in all areas where citizens access government services within and outside of Canada.

● (1540)

FALUN GONG

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and present three petitions.

The first petition is from folks across Canada who are deeply concerned about the treatment of the Falun Gong people. We have learned stories of organ harvesting and abuses by communist China. The petitioners are calling on the government to use Magnitsky sanctions against those responsible.

ETHIOPIA

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is in relation to the ongoing conflict in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. The petitioners are calling on the Canadian government to immediately engage with the Eritrean and Ethiopian governments in order to come to a peaceful solution. Thousands of people have lost their lives and it is a tremendously deteriorating humanitarian situation, so the petitioners would deeply appreciate Canada's involvement in this.

EQUALIZATION

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third and final petition is on behalf of folks in my home province of Alberta who are deeply concerned about the existing equalization formula of the fiscal stabilization program, which has not been changed in many years and has a cap of $170 per person. They are very concerned that the fiscal shock of the drop in oil price in 2014 has not been reflected in the economic formula and that the equalization unfairly disadvantages folks from Alberta.

TRAVEL ADVISERS

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to be able to present two petitions today on behalf of independent travel advisers in my constituency.

The petitioners would like this House to know that there are 12,000 independent travel advisers across Canada who have been largely without income for more than a year because of the implications of the COVID travel restrictions due to the pandemic. Many federal assistance programs such as CEBA, CERS, CEWS and the RRRF exclude the majority of these small business owners, leaving them to slip through the cracks.

The first of these two petitions ask the Government of Canada to provide sector-specific funding for independent travel advisers and extend the qualifications of the RRRF in urban areas to include sole proprietors.

The second petition I am presenting to the House today is very simple. These independent travel advisers are asking that the CRB for travel advisers be extended six months past the lifting of all travel advisories, as the income they specifically receive is 100% based on commission, and it takes approximately that long for them to start receiving those commissions.

ETHIOPIA

Mrs. Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I have the privilege of presenting three petitions to the House.

The first petition is calling on the Government of Canada to respond to the violence in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. Petitioners are asking the government to call for an end to the violence in the region and to help to ensure that the innocent victims of the violence are able to access humanitarian aid. Canada has a history of supporting democracy around the world, and in addition to calling for an end to the violence, we need to do our part to ensure the fairness and legitimacy of the democratic process in Ethiopia.

● (1545)

FALUN GONG

Mrs. Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I will present today calls on the government to use the Magnitsky act to sanction the perpetrators of the persecution and violence against the Falun Gong in China. There are credible reports of appalling human rights abuses against the Falun Gong, including forced organ harvesting.

The petitioners call attention to the former Chinese Communist Party leader, Jiang Zemin, and his cohorts whose eradication campaign against Falun Gong, including the extrajudicial torture and killing of Falun Gong practitioners in large numbers, has continued with impunity for the past 19 years. The Canadian government needs to recognize this and take action by freezing assets and barring entry into Canada.

CONVERSION THERAPY

Mrs. Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the final petition I will present today relates to Bill C-6. Just like every member of this House, these petitioners want to see conversion therapy banned. No Canadian should be subject to a harmful and degrading practice that seeks to change their sexuality against their will.

They also recognize, however, that the definition of conversion therapy used in Bill C-6 is a poorly written definition. The definition is not used by any medical body in the world, and it will cause this bill to ban not only the harmful practices we all want banned, but also the support that helps certain LGBTQ Canadians. As we debate this bill together today, let us not forget the countless people who have benefited from the type of support this bill will ban, and that they have asked us not to forget about them as we craft this legislation.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. A few members have been giving their personal opinions on petitions. This member in particular went as far as to say that when we are debating this bill, we should consider x, y and z, which she brought up in her petition. We are not supposed to be referencing our own personal positions on petitions. We are supposed to just represent what is in the petition, the content of the petition.

I was wondering if you would like to weigh in on that, Mr. Speaker, to remind members of that rule when presenting petitions.

The Speaker: I think the hon. member did an excellent job of reminding all hon. members.

I would also like to remind hon. members to be as concise as possible and give us the highlights of the petition, not proceed to debate it.

The hon. member for Peace River—Westlock.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to present a few petitions.

The first petition I am bringing to the attention of the House is signed by Canadians from across Canada. They are concerned with the Senate amendment to Bill C-7 that would allow Canadians with mental illness as their sole medical condition to access euthanasia.

The petitioners recognize that suicide is the leading cause of death for Canadians between the ages of 10 and 19. Therefore, they are calling on the government to reject the Senate amendments to prevent those struggling with mental illness from obtaining assisted death and to protect Canadians struggling with mental illness by facilitating treatment and recovery, not death.

● (1550)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I have to present today is from Canadians from across the country who are concerned about the treatment of the Uighur population in China. The Chinese Communist Party is using methods such as forced sterilization and abortion and birth suppression, and there is a mounting body of evidence that the Uighurs are undergoing anti-religious indoctrination, arbitrary detention, separation of children from families, invasive surveillance and the destruction of cultural sites.

The petitioners are calling on Canada to use the Magnitsky act to bring justice to the individuals suffering in China and for the Government of Canada to formally recognize the treatment of Uighurs in China as a genocide.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I am presenting today is from Canadians from across Canada who are concerned about forced organ harvesting that happens around the world. The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to pass two bills: Bill C-350 and Bill S-240. These bills would make it illegal for a Canadian to go abroad to gain access to illegally harvested organs.

COMMUNITY POLICING IN ALBERTA

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I am presenting today is from Canadians from across Canada, mostly from Alberta, who are concerned about the relationship with the RCMP and Canada. The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to work with Alberta to help Alberta introduce its own police force.

They are calling on the Government of Canada to make a public statement that would encourage the Alberta government to terminate the community policing agreement with the RCMP as per the recommendation of the Fair Deal Panel, that there would be no penalty levied against the Province of Alberta from the Government of Canada, and that the Government of Canada would support the transition to a province-wide community police force, as is Alberta's constitutional right.

ETHIOPIA

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I am presenting today is from Canadians from across Canada. They are concerned about the situation in Ethiopia, particularly in the Tigray region. The petitioners are calling on Canada to take the following actions: immediately call for an end to violence and for restraint from all sides in that conflict, call for an international investigation into credible reports of war crimes and gross human rights violations, and engage directly and consistently with the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments on this conflict.

FALUN GONG

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I have today is from Canadians from across this country who are calling on the Government of Canada to impose Magnitsky sanctions on leaders in the Chinese Communist Party. The petitioners are calling for the recognition of the treatment of the Falun Gong using state apparatus, including the extrajudicial torture and killing of Falun Gong practitioners in large numbers over the last 19 years.

Therefore, the petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to deploy all legal sanctions, including the Magnitsky act and barring entry to Canada, against the perpetrators of the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners.

EQUALIZATION

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Finally, Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from Albertans from across Alberta calling on the Government of Canada to remove the per capita cap on the fiscal stabilization payments. The fall economic statement increased the per capita limit from $60 to $170, and that cap had not been changed since 1987. The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to remove that cap entirely, given that there is no good reason why it is there. They are calling on the Government of Canada to work to ensure that equalization is fair and stable across this country.

The Speaker: Presenting petitions, the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan has two minutes and seven seconds for whatever he can get in, and then he will have to continue the next time we present petitions.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it seems my reputation precedes me. I have many petitions to present today, and although I intend to go through them quickly, I do not think I will be able to get through all of them in the time we have, but here we go.

The first petition is in support of Bill S-204, a bill that would make it a criminal offence for a person to go abroad and receive an organ in a case where there has not been consent. It would also create a mechanism by which a person could be deemed inadmissible to Canada if that person has been involved in forced organ harvesting and trafficking. Petitioners are in support of Bill S-204. They would like to see it passed as quickly as possible.

ETHIOPIA

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition, and my colleagues have presented petitions on this, highlights the situation in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. Petitioners and concerned Canadians are highlighting the situation in Ethiopia, in Tigray and more broadly. They are calling for an end to conflict, restraint from all sides, humanitarian access, independent monitoring and international investigations around credible reports of war crimes and gross violations of human rights. They want to see the Government of Canada engage directly with the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments regarding this conflict and promote short-, medium- and long-term election monitoring.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third petition highlights the sad reality that the current government has not yet recognized that Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims in China are subject to an ongoing genocide. Petitioners want to see that recognition take place from Parliament, which has happened, and from the government, which has not happened. They want to see the use of Magnitsky sanctions in this case, as well as reforms to supply chain legislation to prevent the importation of products made with slave labour.

EQUALIZATION

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fourth petition highlights an issue that is of critical importance to my province: the issue of the fiscal stabilization fund. This is a mechanism by which provinces are able to receive support during unusual fiscal circumstances.

Petitioners note that the government has indicated its intention to increase the cap, but that is not good enough from the perspective of fiscal fairness. Petitioners are asking the government to remove the per capita cap on the fiscal stabilization, to pay the Province of Alberta the $4.6 billion that it would have received without the cap, and to establish fairness in terms of fiscal stabilization payments.

The next petition—

The Speaker: I am afraid I have to stop the hon. member there. We have just run out of time. I let him finish off.

I do want to compliment the hon. member. He was very concise and very precise in his presentations, and I look forward to tomorrow, when he will continue.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 629, 630, 631, 633, 636 and 638.

[*Text*]

Question No. 629—**Mr. Gord Johns**:

With regard to the federal investments and the communities that comprise the federal electoral district of Courtenay—Alberni, between the 2018-19 and current fiscal year: (*a*) what are the federal infrastructure investments, including direct transfers to the municipalities and First Nations, for the communities of (i) Tofino, (ii) Ucluelet, (iii) Port Alberni, (iv) Parksville, (v) Qualicum Beach, (vi) Cumberland, (vii) Courtenay, (viii) Deep Bay, (ix) Dashwood, (x) Royston, (xi) French Creek, (xii) Errington, (xiii) Coombs, (xiv) Nanoose Bay, (xv) Cherry Creek, (xvi) China Creek, (xvii) Bamfield, (xviii) Beaver Creek, (xix) Beaufort Range, (xx) Millstream, (xxi) Mt. Washington Ski Resort, broken down by (A) fiscal year, (B) total expenditure, (C) project, (D) total expenditure by fiscal year; (*b*) what are the federal infrastructure investments transferred to the (i) Comox Valley Regional District, (ii) Nanaimo Regional District, (iii) Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, (iv) Powell River Regional District, broken down by (A) fiscal year, (B) total expenditure, (C) project, (D) total expenditure by fiscal year; (*c*) what are the federal infrastructure investments transferred to the Island Trusts of (i) Hornby Island, (ii) Denman Island, (iii) Lasqueti Island, broken down by (A) fiscal year, (B) total expenditure, (C) project, (D) total expenditure by fiscal year; (*d*) what are the federal infrastructure investments transferred to the (i) Ahousaht First Nation, (ii) Hesquiaht First Nation, (iii) Huu-ay-aht First Nation, (iv) Hupacasath First Nation, (v) Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, (vi) Toquaht First Nation, (vii) Tseshaht First Nation, (viii) Uchucklesaht First Nation, (ix) Ucluelet First Nation, (x) K'omoks First Nation, broken down by (A) fiscal year, (B) total expenditure, (C) projects, (D) total expenditure by fiscal year; (*e*) what are the federal infrastructure investments directed towards the Pacific Rim National Park, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) total expenditure, (iii) project, (iv) total expenditure by year; and (*f*) what are the federal infrastructure contributions to highways, including but not limited to, (i) Highway 4, (ii) Highway 19, (iii) Highway 19a, (iv) Bamfield Road, broken down by (A) fiscal year, (B) total expenditure, (C) total expenditure by fiscal year?

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the federal investments and the communities that comprise the federal electoral district of Courtenay—Alberni, Infrastructure Canada does not track information by federal electoral district.

For information on projects funded under Infrastructure Canada's contribution programs, members can visit http://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/map-carte/index-eng.html.

Question No. 630—**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval**:

With regard to Canada's constitutional system: has the government produced, since January 1, 2015, any documents, studies, opinion polls, memos or scenarios exploring the possibility of a fundamental change to Canada's constitutional system, including the abolition of the monarchy, and, if so, what are the (i) nature of the constitutional changes being considered, (ii) anticipated timeline for such a change, (iii) steps that might be taken to bring about such a change, (iv) concerns of the government with respect to the constitutional demands of the provinces?

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 government has not produced documents exploring in detail the possibility of a fundamental change to Canada's constitutional system since January 1, 2015.

Question No. 631—**Mr. Philip Lawrence**:

With regard to the government's advance-purchase agreements for COVID-19 vaccines, signed with COVID-19 vaccine manufacturers, and broken down by agreement: (*a*) what is the date on which each agreement was signed with (i) Pfizer Biotech, (ii) AstraZeneca, (iii) Sanofi and GlaxoSmithKline, (iv) Covavax, (v) Medicago, (vi) Verity Pharmaceuticals Inc. & Serum Institute of India, (vii) Moderna, (viii) Johnson & Johnson; (*b*) did the government secure (i) an upfront guarantee on pricing, (ii) distribution via funding, (iii) purchasing contracts; (*c*) what was the coming into force date; and (*d*) what is the agreement's end date?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a) to date, the Government of Canada has signed nine agreements with vaccine suppliers, which include the following: i) an advance purchase agreement, APA, with Pfizer-BioNTech, which will supply up to 76 million doses of its mRNA-based vaccine, BNY162. The agreement in principle was signed on August 1, 2020; ii) an APA with AstraZeneca, which will supply 20 million doses of its viral vector vaccine candidate, AZD1222. The agreement in principle was signed on September 24, 2020; iii) an APA with Sanofi and GlaxoSmithKline, which will supply up to 72 million of doses of their protein subunit vaccine candidate and AS03 adjuvant. The agreements were signed on September 11, 2020, and September 18, 2020, respectively; iv) an APA with AstraZeneca for the supply of Canada's COVAX allocation of the AstraZeneca vaccine. This APA was signed on March 2, 2021; v) an APA with Medicago, which will supply up to 76 million doses of its virus-like particle vaccine candidate. The agreement in principle was signed on October 22, 2020; vi) a contract with Verity Pharmaceuticals Inc. and Serum Institute of India, which will supply up to two million doses of its viral vector vaccine candidate, COVISHIELD. The contract was signed February 24, 2021; vii) an APA with Moderna, which will supply 44 million doses of its mRNA-based vaccine, mRNA-1273. The agreement was signed on July 24, 2020; viii) an APA with Johnson & Johnson, which will supply up to 38 million doses of its viral vector vaccine candidate, Ad26.COV2.S. The agreement in principle was signed on August 21, 2020; and ix) an APA with Novavax, which will supply up to 76 million doses of its protein subunit vaccine candidate, NVX-CoV2373. The agreement in principle was signed on August 27, 2020.

With regard to parts (b), (c) and (d), PSPC cannot disclose details of specific vaccine agreements unilaterally, in order to respect confidentiality agreements with suppliers and protect our negotiating position. We continue to have discussions with suppliers about opportunities to share information publicly.

Question No. 633—**Mr. Philip Lawrence**:

With regard to the government's rentals of warehouses in or near Shanghai, China, since January 1, 2020: what are the details of each contract, including the (i) date signed, (ii) vendor or firm, (iii) contract value, (iv) purpose of the contract or reason for needing warehouse?

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers.

Global Affairs Canada has issued two contracts for moving and storage services in or near Shanghai since January 1, 2020. Global Affairs Canada contracts over $10,000 are proactively disclosed. The two contracts have been proactively disclosed at:

https://search.open.canada.ca/en/ct/id/dfatd-maecd,C-2020-2021-Q1-00195 and https://search.open.canada.ca/en/ct/id/dfatd-maecd,C-2020-2021-Q1-00198.

Question No. 636—**Mr. Arnold Viersen**:

With regard to the Canadian Passport Order, since November 4, 2015, in order to prevent the commission of any act or omission referred to in subsection 7(4.1) of the Criminal Code: how many passports has the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship (i) refused, (ii) revoked, (iii) cancelled, broken down by month?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since 2015, in order to prevent the commission of any act or omission referred to in subsection 7(4.1) of the Criminal Code, there have been, in response to (i), eight refusals to issue a passport in accordance with subsection 9(2) of the Canadian Passport Order; and, in response to (ii) and (iii), 13 revocations/cancellations in accordance with subsection 9(2), subsection 10(1) and paragraph 11.1(1)(a) of the Canadian Passport Order.

Question No. 638—**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall**:

With regard to fraudulent or suspected fraud cases related to the COVID-19 relief programs discovered by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and concerns that these cases are not being referred to the RCMP: (*a*) excluding instances where spouses share bank accounts, how many instances is the CRA aware of where the same bank account number has been used in applications from multiple individuals, or fraudsters claiming to be multiple individuals; (*b*) in how many instances in (*a*) did the CRA (i) stop the payment, (ii) make the payment without verifying the authenticity of the application and knowing it was suspicious, (iii) verify the authenticity of the application; (*c*) how many cases is the CRA aware where the same bank account has been used for more than (i) five, (ii) 10, (iii) 25, (iv) 50, (v) 100 applications; (*d*) who at the CRA is responsible for ensuring that this type of suspected fraud is reported to the RCMP for investigation; and (*e*) how many fraudulent or suspected fraud cases related to COVID-19 relief programs has the CRA referred to the RCMP, since March 1, 2020, broken down by month and by program?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in considering this question, it is important to note that there may be legitimate reasons why multiple individuals may have used one bank account on their emergency benefit applications. This criteria in and of itself does not demonstrate suspicious nor fraudulent activity. While the CRA cannot disclose specific bank account verification procedures, a bank account is deemed acceptable to receive payments only if it meets specific validation criteria.

The CRA routinely monitors accounts for suspicious activity to detect, prevent and address potential instances of fraud, unauthorized use of stolen CRA user IDs and passwords, and unauthorized access to taxpayers' accounts. The CRA combines advanced data analytics and business intelligence gathered from many sources, including law enforcement agencies, financial institutions and leads, to support these efforts.

As soon as the CRA becomes aware of an alleged incident of identity fraud or suspects an account could be the target of a fraudster, it takes immediate precautionary measures on the client's account such as locking it to prevent transactions, conducting in-depth reviews and contacting the potential victims.

Where appropriate, the CRA works with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre, CAFC, financial institutions and local police to investigate the incident. In some cases, the CRA will also provide the taxpayer with credit protection and monitoring services.

The CRA has robust systems and tools in place to monitor, detect and investigate potential threats, and to mitigate threats when they occur. Throughout the lifespan of the COVID-19 relief programs, the CRA has adapted and has introduced new measures and controls to address suspicious activity. Safeguards are embedded within the application processes to verify an applicant's eligibility. The CRA has implemented additional controls requiring closer scrutiny of certain applications before they are processed.

With regard to part (a), the breadth of data to be analyzed to answer this question and the evolving nature over time of taxpayer direct deposit bank accounts would require extensive analysis that would not be possible to complete within the prescribed time frames under Standing Order 39(5)(a) and may yield inaccurate results; therefore, the CRA is unable to respond in the manner requested. The CRA can confirm that, once a specific bank account is confirmed as being used for suspicious or fraudulent activities, a block is put in place to prevent future payments from being emitted to that account.

With regard to part (b)(i), establishing fraud is the outcome of investigative work and analysis. Each case must be reviewed and the investigative work concludes with a confirmation of the presence of unauthorized use of taxpayer information, fraud, or the case is determined not to be founded. As the CRA's investigative work is still ongoing, it would be premature to confirm or comment on the number of fraud cases related to the COVID-19 economic relief measures or any amounts associated to them at this time.

With regard to part (b)(ii) and (iii), the CRA has controls to block suspicious applications meeting high-risk indicators from processing. Safeguards are embedded within the suite of COVID-19 relief programs application processes to stop the processing of questionable or suspicious applications until such time that the applicant has provided supporting documents to prove their identity and eligibility to prevent the issuance of unwarranted payments and to validate high-risk applications.

The CRA does not release specific information related to its review strategies, as releasing this information could jeopardize its compliance activities and the integrity of Canada's tax system.

With regard to part (c), the breadth of data to be analyzed to answer this question and the evolving nature over time of taxpayer direct deposit bank accounts would require extensive analysis that would not be possible to complete within the prescribed time frames under Standing Order 39(5)(a) and may yield inaccurate results; therefore, the CRA is unable to respond in the manner requested.

With regard to part (d), the criminal investigations program of the CRA is responsible for referring suspected fraud cases related to the COVID-19 relief programs to the RCMP.

With regard to part (e), in order to ensure the integrity of ongoing investigations, the CRA does not comment on or provide details on ongoing investigations or referrals tied to investigations.

[*English*]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 632, 634, 635, 637, 639 and 640 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Text*]

Question No. 632—**Mr. Philip Lawrence**:

With regard to the government using Bolloré Logistics for flight services between Canada and China between March 1, 2020, and December 31, 2020: (*a*) how many flights did the government contract the company for; (*b*) what are the details of each flight, including the (i) date, (ii) origin, (iii) destination, (iv) products transported by flight or purpose of flight; and (*c*) what is the total value of all the contracts related to these flights?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 634—**Mr. Philip Lawrence**:

With regard to the government's contracts for personal protective equipment (PPE), signed by Public Services and Procurement Canada since January 1, 2020: (*a*) how many contracts did the government sign for the procurement of domestic production of PPE, broken down by month; (*b*) how many contracts received a national security exemption; (*c*) what was the total number or amount of (i) hand sanitizer, (ii) disinfectant, (iii) disinfectant wipes, (iv) non-medical masks, (v) non-medical gloves, (vi) nitrile gloves, (vii) surgical masks, (viii) face shields, (ix) eye goggles or protective glasses, (x) thermometers, (xi) respirators, (xii) reusable gowns, (xiii) disposable gowns, (xiv) shoe or boot covers, purchased by the government, broken down by month; and (*d*) for each sub-part in (*c*), how much of each product was manufactured in (i) Canada, (ii) China?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 635—**Mr. Arnold Viersen**:

With regard to An Act respecting the mandatory reporting of Internet child pornography by persons who provide an Internet service, broken down by year since 2011: (*a*) how many reports has the RCMP received under section 3 of the act from a service provider or entity in Canada; (*b*) how many reports has the RCMP received under section 3 of the act from a service provider or entity outside of Canada; (*c*) how many investigations related to the offences in section 10 of the act have either been initiated or are ongoing, broken down by specific offence committed; (*d*) how many of the investigations were initiated by the RCMP; (*e*) what were the results of the investigations in (*d*); (*f*) in how many cases were charges laid under section 10 of the act; and (*g*) of the charges laid in (*f*), how many resulted in convictions?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 637—**Mr. Arnold Viersen**:

With regard to documents prepared by the government departments or agencies about cyber trafficking, cyber-sex trafficking, organ trafficking, human trafficking, slavery, modern slavery, forced labour, sex trafficking or prostitution, since November 4, 2015: for any such document, what is the (i) date, (ii) title or subject matter, (iii) type of document (routine correspondence, directive, options to consider, etc.), (iv) department's internal tracking number, (v) sender and recipient, if applicable, (vi) summary of contents?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 639—**Ms. Leah Gazan**:

With regard to legal fees paid and budgeted by the Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs: (*a*) what is the itemized breakdown of all legal fees budgeted and spent during the last five years; and (*b*) what is the itemized breakdown of all legal fees budgeted for the upcoming year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 640—**Mr. Michael Barrett**:

With regard to the Memorial to the Victims of Communism and the additional $4 million announced in the 2021 budget to the project: (*a*) what was the original total budget for the project, broken down by line item; (*b*) what is the current budget for the project, broken down by line item; (*c*) what specific delays caused the monument not to be completed in 2018, as the government stated was the schedule as recently as 2017; (*d*) what is the current projected completion date; (*e*) what are the details of all contracts and expenditures over $10,000 related to the project including (i) the date, (ii) the vendor, (iii) the description of goods or services, including quantity, (iv) the original contract value or amount, (v) the amended contract value or amount, if applicable, (vi) whether the contract was sole-sourced or awarded through a competitive bidding process; and (*f*) has any vendor, including those involved with the construction of the project, received a financial penalty from the government as a result of the project being more than three years behind schedule and, if so, what are the details of the penalty?

(Return tabled)

[*English*]

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

● (1555)

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

SITUATION IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to draw the attention of the House to an emergency situation, one that has sadly not gotten the notice or attention it deserves.

This Parliament must be engaged with foreign policy crises, and that must include emerging challenges in Africa. The Democratic Republic of Congo, or DRC, is the largest nation in sub-Saharan Africa. Currently, it is facing an insurgency while also suffering from the aftermath of a volcanic eruption and increased violence from local militias.

On May 31, the militant fighters of the ADF killed 57 civilians, including seven children, in displacement camps in eastern DRC. According to the UNHCR, the ADF has caused the displacement of over 5,800 people in the province of Ituri. As a response to this, the politicians of the DRC have voted to extend martial law for 15 days in the provinces of North Kivu and Ituri.

This recent attack by the ADF comes as the country is still struggling to deal with the volcanic eruption of Mount Nyiragongo, which is the largest natural disaster Congo has seen in nearly two decades. It left 31 people dead and over 20,000 homeless. The eruption caused an exodus from the Congolese city of Goma. The DRC also faces instability and violence from smaller local rebel groups fighting for territorial control.

Speaker's Ruling

Issues of judicial fairness have also come under the spotlight, as a court recently handed death sentences to 29 people accused of violence on May 15 after a clash between two rival groups. The sentence was handed out after a one-day session in courts.

As aid agencies and the government are grappling to manage the different threats to eastern Congo, we are also awaiting a verdict on the accusations of sexual abuse and exploitation by aid workers in Congo during the Ebola epidemic. Over 40 women have pointed a finger specifically at WHO employees, which points to the urgent need for accountability from international organizations for abuses in which they may be involved in Congo.

The multiplication of serious challenges requires greater attention and engagement from the world. As the DRC is encountering multiple deep-rooted issues, we need to recognize these issues and stand with this country to aid and support the people who are in dire need.

If this were happening closer to home, it would lead the news. We should still be talking about it. It still matters. Human lives are involved. The destabilization in the DRC affects lives and livelihoods. It also sends ripple effects throughout Africa, and it has consequences for the well-being and security of many communities around the world.

I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, to give the House an opportunity to consider this question in greater detail in the context of an emergency debate. In my view, it is an emergency that requires it.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan for his intervention. However, I am not satisfied that his request meets the requirements of the Standing Orders at this time.

While I have the opportunity, I want to remind all members that when submitting a request for an emergency debate, they should include some details so that the table and I can be prepared when the submission is made. It makes it easier to make the decision and gives us a better idea of what is coming.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

CONDUCT OF THE MEMBER FOR PONTIAC—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the question of privilege raised on May 28, 2021 by the member for Elgin—Middlesex—London concerning the conduct of the member for Pontiac.

Speaker's Ruling

During her intervention, she reported that the member for Pontiac had admitted on social media to committing a breach of conduct in front of the camera during the virtual proceedings of the House in committee of the whole last May 26. Citing the relevant authorities, she argued that this was an unprecedented breach and an offence to the dignity of the House. She added that the behaviour of members participating in the proceedings by video conference must be treated the same as that of members who are physically present in the chamber, whether or not they are on camera.

In response, the member for Kingston and the Islands agreed that it was a deplorable and unacceptable incident, while also pointing out that the member for Pontiac had accepted full responsibility and that he had stepped aside from his parliamentary secretary responsibilities and from his committee responsibilities in order to obtain the appropriate assistance. For that reason, he was again apologizing on his behalf. He concluded by saying that the incident was not a question of privilege because there was a long tradition in the House of accepting members' apologies.

[*Translation*]

The Chair has on many occasions reminded members that virtual sessions are an extension of the proceedings of the House and that their conduct must respect our rules and practices, even if they are participating remotely. I want to reiterate, yet again, the importance of everyone adjusting to the temporary measures put in place in response to the pandemic and exercising continued vigilance to prevent such incidents from recurring. As soon as a member connects to a virtual sitting and opens their camera, they are considered to be, for all intents and purposes, in the House.

● (1600)

[*English*]

There is no dispute about the facts in question, and they constitute a serious breach of the rules of decorum and an affront against the dignity of the House. *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, states, at page 60, "Any conduct which offends the authority or dignity of the House...is referred to as a contempt of the House."

[*Translation*]

I obviously take note of the apology from the member for Pontiac. He recognized that his behaviour was completely inappropriate and confirms his commitment to obtain the necessary assistance. Nevertheless, the Chair is required to determine whether the alleged facts are a breach of the rules governing contempt and thus merit priority consideration.

[*English*]

That is the case here. I would add that the new reality of members participating virtually, as well as its attendant rules, is unquestionably exceptional in the history of this House, but it is not without challenges. As such, more attention should be paid to this general and fundamental issue, perhaps even more so than to the more limited question on which I am required to rule today.

For those reasons, the Chair rules that there is a prima facie question of privilege. I thus invite the member to move the appropriate motion.

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I move:

> That the prima facie contempt, concerning the misconduct of the Member for Pontiac committed in the presence of the House, be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

I will be sharing my time with the member for Banff—Airdrie.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I certainly commend your ruling. It is important that this matter be examined. Obviously, when we have a case of someone literally exposing themselves to the House on two different occasions, that is a pretty serious matter and one that does deserve to be reviewed by the procedure and House affairs committee.

I would also note that what we have seen is maybe a bit of a pattern of a general degradation of decorum and debate in the chamber by the fact that we have had the hybrid type of proceedings. No one denies that this has been necessary because we have been dealing with a pandemic. Certainly, we have seen everything from issues with connections, sound quality, right through to instances like we have seen in the case of the member for Pontiac on a couple of occasions.

A lot of that stems from the fact that people are a bit more relaxed and comfortable because they are at home or in their offices. Sometimes members forget that they are still in proceedings of the House of Commons. It is something that is very difficult, if not impossible, to do when we are here in the chamber. We understand the gravity and the respect that we must provide this institution when we are part of the proceedings here in the chamber, whether we are speaking, or observing debate or preparing for our opportunity to speak. I think that relaxation does lead to things like this.

I look forward very soon to the day when we are able to see the end of hybrid proceedings, as we see vaccination rates go up in the country, etc., and have the opportunity for all members to be back in the House of Commons, where we belong and where we all want to be. Hopefully, that will help to prevent instances like this as well as bring back elevated debate and decorum in this place.

Again, I look forward to that opportunity very soon for all of us to be back in the chamber in person, so hopefully we can move on without these kinds of instances in the future.

● (1605)

The Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, I request that the motion be adopted on division.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried on division.

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-6, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (conversion therapy), be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 16 minutes.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if Parliament is seeking to ban something, then it is very important that Parliament clearly know and understand what it is banning. Parliament should be careful to precisely identify the things that it wishes to ban so not to accidentally, through sloppy legislative drafting or through the mal-intent of some and the fear of others, ban things that it does not officially intend to ban.

Whatever may be said about the government's intention in banning something, good intentions are clearly not enough. If it is banning a thing, then it must correctly identify the thing that it wishes to ban, and ban that and that alone.

A legislature might wish, for example, to ban violence, but in the process accidentally also ban legitimate acts of self-defence. A legislature might legitimately wish to ban certain toxic substances, but should still be careful to consider the reasonableness of exceptions, considering all the cases in which those substances are used, such as research or secure technological applications.

If the government said that it was going to take tough measures to combat hard drugs, I would likely support those measures. However, if it miswrote the definition of hard drugs to include all potentially addictive substances, including caffeine or alcohol, then I would vote against those measures. It is not because I do not want to stop the use of hard drugs, but because I would object to the misuse of that term to apply to things which were not in fact hard drugs.

It should be a simple thing to say, in general, that when legislation is debated, the details matter, yet too often the rhetoric we hear from the other side invokes good intentions as the beginning and the end of the argument. When powerful people, in this case parliamentarians, do sloppy or imprecise work, even with good intentions, the results can be disastrous.

The government says that this is a bill to ban conversion therapy, so then what is conversion therapy? As I have said, if we are to ban it, then we must first know what it is and how it will be defined in law. This conversation, in general, has been frustrated by the fact that the government toggles back and forth between two very different definitions. One definition is what conversion therapy has actually meant for as long as the term has been used up until the

tabling of the legislation. The other is the definition that has been used in the bill. These are two very different definitions. We are on the verge of banning the wrong thing, based on a bad definition.

Let us first look at the historical or traditional definition of what constitutes conversion therapy. About 100 years ago, the world saw the emergence of pseudoscientific practices which purported to change a person's sexual orientation. These involved the use of a medley of coercion, shaming, violence, physical and psychological abuse, electric shock, ice baths, hyper-sexualized heterosexual experiences, etc.

When this matter was first raised in the House, I spent some time reading, watching and listening to stories of people who had been victims of conversion therapy, and was absolutely horrified by the experiences that some people described. Conversion therapy is wrong and it should be banned, and we should be clear about why.

It is not illegal to have an opinion about when, where or how people should have sex. Indeed, it is quite normal for people to make choices about sexual behaviour and to, in certain cases, choose to limit their own sexual experiences based on whatever factors they think are important or to share their opinions about these matters with those around them. If there was something wrong with giving advice about when to have or not to have sex, we would be driving a whole industry of therapists and relationship advice columnists out of business.

However, conversion therapy is something totally different. We can all agree, I hope, that degrading people, making them feel less valuable or less human because of sexual or romantic feelings or behaviour is never acceptable. A belief in universal immutable human dignity is foundational to our way of life. Nobody's orientation or behaviour justifies subjecting them to violence, bullying or degradation.

If we were actually working to try to get consensus in this place, then that really could be the basis for an agreement. Conversion therapy, as it has been historically defined and understood, is a bad thing, is contrary to human dignity and should be banned. I think we actually all agree on that.

Notably, there has, for a number of years, been a conversion therapy ban in the municipality where I live. The definition of conversion therapy used in Strathcona County's bylaw on the subject is as follows:

> "Conversion Therapy" means an attempt to change an individual's sexual orientation, gender identity, gender preference, or gender expression; an attempt to convert an individual from one orientation, identity, preference, or expression to another. Conversion therapy includes various physical treatments, chemical or hormonal treatments, drug treatments, counselling, or behaviour modification through shaming or emotionally coercive or traumatic stimuli. Conversion therapy does not include clinical assessment and treatment by a medical professional that explores all aspects of an individual's sexual orientation, gender identity, gender preference, or gender expression, or that explores an age- or developmental-level-appropriate use of gender transition to align an individual's anatomical features with the individual's gender identity.

That is a pretty good definition. Any time this sort of thing is put in criminal law, it probably requires an extra level of scrutiny beyond what could happen at the municipal level. However, I would generally credit our municipal leaders in getting it right. They were able to write a definition that identified conversion therapy as pertaining to a quasi-therapeutic context in which a change to sexual orientation or other characteristics is brought about through shaming, emotional coercion or traumatic stimuli.

The work of this one municipal council made up of nine people shows us that it is possible to get the definition right. That is where we should be in terms of definitions when we talk about banning conversion therapy.

● (1610)

However, Bill C-6 uses a false definition of conversion therapy. As amended at committee, with the amendments carrying the support of Liberal and NDP members only, it now defines conversion therapy as:

> ...a practice, treatment or service designed to change a person's sexual orientation to heterosexual, to change a person's gender identity or gender expression to cisgender or to repress or reduce non-heterosexual attraction or sexual behaviour or non-cisgender gender expression. For greater certainty, this definition does not include a practice, treatment or service that relates to the exploration and development of an integrated personal identity without favouring any particular sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

There are three important distinctions between the definition used by my local municipal council, the mayor of which, by the way, is a former Liberal candidate, which is well aligned with the proper and historic definition of conversion therapy, versus the one used by Bill C-6.

First, the definition in Bill C-6 does not refer to any pseudo-therapeutic context. There is no clear definition of what would or would not constitute a practice, treatment or service. As we pointed out at committee, a key principle of law is that the legislature does not speak in vain, so each of these three things would be understood to be different. A service is more than just a treatment and a practice is something other than a treatment or service. A thing could be any of these three things and still be considered conversion therapy according to Bill C-6, although not according to my local municipal bylaw.

Second, there is no reference to coercion, degrading treatment, traumatic stimuli, etc. being part of conversion therapy. Therefore, again, conversion therapy could simply be a word, a statement or a conversation according to Bill C-6, although not according to my municipal bylaw.

Third, and most important, the definition in Bill C-6 includes references to advice or therapy that seeks to modify sexual behaviour as opposed to sexual orientation, and this is a really radical departure. For the first time, it says that advice or statements that do not seek to change orientation or identity but simply advise about sexual behaviour could be considered conversion therapy as well.

Without limiting the definition of conversion therapy to a pseudo-therapeutic context, a simple, informal conversation between two people could be deemed conversion therapy, depending on what it is. For a conversation to cross the line into conversion therapy, according to the definition used in the bill, it would not be necessarily pushing a change in orientation, but simply suggesting some modification of sexual behaviour. This is now being called conversion therapy in this new definition invented by Bill C-6.

Therefore, let me make this concrete. Suppose that a close friend of mine comes to me for advice and confides that he is having some serious challenges in his relationship and those challenges have led him to be unfaithful to his partner. Suppose I encourage my friend to be faithful to his partner and stop cheating or suppose I encourage this friend to break up with his partner and just focus on himself for a while. Now, if, in this hypothetical situation, my friend is straight, then I have broken no law. However, if my friend is gay, then my advice to him has violated the law, because by enjoining him to either reduce his number of sexual partners or to be single for a while, I have engaged in a practice that seeks to reduce non-heterosexual sexual behaviour. The definition of conversion therapy in Bill C-6 is so broad that it would apply precisely to that conversation.

We can hope that I would never be prosecuted for simply giving a gay friend relationship advice, but suppose that similar advice were given by a mentor or a counsellor perhaps to a young person. It is not, I imagine, uncommon for parents or mentors to advise young people in terms of partner reduction, fidelity in relationships, waiting before becoming sexually active, etc. As a young person, I certainly was a recipient of this sort of advice from time to time. However, since any of this advice if given to a gay person would constitute a practice seeking to reduce non-heterosexual sexual behaviour, it could run afoul of criminal law.

To summarize, we have two different operating definitions of conversion therapy: the historic and proper definition, and the false definition in Bill C-6, which extends the term "conversion therapy" to many ordinary conversations, many of which, as the one I described, are not the sort of thing that any reasonable person would want to prevent from occurring.

In light of this simple and very fixable problem, Canadians began to speak out, and my office launched a petition, all with a very simple message: fix the definition. Just fix the definition and then we can all support the bill.

Recently some members of other parties have tried to attack the motivation of those who are concerned about the definition. They have claimed that we are just looking for an excuse to vote against the bill. For those who are levelling this challenge, I would say, "Please, call our bluff." If they think we are just looking for an excuse to vote against the bill, then why not accept the reasonable amendments we are putting forward and then see what happens?

I am generally loath to give the government political advice, but if the Liberals believe there are members of the House who actually want to oppose a conversion therapy ban, then they should endeavour to address at least the more obvious problems of the definition and thus leave those who allegedly wish to oppose the bill without excuse. Then those who have allegedly been using this excuse simply as an excuse would find themselves in a real bind if the government were to accept some reasonable amendments.

● (1615)

If the Liberals did so, of course, they would find in reality that the bill would pass unanimously. I think at this stage it is obvious that they know this, and that they would rather leave in the definitional problems that we have pointed out, so as to create a political wedge. Sadly, though, it is a political wedge that will potentially cause serious problems for the rights and freedoms of Canadians in terms of the freedom to simply share personal opinions about sex and relationships, even in private.

When this bill came to a vote at second reading, I made the decision to abstain. It was a difficult decision, because I generally do not like to abstain. I worked hard to get here and nobody can vote on behalf of the people of my riding in my stead.

However, there are cases where it is particularly challenging to cast a ballot at the second reading stage of a bill, because while third reading involves a vote on the final text of a bill, second reading is generally thought of as a vote on the principle or objectives of the bill. For those watching these proceedings who may be less familiar with the legislative process, every bill goes through second reading debate and a vote where the general principle of the bill is considered. After that, the bill is refined by committee and then it returns to the House of Commons for a debate and vote at the third and final reading where MPs must consider not only the intention of the bill, but also its substance and text.

Making a judgment at third reading is relatively straightforward, because one is considering the text of the bill in final form. However, making a judgment at second reading about the objective of the bill requires me to evaluate the government's unspoken intention. Do I agree with what it seems to be trying to do in spite of the technical flaws in a piece of legislation, such that I will support it going forward for further consideration, or do I determine that the flaws in the bill are there by design and demonstrate a policy decision of the government to draft the bill in an overbroad way?

It is sometimes impossible to resolve the question of what the true intent of a bill is without being able to read minds. Ultimately, being unable to resolve this question of the government's true intention, cognizant of the importance of banning conversion therapy but unconvinced that the flawed definition was simply a drafting error, I decided to abstain from the bill, hoping that I would have an opportunity to vote for it at third reading after committee study.

I had hoped for the best. I had hoped the professions at second reading of a desire to get this right and clear up any ambiguities would turn out to be sincere. When this bill went to committee, it attracted significant public attention and interest, so much so that the committee received close to 300 written briefs from various stakeholders and concerned members of the public. Liberals on the justice committee sadly made a mockery of the committee process by refusing to even allow enough time to read those briefs, refusing to incorporate reasonable concerns and table-dropping amendments to actually make the problems with the definition even worse.

At that stage, where various amendments were considered, Conservative members put forward reasonable amendments that sought to fix the definition. These were opposed by the Liberals and the NDP, who, in the process, also tipped their hand about their true intentions. I noted in particular the comments of the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore in response to one of the reasoned Conservative amendments.

Conservatives proposed an amendment taking language directly from the Department of Justice website, clarifying that the definition of conversion therapy would not apply "to the expression of views on sexual orientation, sexual feelings or gender identity, such as where teachers, school counsellors, pastoral counsellors, faith leaders, doctors, mental health professionals, friends or family members provide support to persons struggling with their sexual orientation, sexual feelings or gender identity". This amendment would have taken a big step to addressing the problems in the definition, but when this amendment was put forward, the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore said, "I'm concerned that this amendment would defeat the purpose of the bill."

Again, during the final stage of the committee study, when Conservatives proposed an amendment that simply sought to clarify in the definition that conversion therapy would not apply "to the expression of views on sexual orientation, sexual feelings or gender identity," a Liberal member admitted that the adoption of this amendment would defeat the purpose of the bill.

I thought that the purpose of the bill was to ban conversion therapy, not to restrict the expression of personal views on issues involving sexuality. However, this was a clear admission from the government side that restriction on the expression of views is at least part of the purpose of this bill.

I want to salute the hard work of Conservative members on the justice committee, but also to recognize the member for Rivière-du-Nord, the Bloc member on the committee. I suspect that there are many issues on which he and I will disagree, but I know that he took his role on the committee to study and improve the legislation very seriously.

It was the member for Rivière-du-Nord who noted at the beginning of clause-by-clause consideration that the committee had received hundreds of briefs from members of the public that had only been translated and distributed the day before. He noted that it would have shown a necessary level of respect for the public who had submitted these briefs to delay clause-by-clause for one meeting, allowing members to review the briefs and incorporate insights contained therein. Conservatives supported this Bloc member's motion to allow time for members to review the briefs that had been submitted. This motion was defeated by the Liberals and the NDP, who insisted on proceeding with clause-by-clause without reviewing the briefs.

Ironically, after this bill was considered that day at the justice committee and referred to the House, the government has not even scheduled the bill for a full day of debate until last week, more than five months after its adoption by committee. Therefore, no time would have been lost at all by delaying the clause-by-clause so as to allow members to consider the input from the public, as suggested by the member for Rivière-du-Nord.

The fact is that government voted against this proposal because it did not want to hear the constructive suggestions put forward by the hundreds of Canadians and Canadian organizations that had taken the time to submit briefs and information to the committee. After defeating this Bloc motion, the government worked with the NDP, table-dropping an amendment that significantly worsened the definition, from the perspective of clarity.

● (1620)

The amendment the Liberals put forward without prior notice added in the idea that conversation therapy includes an effort to reduce non-cisgender gender expression. What would constitute non-cisgender gender expression? Let me quote directly from the committee intervention of the member for Rivière-du-Nord at committee. He said—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Just a moment, I have a point of order.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Drummond.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, I wish to intervene because we often talk about how much we value the work of our interpreters.

If my colleague could speak a little slower, it would give the interpreters a chance to do their job more easily and perhaps a little more accurately. That would make it easier for us to follow our colleague's speech.

● (1625)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is very important for us to have interpretation. I must therefore support the request that was just made and ask the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan to speak more slowly, because it is very important for the interpreters.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind all members who have their speech written up to send a copy to the interpreters. This helps them follow what is said more closely.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, on the same point of order. I appreciate the point. I wonder if you can tell me how much time I have left because that will allow me to calibrate how fast I need to speak, but I do want to share with you it is a good point of advice to share the text with the interpreters and I have done that in this case.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member has four and a half minutes. The time has stopped for the point of order. I do want to advise the member that I understand it is not just about the interpretation; it is very difficult for even the viewers to listen if the hon. member is talking too quickly. If it could be at a good pace, but not so quick that people cannot follow, that would be important. I am sure that the hon. member wants to make sure that everybody is able to hear and understand what he is saying.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the feedback and will now continue with my speech.

I was quoting from the member for Rivière-du-Nord with respect to the addition of the reference to non-cisgender gender expression. He said:

> The Department of Justice website states that "gender expression is the way in which people publicly present their gender. It is the presentation of gender through such aspects as dress, hair [,etc]..." If I go back to the text defining conversion therapy, I understand that the bill would prohibit any practices, treatments or services designed to repress that.
>
> Here is the example that comes to my mind. Let's say that, in the morning before going to school, an eight-year-old boy decides to wear a dress. His mother might say yes, or she might say no. Either way, if we use that definition, it would be a criminal offence for a mother to tell her son that she does not want him to wear a dress and to force him to wear pants. That's the definition we are about to adopt, and I see a problem with it.

The same member said later:

> I confess that, as a parent, I have told my daughter that she should not wear so much make-up. From what I understand, by engaging in that practice—and I do feel it can be considered a practice—I would have committed a criminal offence. I'm sure no one wants that.

Despite the serious concerns raised about this further expansion and confusion of this definition, this amendment on gender expression passed the committee by a vote of six to five.

The House has now received back from the committee a bill that is substantially worse than the one it was sent. This is because now it more clearly says any treatment, practice or service, which could be anything at all that involves an effort to reduce non-heterosexual, sexual behaviour or non-cisgender gender expression, so everything from advice about sexual and romantic activities to conversations about dress and make-up, could now very easily constitute a violation of criminal law.

The definition could have easily been fixed, but I think it was for political reasons the government chose not to, because if it fixed the definition then this bill would have had the unanimous support of the House, which would have deprived the government of the opportunity to use this issue to drive a political wedge.

At the end of the day, though, regardless of anyone's evaluation of the government's intention or political strategy here, we are now at third reading and are voting on the final text of the bill. We are not voting on aspirations or intentions, or on a response to conversion therapy as the term was historically defined. We are voting on a piece of legislation that would put many kinds of private conversations, counselling or advice about sex, relationships and anything captured by gender expression under Criminal Code scrutiny. This is fundamentally unacceptable in a free society.

Bill C-6, in its final form, is a bad bill. I will be voting against it and I encourage my colleagues to do likewise. Canadians are rightly disappointed by the politics being played by the Liberals by failing to work constructively with other parties to fix the flaws in the bill. For them, this is now clearly about trying to drive a political contrast rather than trying to get the bill right. The implications of that choice are the freedom of all Canadians to have conversations about sex and relationships being impaired if this bill passes. Such conversations are very different from conversion therapy but they are swept into it by this definition, as written.

We hear repeatedly from government members an effort to set up this false choice in terms of the debate. They try to tell us that we either have to pass this bill in its current form, yes criminalizing conversion therapy but also sweeping up all kinds of other things that have nothing to do with conversion therapy, or we do not pass it and we do not ban conversion therapy.

This is a false choice. This is a false choice of the government's own making. There is an alternative, which is the alternative Conservatives and other members have been calling for from the beginning of this conversation, which is for a clear ban on conversion therapy, a fixed definition and clarity that excludes the private conversations, the conversations that happen where individuals share their opinions about sexual behaviour.

We can have clear exclusions in line with the reasonable amendments proposed at committee and then we can get this done and passed and moving forward quickly. Everybody should want to see that happen, but the government is creating a false choice for political reasons. Let us reject that false choice. Let us fix the definition. I would submit there is still time. There is still time in this Parliament for us to work collaboratively across party lines to fix the definition and pass a clear, comprehensive conversion therapy ban that does not limit the rights and freedoms of people to have conversations about sexual behaviour.

● (1630)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think, at least in my opinion, the majority of those who are against a ban on conversion therapy are most likely people who think one's sexual identity is a choice. I am just curious if this member can comment on how he views the situation. Does he believe somebody is born a certain way or does he believe their sexual identity is a choice they make in life?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I am very happy to say that I believe it is not a choice to have that identity. I do not know from personal experience, but this is what people who are friends of mine have told me and I certainly believe the things they share.

I am a bit reluctant to indulge the member for Kingston and the Islands, though, in going down this road of asking members "gotcha" questions about their personal views on these kinds of things. I answered the question. I was willing to answer the question, but I would encourage the member to take a step back from trying to look for those "gotcha" opportunities and instead look at the text of the bill. He has a responsibility not just to be the man who sits in the House and parrots government talking points but to actually look at the legislation that he is going to be voting on and to consider its substance and its impact. I would encourage him to do that. I would encourage him to take on that role and dig into the text of the bill and reflect on whether he would be willing to support some of the reasonable amendments that Conservatives and others have been talking about to fix the definition, work on a consensus and move forward on this.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have a very simple question.

First, it bothers me that we are still debating certain details, when it is all very clear. We have spoken about these things for hours and have demonstrated the merits of the bill. To my mind, members are splitting hairs. Consultations have been held. We have reached this stage, and the majority are in agreement. This is urgent, because people are wondering why this bill has not yet passed.

I would like to know if my colleague has seen the 2018 film *Boy Erased*, which is about conversion therapy, the subject of the bill. If he has not, does he think he will watch it?

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I have not had the opportunity to see the film that the member referred to. I appreciate the recommendation and, based on her recommendation, I will be happy to endeavour to access it and watch it. I gather the implication is that it shares the story of a person who has been through conversion therapy.

I do want to share with the member that, as I said in my speech, when this topic initially came up I made some efforts to look at and read other stories of people who had been victims of conversion therapy. I recall one story of a young woman who was forced to walk around with stones in a backpack. There were other aspects of the story as well that I found particularly affecting, and it formed my conviction that we need to ban conversion therapy. I believe that and I have said it over and over again. That is why I have asked the government to give us a bill that fixes these details so that we can all support it.

The member raised some questions about looking at details. I will say that her Bloc colleague on committee raised some of these questions about details. I quoted extensively from what I thought was the very good work of the Bloc MP. I understand the political impact on the Bloc, perhaps, when the government tries to create this false choice, but let us not accept that false choice. Let us work to fix the bill. Let us work on constructive amendments so that we can ban conversion therapy and address the problems with the definition.

● (1635)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague mentioned that, as a result of the discussion around Bill C-6, he was asked about fixing the definition and that there was a web page put up.

Could he comment on what the reaction was from other members of the community across Canada?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, it is very interesting to have conversations on this issue with people who are maybe from different kinds of political backgrounds. I recall one conversation I had with a constituent who phoned me upon hearing that I had concerns about Bill C-6. Initially she was very worried about that. We had a conversation for close to half an hour. At the end of that she said, "What you're saying is perfectly reasonable. Why doesn't the government just fix the definition?" I said, "I hope it does."

This did not need to be an issue on which people disagree. It still does not need to be an issue on which people disagree. There are people all over the spectrum politically who have different assumptions, but we can all come together and ban conversion therapy if we fix the definition and address some of these technical details that are important and need to be addressed. At that point, we can all move forward together.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I cannot let another speech that grossly misrepresents Bill C-6 go by without commenting.

The speech by the hon. member does so in two ways. First, it equates conversations with practice, treatment or service. There is no reason for such an equation. There is no case in law that he could cite in which a conversation is treated as a practice, treatment or service.

The second way it misrepresents the definition in the bill is that it tries to create a division between someone's sexual orientation or gender identity and the way they live their lives: the way they behave. If the member would like to talk to clinicians, they can talk to him about how repression of sexual orientation and repression of gender identity have been fundamental parts of conversion therapy over time.

This really is a misrepresentation of the bill. I will not speculate on the member's motives.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, although we are clearly not going to agree on this issue, I appreciate the opportunity to work with the member on other issues, including the situation in Tibet.

I would disagree with his interpretation of the legislation. He rightly points out that the legislation refers to a treatment, practice or service. In particular, it is the word "practice", undefined previously in the Criminal Code, that raises significant questions. As was pointed out at committee by the Bloc member, the principle in law is that the legislature does not speak in vain. When we say a treatment, practice or service, we can imply that a practice is something that is not a treatment or a service, and "practice" is not defined.

To his comments about the distinction between identity and behaviour, I will simply say that there are cases in which a person might be advised, such as when a parent advises a teenager, about aspects of their sexual behaviour not in a way that denies their identity or tries to get them to change their identity, but that says there are certain aspects of the teenager's behaviour they should moderate in some way. I would submit that giving advice to a young person about some aspects of sexual behaviour is very different from telling someone fundamentally that their identity is wrong. These are two very different things, and a distinction has to be made.

Mr. Derek Sloan (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Ind.): Madam Speaker, I will ask the member another question regarding the definition. I remember watching some of the committee proceedings and hearing some experts say they were afraid that affirmation-only care for transgender youth would be promoted through this bill. I did some research and I know that transgender identification is rising very quickly. Some countries, such the U.K., are concerned about it. It has been noted in the U.K. that over a seven-year period, there has been a 4,000% increase in this identification. In fact, the U.K.'s minister for women and equalities is calling for a study of the root causes of this surge. She suspects the influence of social media and the teaching of transgender philosophy in the educational system may have something to do with it.

Why does this bill, in the definition, not address this rise? In fact it may create a chilling effect on counselling professionals who are trying to address this issue.

● (1640)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I hesitate to weigh in on some of the details the member has raised because they are ones that I cannot confirm. I am not doubting his sincerity. Some of the numbers and the situations he shared with regard to other countries are genuinely not things I am prepared to comment on, specifically in terms of their substance.

I will say that there is a difference between someone having an opinion that I might disagree with or find reprehensible, and saying that person should be prosecuted criminally for having that opinion. In the way the definition is phrased, with its lack of clarity around what constitutes a practice, the inclusion of any discussion of reducing sexual behaviour, which is a thing that people have conversations about, could become a question of a criminal response. We should ban conversion therapy, properly defined, and we can do that by fixing the definition.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. House Leader of the Official Opposition on a point of order.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

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

Mr. Gérard Deltell (House Leader of the Official Opposition, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is a question of privilege.

[*English*]

Following my one-hour notice under Standing Order 48 concerning the report that you gave the House earlier today, the government has not complied with the order of the House adopted last Wednesday, June 2. This is a disappointing and troubling state of affairs that undermines our Parliament: one of the world's oldest continuously functioning democratic bodies.

[*Translation*]

As Speaker Milliken so clearly said in 2010, you are at a serious impasse. As your esteemed predecessor said in a widely commended ruling on April 27, 2010, at page 2042 of the Debates, "Before us are issues that question the very foundations upon which our parliamentary system is built. In a system of responsible government, the fundamental right of the House of Commons to hold the government to account for its actions is an indisputable privilege and in fact an obligation."

The current obligation comes from the opposition motion adopted on Wednesday afternoon. It is recorded at pages 1023 and 1024 of the Journals, and the main items of the motion that relate to this question of privilege state, and I quote:

> That an order of the House do issue for the unredacted version of all documents produced by the Public Health Agency of Canada in response to the March 31, 2021, and May 10, 2021, orders of the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations, respecting the transfer of Ebola and Henipah viruses to the Wuhan Institute of Virology in March 2019, and the subsequent revocation of security clearances for, and termination of the employment of, Dr. Xiangguo Qiu and Dr. Keding Cheng, provided that:
>
> (a) these documents shall be deposited with the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel, in both official languages, within 48 hours of the adoption of this order;
>
> (b) the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel shall promptly thereafter notify the Speaker, who shall forthwith inform the House, whether he is satisfied the documents—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands on a point of order about the question of privilege.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I know it is quite unorthodox to have a point of order during a question of privilege, but the interpreter said the speech is too fast to be properly interpreted. I am listening very closely.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would ask the hon. member to slow down. We had a point of order about this earlier. If the document provided to the interpreters is not bilingual, they need a little more time to do their work.

I would therefore ask the members to speak at a reasonable speed to ensure the best possible interpretation so that everyone can participate, hear and understand.

The hon. House Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, you are absolutely right.

I thank my hard-working colleague from Kingston and the Islands, and I must say how impressed I am by his outstanding participation these past few months.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the interpreters, who work under such difficult conditions. Earlier, my colleague from Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup pointed out that interpreters have an extremely tricky job to do under very challenging conditions. We acknowledge that, and I appreciate their contribution and their support for the work we do in Parliament.

● (1645)

[*English*]

I will go back to my text. I have a few sentences to present today. I will get back to the quotation regarding the order that had been adopted by the House a few days ago.

[*Translation*]

I will continue.

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

Madam Speaker, you informed the House, as set out in paragraph (b), that the documents had not been produced as ordered.

I want the House to understand the full context surrounding the documents required, so allow me to explain how this order works.

When the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations was created on December 10, 2019, in response to the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition, the Journals stated, on page 28, "that the committee be granted all of the powers of a standing committee, as provided in the Standing Orders".

More specifically, Standing Order 108(1)(a) grants standing committees the authority to "send for persons, papers and records".

This authority was renewed when the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations was re-established through paragraph (q) of the special order adopted on September 23, 2020, as indicated on page 4 of the Journals.

On March 22 of this year, Iain Stewart, president of the Public Health Agency of Canada, testified before the special committee. Despite relentless questioning by the hon. members for Wellington—Halton Hills, Montarville, St. John's East, Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan and New Brunswick Southwest, Mr. Stewart refused to provide concrete or substantive answers pertaining to the House's latest order, and his answers were variations of a statement about his being unable to provide details.

In response, the special committee adopted the following order during the meeting:

> That the president of the Public Health Agency of Canada provide a written response to all questions raised during the course of tonight's meeting in relation to the two scientists whose employment at Canada's National Microbiology Laboratory was terminated and that the response be submitted to the clerk of the committee, no later than 2:00 PM (EDT) on Friday, March 26, 2021.

Mr. Stewart's letter in response was unsatisfactory. Specifically, he said that the Privacy Act prevented him from disclosing the information the parliamentary committee wanted.

The special committee then consulted with the law clerk and parliamentary counsel regarding its powers and the implications of the Privacy Act. Based on that advice, on March 31 the special committee adopted the following motion, which was the subject of an order of the House last week:

> That the committee send for all information and documents in the possession of the Public Health Agency of Canada or any subsidiary organizations relating to the transfer of Ebola and Henipah viruses to the Wuhan Institute of Virology in March of 2019 and the subsequent revocation of security clearances for, and termination of the employment of, Dr. Xiangguo Qiu and Keding Cheng, provided that:
>
> (a) these documents shall be deposited with the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel, in an unredacted form, within 10 days of the adoption of this order;
>
> (b) the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel discuss with the committee, in an in camera meeting, information contained therein, which in his opinion, might reasonably be expected to compromise national security or reveal details of an ongoing criminal investigation, other than the existence of an investigation, so that the committee may determine which information is placed before a committee in public;
>
> (c) should the Public Health Agency of Canada not provide documents in their unredacted form within 20 days, the President of the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Acting Scientific Director General of the National Microbiology Laboratory be scheduled to appear for three hours before the committee, within 27 days of this motion passing, to explain why the documents were not provided.

On April 20, the law clerk received about 267 pages from the Public Health Agency of Canada, with various redactions that had not been authorized by the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations. Furthermore, 279 additional pages had been completely redacted. At its April 26 meeting, the special committee adopted the following motion in response to the documents PHAC provided, stating that it was not satisfied with the agency's response:

> — That pursuant to the motion adopted by this committee on Wednesday, March 31, 2021: " [...] (c) should the Public Health Agency of Canada not provide documents in their unredacted form within 20 days, the President of the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Acting Scientific Director General of the National Microbiology Laboratory be scheduled to appear for three hours before the committee, within 27 days of this motion passing, to explain why the documents were not provided", the committee does thus invite the President of the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Acting Scientific Director General of the National Microbiology Laboratory to appear at their earliest convenience.

On May 10, Mr. Stewart appeared before the special committee once again. He continued to refuse to provide the information requested and, because of PHAC's ongoing refusal to co-operate, the special committee adopted this motion, originally moved by the Liberal member for Cumberland—Colchester, which was also in the June 2 order of the House, and I quote:

> That the unredacted documents from the Public Health Agency of Canada be provided to the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel within 10 days to review and ascertain the fairness of them, and should the documents not be provided, that the committee report the following to the House: Your committee recommends that an Order of the House do issue for all information and documents, in the care, custody or control of the Public Health Agency of Canada and subsidiary organizations, respecting the transfer of Ebola and Henipah viruses to the Wuhan Institute of Virology in March 2019 and the subsequent revocation of security clearances for, and termination of the employment of, Dr. Xiangguo Qiu and Keding Cheng, provided that: (a) these documents be deposited, in both official languages, with the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel no later than two weeks following the House's concurrence in this recommendation; (b) the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel discuss with the committee, in an in camera meeting, information contained therein, which in his opinion, might reasonably be expected to compromise national security or reveal details of an ongoing criminal investigation, other than the existence of an investigation, so that the committee may determine which information is placed before the committee in public.

The second order of the committee was not satisfactorily complied with as we can conclude from the fact that the recommendation included in this motion was later presented to the House in the third report of the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations on May 26.

We now have a third order, and this time it is an order of the House of Commons of Canada, which the Public Health Agency of Canada did not comply with.

● (1650)

[*English*]

In baseball we say, "Three strikes and you're out." This is not a game. It is about the fundamental and ancient powers of the House of Commons to act as the grand inquest of the nation. This is being openly defied, dismissed and mocked by the Liberal government. It is, in a word, treating the House with contempt.

Page 137 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, explains:

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

Indeed, as one mark of how old the power is, Erskine May treated it as a settled matter in the first edition of his eponymous treatise on parliamentary procedure, published in 1847, at page 309. It states, "Parliament, in the exercise of its various functions, is invested with the power of ordering all documents to be laid before it, which are necessary for its information."

● (1655)

[*Translation*]

With regard to the scope of that power, Bosc and Gagnon quoted favourably from page 190 of Joseph Maingot's second edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, which reads as follows:

> The only limitations, which could only be self-imposed, would be that any inquiry should relate to a subject within the legislative competence of Parliament, particularly where witnesses and documents are required and the penal jurisdiction of Parliament is contemplated. This dovetails with the right of each House of Parliament to summon and compel the attendance of all persons within the limits of their jurisdictions.

Bosc and Gagnon go even further with regard to the scope of the House's power to request documents on pages 984 and 985, where it reads:

> The *Standing Orders* do not delimit the power to order the production of papers and records. The result is a broad, absolute power that on the surface appears to be without restriction. There is no limit on the types of papers likely to be requested; the only prerequisite is that the papers exist in hard copy or electronic format, and that they are located in Canada [or elsewhere]. They can be papers originating from or in the possession of governments, or papers the authors or owners of which are from the private sector or civil society (individuals, associations, organizations, et cetera).

> In practice, standing committees may encounter situations where the authors of or officials responsible for papers refuse to provide them or are willing to provide them only after certain portions have been removed. Public servants and Ministers may sometimes invoke their obligations under certain legislation to justify their position. Companies may be reluctant to release papers which could jeopardize their industrial security or infringe upon their legal obligations, particularly with regard to the protection of personal information. Others have cited solicitor-client privilege in refusing to allow access to legal papers or notices.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but there is something I must do right away.

I know it is not usual to interrupt the member during a question of privilege, but today's circumstance is somewhat unique because we are running out of time.

My intervention will be brief, but it will give the hon. member time to catch his breath.

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 Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, Justice; the hon. member for Vancouver East, Housing; the hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove, Tourism Industry.

We will now go back to the question of privilege.

The hon. House Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, I remind my colleagues that I was sharing a quote from Bosc and Gagnon.

I will continue with my quote:

> These types of situations have absolutely no bearing on the power of committees to order the production of papers and records. No statute or practice diminishes the fullness of that power rooted in House privileges unless there is an explicit legal provision to that effect, or unless the House adopts a specific resolution limiting the power. The House has never set a limit on its power to order the production of papers and records.

This also came up in the first report of the former Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, which was tabled on May 29, 1991, and of which the House took note on June 18, 1991.

> The power to send for persons, papers and records has been delegated by the House of Commons to its committees in the Standing Orders. It is well established that Parliament has the right to order any and all documents to be laid before it which it believes are necessary for its information.... The power to call for persons, papers and records is absolute, but it is seldom exercised without consideration of the public interest.

I will get back to this last point in a moment.

● (1700)

[*English*]

In a May 2019 report on the power to send for papers, the United Kingdom House of Commons Procedure Committee concluded at paragraph 16, “The power of the House of Commons to require the production of papers is in theory absolute. It is binding on Ministers, and its exercise has consistently been complied with by the Government.”

[*Translation*]

Over the past few decades, the House has experienced several instances of the withholding of documents requested by the House or its committees.

After the Access to Information Act and Privacy Act were passed, the first major conflict between parliamentary privilege and the government's view of those laws occurred in 1990, when a committee requested reports about two murderers who had escaped from prison.

The matter is summarized in footnote 182 at page 987 of Bosc and Gagnon, which we cited earlier, and I quote:

> During the Thirty-Fourth Parliament, following the refusal of the Solicitor General to provide two [unredacted] reports to the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General on the grounds of privacy, the Committee reported the matter to the House. Subsequently, a question of privilege was raised by Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River) concerning the Minister's refusal to provide the reports sought by the Committee. No ruling was delivered as to whether the matter constituted a prima facie breach of privilege, but the issue was referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.... The Committee presented a report which concluded that the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General had been within its rights to insist on the production of the two reports and recommended that the House order the Solicitor General to comply with the order for production. The House subsequently adopted a motion to that effect, with the proviso that the reports be presented at an in camera meeting of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General....

In 2004, the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food was unable to obtain the financial statements of private businesses, despite giving many guarantees that sensitive information would be protected. The matter is explained in footnote 180 at page 986 of Bosc and Gagnon:

> In its attempt to obtain the financial statements of Canada's five major meat packers in the course of its study on beef pricing, the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food adopted a motion stating that the financial statements would not be copied for the Committee members, but would be provided to the Office of the Law Clerk and the analyst assigned to the committee by the Library of Parliament. The analyst would review the information and prepare a report to the Committee drafted in such a fashion as to protect specific sensitive business information that could disclose the identity of any person or corporation. The motion also provided for a mechanism for the retention and eventual destruction of the records.... After presenting two reports in the House on the matter..., the Committee reiterated its requests to the meat packers concerned in the new session of Parliament following the dissolution of Parliament which had occurred in the meantime. It then obtained the records requested....

At this point, I should provide a brief explanation of those two reports.

The Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food presented its third report on May 6, 2004, which stated that three companies were in contempt and ordered them to provide certain documents to the clerk of the committee within four days. The House unanimously concurred in the report immediately after it was tabled, finding the companies in contempt.

The Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food then presented its fourth report on May 13, 2004, noting that one of the three companies had responded. As for the other two, the committee reported that they were still in contempt, gave them another week to respond and set out the penalties that would be imposed if they did not. The House sat for only one day before Parliament was dissolved, so the report was never concurred in.

Then came the well-known ruling from your longest-serving predecessor, Mr. Milliken, on the documents related to the conflict in Afghanistan. Bosc and Gagnon described the situation at page 139:

> In November 2009, the Special Committee on the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan reported to the House that its privileges had been breached by the Government's failure to produce documents requested by the Committee relating to the detention of Afghan soldiers by Canadian Forces in Afghanistan.

I will briefly note that a question of privilege was raised but was rejected by Speaker Milliken on November 30, 2009, at page 7386 of the Debates.

During a Liberal opposition day, the House adopted a motion, which our prime minister voted in favour of, in accordance with the conditions established at page 1195 of the Journals on December 10, 2009:

> That, given the undisputed privileges of Parliament under Canada's constitution, including the absolute power to require the government to produce uncensored documents when requested, and given the reality that the government has violated the rights of Parliament by invoking the Canada Evidence Act to censor documents before producing them, the House urgently requires access to the following documents in their original and uncensored form:

Seven categories of documents pertaining to the Afghan detainee situation were listed.

> ...accordingly the House hereby orders that these documents be produced in their original and uncensored form forthwith.

Let us now go back to page 139 of Bosc and Gagnon for the explanation:

> ...the Government refused [to provide the requested documents], citing national security concerns. Questions of privilege were raised based on the House's absolute right to order documents. The Minister of Justice insisted that as the government had a duty to protect information that could jeopardize national security, that right was not without limits. On April 27, 2010, Speaker Milliken ruled that it was within the powers of the House to ask for the documents specified in the House Order, and that it did not transgress the separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches of Government. Thus, the Speaker concluded that the Government's failure to comply with the House Order constituted a prima facie breach of privilege. However, he gave the parties two weeks to develop a mechanism that would accommodate the Government's concerns over national security and the House's right to receive the documents.

Footnote 348 at page 139 explains how Speaker Milliken's ruling was implemented:

> Following an agreement in principle of all parties and the resulting memorandum of understanding, signed only by the Government, the Official Opposition and the Bloc Québécois, an ad hoc committee composed of one Member and one alternate from each of the three parties signatory to the agreement examined the approximately 40,000 pages of unredacted text related to Afghan detainees, after being sworn to secrecy.... To facilitate the identification of relevant documents, a three-person panel, known as the Panel of Arbiters, was struck, comprised of former Supreme Court Justices Frank Iacobucci and Claire L'Heureux-Dubé, and former B.C. Supreme Court judge Donald Brenner, to assist the Members of the ad hoc committee in their work.... On March 26, 2011, the Fortieth Parliament was dissolved. On June 22, 2011, John Baird, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, tabled approximately 4,000 pages of documents relating to the detention of combatants by the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan....

● (1705)

[*English*]

Meanwhile, in 2011, another prima facie case of privilege was found with respect to efforts by the Standing Committee on Finance to obtain documents. Allow me to summarize for the House the events surrounding that, as well as the outcome.

First, on October 6, 2010, the finance committee requested certain financial information from the government, but no response was forthcoming. As a consequence, on November 17, 2010, the finance committee adopted a motion ordering the production of various government documents concerning economic projections and costing estimates. On November 24 and December 1, 2010, the government responded to the finance committee, advising that certain documents being sought constituted cabinet confidence.

On February 3, 2011, the finance committee adopted a motion to report the foregoing events to the House. That report, the finance committee's 10th report, was presented on February 7, 2011, following which Scott Brison rose on a question of privilege.

● (1710)

[*Translation*]

Meanwhile, the government tabled in the House some documents pertaining to the Standing Committee on Finance's request. In any event, on February 17, 2011, the House considered and then, on February 28, 2011, adopted an opposition motion moved by the Hon. Ralph Goodale and seconded by the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations.

This is the text of the motion:

> That, given the undisputed privileges of Parliament under Canada's constitution, including the absolute power to require the government to produce uncensored documents when requested, the government's continuing refusal to comply with reasonable requests for documents, particularly related to the cost of the government's tax cut for the largest corporations and the cost of the government's justice and public safety agenda, represents a violation of the rights of Parliament, and this House hereby orders the government to provide every document requested by the Standing Committee on Finance on November 17, 2010, by March 7, 2011.

Then, on March 9, 2011, Speaker Milliken ruled on Mr. Brison's question of privilege, finding a prima facie breach of privilege, and Mr. Brison moved a motion to refer the matter to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

The Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs then presented its 27th report on March 21, 2011. On March 25, 2011, the House studied and adopted an opposition motion moved by Michael Ignatieff. Among other things, the motion stated:

> That the House agree with the finding of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs that the government is in contempt of Parliament....

Most of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs' report had to do with the government's invocation of cabinet confidentiality, which is not the main issue here. Even so, two excerpts from the report are important to the matter at hand:

The first, on page 5 of the report, reads as follows:

> He [Robert R. Walsh, House of Commons law clerk and parliamentary counsel] further indicated that the Speaker had concluded in his ruling that Parliament has the right to receive all the information that it requires, but the government may decide to refuse to provide this information. In that event, the government must convince Parliament that its decision is well-founded.

Further on, on page 9, it states:

> Mr. Ned Franks, professor emeritus in the Department of Political Studies at Queen's University...affirmed that he sided with Speaker Milliken and declared that, in his view, the government was not entitled to limit Parliament's power to receive information.

As the House accepted the findings of the report on March 25, 2011, it is clear that it also accepted the analysis that preceded it.

[*English*]

Even more recently are developments in the United Kingdom's Parliament, some of which our colleagues may not be fully familiar with. In the 2017 general election, the incumbent Conservative government did not secure a majority in the House of Commons. Although it was able to muster a working majority through a confidence and supply arrangement with one of the Northern Ireland parties, it was the U.K.'s first true minority government in some four decades.

The Labour Party devoted 10 of its opposition days in the first session of Parliament following that election to ordering the production of documents. Half of these motions were defeated by the House, and of the remaining five, four were responded to in a satisfactory manner by the government. It is the fifth motion that earns our attention. It prompted the U.K. House of Commons Procedure Committee to study the matter and issue its ninth report, entitled "The House's power to call for papers: procedure and practice", in May 2019, which I quoted earlier.

On November 13, 2018, the U.K. House of Commons adopted the following motion, proposed by Sir Keir Starmer, now the leader of the opposition, recorded on pages 1 and 2 of Votes and Proceedings:

> That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, that she will be graciously pleased to give directions that the following papers be laid before Parliament: any legal advice in full, including that provided by the Attorney General, on the proposed withdrawal agreement on the terms of the UK's departure from the European Union including the Northern Ireland backstop and framework for a future relationship between the UK and the European Union.

Subsequent events can be summarized by the following extracts from paragraphs 41 to 43 of the U.K. Procedure Committee's 2019 report:

> 41. Ministers advanced arguments against the motion from the Despatch Box, but did not seek to divide the House. The motion therefore passed unopposed. In points of order raised immediately after the House's decision, Members sought to clarify the obligations on the Government arising from it: no Ministerial statement was made in response.
>
> 42. An agreement between the United Kingdom and the EU on the UK's withdrawal from the EU was endorsed by heads of state and government at the European Council meeting of 25 November 2018.... On 3 December the Attorney General presented to Parliament a Command Paper which purported to describe the "overall legal effect" of the agreement of 25 November 2018. On the same day he made a statement to the House...neither the Command Paper nor the statement made reference to the resolution of 13 November, and the Command Paper did not purport to be a return to the resolution of the House.
>
> 43. Following the presentation of the Government's Command Paper to the House, Keir Starmer, together with representatives of four other political parties, wrote to the Speaker alleging that the Government had not complied with the terms of the resolution of 13 November.... The Attorney General also wrote to the Speaker with his observations on the matter: he argued that the Government was in considerable difficulty in knowing how to comply with the resolution.

Speaker Bercow ruled, on December 3, 2018, in column 625 of the official report:

> The letter that I received from the Members mentioned at the start of this statement asks me to give precedence to a motion relating to privilege in relation to the failure of Ministers to comply with the terms of the resolution of the House of 13 November.... I have considered the matter carefully, and I am satisfied that there is an arguable case that a contempt has been committed. I am therefore giving precedence to a motion to be tabled tonight before the House rises and to be taken as first business tomorrow, Tuesday. It will then be entirely for the House to decide on that motion.

The following day, the House considered such a motion. After defeating the government's amendment by a vote of 307 to 311, the House voted 311 to 293 to adopt the following motion, found on page 3 of Votes and Proceedings:

> That this House finds Ministers in contempt for their failure to comply with the requirements of the motion for return passed on 13 November 2018, to publish the final and full legal advice provided by the Attorney General to the Cabinet concerning the EU Withdrawal Agreement and the framework for the future relationship, and orders its immediate publication.

● (1715)

In response, the government produced a complete, unredacted copy of the Attorney General's legal advice the next day. According to the Procedure Committee's report, at paragraph 68, the Attorney General "said that he had complied with the order of the House of 4 December out of respect of the House's constitutional position."

[*Translation*]

It is possible for a government to respect the constitutional position of the House of Commons. As I said earlier, in my humble opinion, this government is in contempt of Parliament.

In fact, page 60 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* by Bosc and Gagnon states that:

> Any conduct which offends the authority or dignity of the House, even though no breach of any specific privilege may have been committed, is referred to as a contempt of the House. Contempt may be an act or an omission; it does not have to actually obstruct or impede the House or a Member, it merely has to have the tendency to produce such results.

Bosc and Gagnon add the following at page 81:

> Thus, the House also claims the right to punish, as a contempt, any action which, though not a breach of a specific privilege: tends to obstruct or impede the House in the performance of its functions; obstructs or impedes any Member or officer of the House in the discharge of their duties; or is an offence against the authority or dignity of the House, such as disobedience of its legitimate commands....

Among the well-established types of contempt detailed at page 82 of Bosc and Gagnon are the following elements:

> ...deliberately altering, suppressing, concealing or destroying a paper required to be produced for the House or a committee;
>
> ...without reasonable excuse, refusing to answer a question or provide information or produce papers formally required by the House or a committee;
>
> without reasonable excuse, disobeying a lawful order of the House or a committee....

In this case, the government disobeyed a lawful order of the House. It did not provide all the papers formally required and, by redacting others, it deliberately altered, suppressed and concealed papers required to be produced.

● (1720)

[*English*]

As for the government's excuses in its May 2020 response to the special committee's second order, Mr. Stewart wrote:

> We share the Committee's interest in ensuring open and public government, in a manner that appropriately protects sensitive information, including national security information. To the end, we note that the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians (NSICOP) was established to review such matters, while ensuring appropriate safeguards. Members of that committee come from both houses of Parliament, hold appropriate security clearances and have express right of access to otherwise restricted information. We would welcome the opportunity to further explore this avenue with you.

Last week, during Tuesday's debate on the order, we heard the same message from the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, who often speaks in the House of Commons on behalf of his government, and I know what I am talking about.

[*Translation*]

On Wednesday, when the Prime Minister answered a question about this in question period, he said:

> That is why [Canadians] elect parliamentarians to hold governments to account, but on issues of national security, it is important that there be higher levels of clearance given to parliamentarians who can properly dig into them and ask all the right questions.

It is very important to remember that the government is talking here about a committee of parliamentarians, not a committee of Parliament. That makes all the difference. In fact, subsection 4(3) of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians Act states: "The Committee is not a committee of either House of Parliament or of both Houses".

It does not stop there. Section 5 of the act states that the members of the committee are to be appointed by cabinet, on the personal recommendation of the Prime Minister. Section 6 states the same for the chair of the committee.

We are told that the Prime Minister can ask all the appropriate questions. Well, no. Section 8 of the act allows the minister to veto a committee study selection. Section 16 allows the minister to refuse to provide information. So much for transparency.

Still, even if they consult the documents, can they really set the record straight? Once again, the answer is no. Section 21 requires the committee to submit all its reports to the Prime Minister and allows the Prime Minister to censor all such reports before they are released publicly. That is the big difference between this type of committee and other committees of parliamentarians. The Prime Minister has the final say on anything that can be made public. It is not at all the same as a parliamentary committee.

Perhaps Parliament's former principle of freedom of expression, a constitutional principle dating back to 1689, would allow someone to sound the alarm if the Prime Minister is hiding something. Again, no. Subsection 12(2) destroys three centuries of freedom of expression and allows the government to prosecute a committee member who says something the Prime Minister does not want to hear.

The Prime Minister ultimately has the right to veto anything with this organization. The sad truth is that the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians is quite simply a puppet of the government. Speaker Milliken spoke to the use of this puppet in determining how to respond to House orders to produce documents on April 27, 2010, at page 2044 of the Debates:

> The government, for its part, has sought to find a solution to the impasse. It has appointed former Supreme Court Justice Frank Iacobucci and given him a mandate to examine the documents and to recommend to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General what could be safely disclosed to the House.
>
> The government has argued that in mandating this review by Mr. Iacobucci, it was taking steps to comply with the order consistent with its requirements to protect the security of Canada's armed forces and Canada's international obligations.
>
> However, several members have pointed out that Mr. Iacobucci's appointment establishes a separate, parallel process outside of parliamentary oversight, and without parliamentary involvement. Furthermore, and in my view perhaps most significantly, Mr. Iacobucci reports to the Minister of Justice; his client is the government.

The Prime Minister's proposal to use the committee he himself composed is neither a reasonable excuse nor even a legitimate reason to defy the House's order of June 2. How can I ask it? Who can judge?

Bosc and Gagnon offer the following in footnote 176 at page 985:

> ...Speaker Milliken reaffirmed the authority of the House to order the production of papers, and to determine whether any reasons for withholding documents are sufficient.

● (1725)

[*English*]

The U.K. Procedure Committee, in its May 2019 report, concluded at paragraph 16, "The way in which the power [to require the production of papers] is exercised is a matter for the House and not subject to the discretion of the Chair." That committee commented at paragraph 35 on the means of assessing compliance:

> There is no recognised procedure to assess the papers provided to the House as a whole in response to a resolution or order, and no means of appeal against non-compliance, short of raising the issue as a matter of privilege.
>
> Where papers have been provided to a body of the House, compliance has been easier to assess. Select committees in receipt of papers have been able to review the information they have received and to determine whether the House's instructions have been complied with.

The U.K. Procedure Committee concluded at paragraph 86:

> The House alone determines the scope of its power to call for papers. In its consideration of each motion it is able to discern whether an inappropriate or irresponsible use of the power is sought, and whether it is being asked to require the production of information from Ministers on a scale disproportionate to the matter under debate. We expect that in each such case the House will continue to exercise its judgment in favour of a responsible use of the power.

In our current circumstances, the House set up mechanisms to first assess consistence when its order was complied with. Paragraph (a) of last week's order required the document to be referred to the Law Clerk, both for the benefit of an initial judgment as well as to ensure appropriate security, while paragraph (b) has given a means to report.

On the strength of the Law Clerk's initial assessment, it now falls to this House to make a determination whenever the lawful exercise of its power has been satisfied or defied. The House takes its decision through the tried-and-true methods of motions, debates and votes.

That is what I am asking you to permit throughout this question of privilege.

The House had the benefit last Tuesday of hearing from the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, and then on Wednesday from the Prime Minister himself, on the government's proposed approach. Since these views were put before the House prior to the vote, I would argue that the House had the benefit of considering them and in the end preferred the approach of my friend, the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. In any event, if you find there is prima facie contempt, the government can always test the will of the House on its alternative approach by proposing an amendment to my motion.

● (1730)

[*Translation*]

As I said earlier, the House does its best work on these issues when it takes into account various public policy considerations, which of course includes the public interest. In fact, as Speaker Milliken noted at page 2045 of the Debates of April 27, 2010, when he ruled on documents pertaining to Afghanistan, the interests of the executive and the legislature must be considered:

> The House has long understood the role of the government as "defender of the realm" and its heavy responsibilities in matters of security, national defence and international relations. Similarly, the government understands the House's undoubted role as the "grand inquest of the nation" and its need for complete and accurate information in order to fulfill its duty of holding the government to account.

That balance is achieved through proper moderation of the House, not through a right of veto exercised by the outside authority. Speaker Milliken clearly explained this concept in the same ruling, this time at page 2043, where it reads:

> It is the view of the Chair that accepting an unconditional authority of the executive to censor the information provided to Parliament would in fact jeopardize the very separation of powers that is purported to lie at the heart of our parliamentary system and the independence of its constituent parts. Furthermore, it risks diminishing the inherent privileges of the House and its members, which have been earned and must be safeguarded.
>
> As has been noted earlier, procedural authorities are categorical in repeatedly asserting the powers of the House in ordering the production of documents. No exceptions are made for any category of government documents, even those related to national security.
>
> Therefore, the Chair must conclude that it is perfectly within the existing privileges of the House to order production of the documents in question.

Having thus established that it is up to the House to decide how to exercise its power to order the production of papers, how are mechanisms established to ensure a good balance? Pages 986 and 987 of Bosc and Gagnon address the choices available to committees in the following circumstances. They said, and I quote:

> In cases where the author of or the authority responsible for a record refuses to comply with an order issued by a committee to produce documents, the committee essentially has three options. The first is to accept the reasons and conditions put forward to justify the refusal; the committee members then concede that they will not have access to the record or accept the record with passages deleted. The second is to seek an acceptable compromise with the author or the authority responsible for access to the record. Normally, this entails putting measures in place to ensure that the record is kept confidential while it is being consulted. These include in camera review, limited and numbered copies, arrangements for disposing of or destroying the copies after the committee meeting, et cetera. The third option is to reject the reasons given for denying access to the record and uphold the order to produce the entire record.

As the House will recall, in the matter of the documents on Afghanistan in 2009-10, the House ordered a series of some 40,000 pages of documents to be produced immediately, in their original, uncensored form, even if their full disclosure would bring harm to Canada and its NATO allies in an armed conflict zone.

In the end, Speaker Milliken reserved his ruling to allow for a motion to be presented for a debate within two weeks, so the parties could find an appropriate balance. In the present case, I would say the appropriate balance was established by the House last week, with the adoption of the opposition motion. As I said, the unredacted documents should not be presented directly to the House, but handed over to the law clerk so he can, pursuant to paragraph (d) of the order of June 2:

> confidentially review the documents with a view to redacting information which, in his opinion, could reasonably be expected to compromise national security or reveal details of an ongoing criminal investigation, other than the existence of an investigation....

I would like to point out that treating the law clerk and his office as a trusted intermediary is not unprecedented or unheard of. For example, on October 26, 2020, the House adopted an order for the production of various documents to support the Standing Committee on Health's study on the government's preparedness for and response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These documents were to be submitted to the Office of the Law Clerk, who, pursuant to paragraphs (aa) and (ii) of the order, was to ensure that the documents:

> (ii) be vetted for matters of personal privacy information, and national security, and, with respect to [vaccine documents], be additionally vetted for information the disclosure of which could reasonably be expected to interfere with contractual or other negotiations between the Government of Canada and a third party....

Once the approval was given, he was to submit them for tabling, as the June 2 order also called for. It was my understanding that on May 28, the law clerk submitted 14 sets of records representing approximately 6,271 documents for tabling. Although I have heard that there are still about 2,000 documents to be vetted and translated, in addition to the many documents that the government still needs to produce, this agreement that we voted on and adopted seems to be working.

On November 19, 2020, the Standing Committee on Finance agreed to have the law clerk examine a less redacted version of the documents that had been submitted to the committee in the previous Parliament during the initial study of the Liberal Party's WE Charity scandal.

As I mentioned earlier, the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations sought assistance from the law clerk. I want to share a quote from the law clerk's appearance before the special committee on March 31. On page 9 of the committee evidence, he states the following:

> In terms of national security and other grounds, my office acts essentially as the department of justice for the legislative branch and we provide legal services and legal advice to committees on all of their areas of law, including all of those potential grounds for confidentiality that committees and/or the House may decide to accept or not accept. We are prepared and able to provide that legal advice in the interpretation of those concepts, including national security, commercial sensitivity and so on.
>
> That said, there may well be some factual information and knowledge that the government or other entities have that we don't have, because it's their information and their concerns, and they may be well placed to share that with us with regard to proposed redactions or proposed areas of concern. That's certainly something the committee can consider, namely, to have my office provide you with advice on the scope and application of those grounds, but not preventing the government or any witness from proposing and raising a concern—albeit, with this committee, and ultimately the House, still having the last word on accepting or not that interpretation.

Once the documents have been produced, pursuant to the order made on June 2, the law clerk informs the special committee of the redacted information without disclosing any sensitive information so that the committee members understand the issues.

● (1735)

The special committee will be able to use the information provided in that overview to give the House a full report without compromising national security or jeopardizing a criminal investigation. That is the heart of the operation: to have access to relevant information without compromising national security or revealing details of criminal investigations.

If that is not enough for the Liberal ministers, I would like to quote the very eloquent words of Speaker Milliken at page 2042 of the Debates, where he said the following on April 27, 2010:

> The hon. member for Kootenay—Columbia argued that even if the documents were provided to the committee, the committee could not, given their sensitive nature, make use of them publicly. However, I cannot agree with his conclusion that this obviates the government's requirement to provide the documents ordered by the House. To accept such a notion would completely undermine the importance of the role of parliamentarians in holding the government to account.

Speaker Milliken then added the following on page 2045:

> The insinuation that members of Parliament cannot be trusted with the very information that they may well require to act on behalf of Canadians runs contrary to the inherent trust that Canadians have placed in their elected officials and which members require to act in their various parliamentary capacities.

In my humble opinion, the appropriate balance has already been struck by the House and now it is up to the House to decide how to proceed.

What should we do?

Bosc and Gagnon offer possible solutions on page 139 of their very important work:

> If an order is issued and disregarded, the disciplinary powers of the House may be invoked. Individuals could be called to the Bar of the House, cited for contempt or otherwise punished. In 1891, a witness before a committee was called to the Bar of the House for refusing to produce documents requested by the committee. In 2004, the House found three companies in contempt of the House for refusing to provide a committee with the documents it had requested.

I already talked about the 2004 proceedings and the 19th-century case, summed up on page 131 of Bosc and Gagnon:

> In 1891, Michael Connolly, a witness before the Privileges and Elections Committee, attended as requested with certain documents which he refused to put into the hands of the Committee. The Committee reported this to the House and requested "the action of the House"...to appear before the Bar. He appeared, was questioned, granted counsel, and ordered to produce the books of account requested by the Committee.

Anyone who wants more detail can consult the Journals of June 5, 1891, pages 204 and 205, of June 8, 1891, page 208, and of June 16, 1891, pages 211 and 212. To everyone's relief, we see on page 214 that, on June 17, 1891, Mr. Connelly handed over the requested documents after being called before the bar and questioned.

As members may remember, in 1991 and 2010, a workable agreement was finally reached. On the other hand, in 2011, the House recognized the findings of a committee that the government was in contempt of the House and reiterated its trust.

● (1740)

[*English*]

Of course, contempt and confidence do not have to be two sides of the same coin. As we saw in Westminster, in 2018, when ministers were found in contempt, the government easily maintained office.

Nonetheless, it is incumbent upon us to act. As Maingot writes at page 239:

> Disobedience to rules or orders represents an affront to the dignity of the House, and accordingly the House could take action, not simply for satisfaction but to ensure that the House of Commons is held in the respect necessary for its authority to be vindicated. Without proper respect, the House of Commons could not function.

That brings me to the remedy which I am prepared to propose in a motion, should you agree that there is a prima facie case of contempt here.

In the interest of giving members appropriate notice of where this debate might go, the motion I intend to move would do the following things: (a) it would find the Public Health Agency of Canada to be in contempt; (b) it would order the Minister of Health to attend in her place, here in this House, to produce documents that have been ordered; (c) it would then require the minister to be questioned by the House; (d) finally, it would set out the procedures for this questioning because the old practices followed when the witness would be summoned to the House for questioning, which the curious could find explained in a search of Bourinot's *Parliamentary Procedure and Practice in the Dominion of Canada*, do not fit neatly into our contemporary rules and ways of doing business.

In summary, first, the House adopted a valid order on June 2 under its ancient, constitutional, undoubted and unlimited power to send for papers.

Second, in the opinion of the law clerk, the Public Health Agency of Canada, to whom the order was addressed, did not comply with the order.

Third, the failure to comply with the lawful order of the House for the production of papers without reasonable excuse is a contempt of Parliament.

Fourth, the House, as the grand inquest of the nation, customarily exercises its power to send for papers in a responsible fashion to account for the executive's duty as a defender of the realm. This balancing act was, in my view, appropriately struck in the House's original order last week.

● (1745)

[*Translation*]

Fifth, the government's reasons for defying the order, whatever they may be, are, in my humble opinion, inadequate and do not qualify as reasonable excuses, particularly in light of the mechanisms established by the House for the responsible treatment of requested documents. There is no doubt that the idea of getting the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians to deal with it is not an acceptable option because, as we have shown, the one who has the final word is the Prime Minister.

Sixth, in every case, only the House, not the government or the Speaker, can judge whether orders to produce documents have been complied with.

Seventh, the House makes decisions by means of motions, debate and votes. Failure to execute an order of the House is, in my humble opinion, a prima facie case of contempt requiring a decision by the House.

Eighth, unlike the case put to Speaker Milliken in 2010 about a motion calling for the production of unredacted copies of approximately 40,000 pages of military secrets pertaining to the armed military conflict in which Canada and its NATO allies were actively engaged, it is not necessary to suspend the effect of any decision because the House has already taken into account the conditions required for security and sensitive information.

[*English*]

Ninth, the House may accordingly consider appropriate sanctions in response to the breach of its order including a finding of contempt, the ordering of someone responsible to attend the House and be questioned and, as a means of allowing for yet another second chance, the further ordering of the production of the documents.

In closing, allow me to quote the Prime Minister's former caucus colleague directly when he raised the first of three questions of privilege, which led to Mr. Speaker Milliken's famous 2010 ruling. These words at page 610 of the debates for March 18, 2010, are equally applicable to us today. I will quote him:

[*Translation*]

> Lastly, there is no place in this country where this issue can be raised and acted on. There is no department of government and there is no court allowed to interfere. There are no other persons who can come into this House to protect the constitutional foundations of this country, only the 308 persons here. So if we do not stand up for our Parliament's role on behalf of Canadians, then there is no one else out there to do it. It is an attempt to undermine the work of Parliament and its committees that I place before the House today. If we do not stand up, those efforts to undermine our Constitution will have succeeded. We cannot let that happen.

Madam Speaker, you have an important decision to make. I know it will perhaps be difficult, but I also know that you will do what it takes to ensure that this House can assert itself.

The House of Commons, Canadians and hundreds of years of constitutional parliamentary governments await your permission to defend, through a debate on the contempt that is the basis of this question of privilege, these ancient rights of the elected representatives of the people.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I thank the hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent for his presentation of this question of privilege. Members will understand that there are far too many elements involved for me to make a ruling at this time, but the Chair will return to the House in due course.

Is the hon. member for Jonquière rising on the same question of privilege?

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to the brief presentation by my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent, and I share some of his concerns, especially about government accountability.

If we do not have all the relevant information, it is impossible for us to act as the watchdog we are meant to be and properly represent our constituents. The democratic process is based on the information we have at our disposal. How can people get a sense of the process of deliberation that happens and the issues we deal with here if they do not have all the information?

Personally, I think we have been going off on a rather strange tangent for the past few months. I will give three examples.

The first is CanSinoBIO. In committee, we questioned the government's decision, but the government hid behind its notorious COVID-19 vaccine task force, whose members, it said, had made that decision. It was almost impossible to find out more because the government claimed that the information contained personal information. However, after a bit of teeth pulling, we finally learned that the task force had never recommended that the government proceed with CanSinoBIO.

I do not believe that privacy and national security are adequate excuses for shirking one's responsibilities, and yet, it certainly seems as though this government is using privacy and national security to renege on its obligation to be transparent.

My second example is that of General Vance and my third is the WE Charity scandal. We had difficulty obtaining pertinent information to get a clear picture and, above all, to take a position on these issues. I believe that there is no democracy without transparency.

I would like to raise another rather important point. I am under the impression that, to paralyze the opposition, the government has adopted this approach of ensuring that the opposition does not have the information it asks for. However, the motions we vote on and the debates we have cannot be ignored because they bring the government face-to-face with its turpitude. I believe that is what we are seeing today.

I need to keep up with my colleague, so in closing, I want to point out another major problem. The Minister of Health sent this whole matter to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians. However, this committee does not have a representative from my party at this time. I do not know why it is taking so long for a member of the Bloc Québécois to be appointed to the committee. I do not know whether this is typical of the Liberals, but, at the very least, it is yet more evidence that this government's track record on transparency could be better.

● (1750)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I thank the hon. member for the points he added to the debate. As I said earlier to the hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent, the Chair will take everything under advisement and return to the House in due course.

* * *

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-6, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (conversion therapy), be read the third time and passed.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is good to have an opportunity to speak to Bill C-6. This is my first opportunity to speak to the bill. There has been a lot of conversation and I have listened intently to some of the debate.

I will say at the outset that in my riding I received a huge number of phone calls, emails and letters about the bill. Many people were very concerned. There have been petitions brought forward calling on the government to amend the definition in the bill.

Of all of the phone calls, emails and letters I received, 100% of the people in Sarnia—Lambton are opposed to forced conversion therapy. It is harmful: there is no debate about that, so the issues the people in my riding are raising have to do with the definition in the bill.

We know that the purpose of the bill is to ban conversion therapy, to make sure that children cannot be forced into conversion therapy, and to make sure that advertising or benefiting materially from conversion therapy is also banned. These are all good things. As I said, there is no dispute on the fact that everybody wants to ban conversion therapy.

The issue is the definition in the bill, which is overly broad. It would criminalize things that are not conversion therapy. The definition in Bill C-6 says that it is a "practice, treatment or service designed to change a person's sexual orientation to heterosexual, to change a person's gender identity or gender expression to cisgender or to repress or reduce non-heterosexual attraction or sexual behaviour."

The concern coming forward from many people is about private conversations or preaching in the public square, or about counsel and discussions that people might have about people's sexuality or gender expression and issues such as these.

Many people are opposed to the definition that has been put forward. It is not just me here as a member of Parliament with a concern. Across the country, there are 12 million Catholics. The Catholic school boards across the country have come out against the definition in Bill C-6. Again, no one is saying that they do not want to ban conversion therapy, but they are concerned that this will infringe on their freedom of speech, on their freedom of religion and on their freedom to teach what they believe in their schools, and that they will end up going to jail for five years for exercising those very freedoms.

If we look at other people of faith in the country, we know that between evangelical Christians, Baptists, Muslims and the Jewish community, we are talking about another 12 million Canadians. All told, that is 24 million people and many groups have come out of them. Groups of lawyers, the Christian Legal Fellowship and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs all have come out with concerns about the definition in the bill.

That is 24 million Canadians out of 38 million Canadians, so we are not talking about a minority or a small group of individuals. We are talking about a lot of people who want to have their rights under the charter protected. We need to look into what is it they are calling on the government to do.

They are calling on the government to ban coercive, degrading practices that are designed to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. I think we would all agree that we want to do that. They want to ensure that no laws discriminate against Canadians by limiting what services they can receive based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

The point here is that there are individuals, even within the LGBTQ community, who want to be able to receive whatever type of counselling they want. They believe that is their freedom, so they are concerned. Similarly, people who want to have conversations about their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression feel like it is their freedom to be able to do that.

● (1755)

We heard from a lot of parents who were concerned. They wanted to speak with their children about sexuality and gender and set house rules, for example, about sex and about relationships. They did not want the far-reaching definition in Bill C-6 to criminalize their ability to be parents and to set rules and boundaries about what should go on in the household according to them.

We want to allow free and open conversations about sexuality and sexual behaviour and not criminalize professional and religious counselling voluntarily requested and consented to. People have the right to seek whatever help they want. One hundred per cent of the people in Sarnia—Lambton, me included, are opposed to forced conversion therapy.

The Liberals knew that there was a problem with the definition. When the noise started to happen from faith groups and legal professionals who said this would infringe on people's freedom of speech, they published a clarification on their web page. This is the clarification as published:

> These new offences would not criminalize private conversations in which personal views on sexual orientation, sexual feelings or gender identity are expressed such as where teachers, school counsellors...doctors, mental health professionals, friends or family members provide affirming support to persons struggling with their sexual orientation, sexual feelings, or gender identity.

That is a great clarification. That is exactly what people were concerned about and exactly what they wanted to hear. Unfortunately, however, judges have to judge by what is in the law, not what is on the government's web page. Therefore, we did what anybody would do. We said that this was a great clarification, that it should be put in the bill. Then it would be clear that we were banning conversion therapy, but we would not be criminalizing things that were private conversations, that were voluntary counselling, that were pastoral duties, all these things.

The Conservatives proposed that be done, but the Liberals would not put the clarification into the bill. Why not? If they really do not want to criminalize things that are not conversion therapy, these kinds of private conversations, which is what they said on their web page, then why would they not put it in the bill? That is something for Canadians to consider.

The Liberals actually accepted some amendments at committee, so they cannot say that they were not going to accept any amendments. They accepted amendments to even expand this to gender expression, so that made the bill even more problematic from the point of view of private conversations, counselling and all the things about which I have been talking.

There are conversion therapy bans in other jurisdictions. We have heard about some of them during the debate. There are other provinces that have conversion therapy bans. The member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan talked about how his municipality had a ban. They have all used certain definitions. Quebec, Nova Scotia, P.E.I. and Yukon all have bans on conversion therapy and they have all used definitions, so that would be a good precedent to look at. The Netherlands, Norway, Germany, Israel and even Albania all have bans on conversion therapy. Therefore, it is worthwhile spending a few moments to talk about what definitions they used and what could we as Canadians learn from people who already implemented something and have not had issues.

Most of the people in the other provinces have used definitions from either the Canadian Psychological Association or the Canadian Psychiatric Association, recognizing that, in fact, it is not a bad thing to let the medical professionals, who understand what practices are acceptable and what practices are not, to define what conversion therapy is.

The Canadian Psychological Association says that, "Conversion therapy, or reparative therapy, refers to any formal therapeutic attempt to change the sexual orientation of bisexual, gay and lesbian individuals to heterosexual."

● (1800)

The Canadian Psychiatric Association says that conversion therapy is, "a range of pseudo-scientific treatments that aim to change...sexual orientation from homosexual to heterosexual".

Members can see the key words "formal therapeutic attempt" and "treatments that aim to change...sexual orientation" in these definitions. It is clear from this that they are not referring to conversations.

We know that in Israel, the definition is "any form of treatment or psychotherapy which aims to change a person's sexual orientation or to suppress a person's gender identity." Again, it is a form of treatment or a form of psychotherapy.

In Germany's definition, it has to be shown that the individual "had not been deceived, coerced or threatened into taking part", and I think that is important.

If we look at all the definitions I have presented, I think there are a lot of good options for the government to choose from. There are the ones that medical professionals have used, the ones that the provinces have used, and the ones that like-minded countries have used. All of these would be better than the definition that we have in the bill before us today.

Did I mention that 100% of the people who have spoken to me in Sarnia—Lambton are opposed to forced conversion therapy? I have to keep restating that because a lot of times when I am talking about the definition people think I am not against conversion therapy. No, 100%, everybody, including me and those I spoke to, is opposed to forced conversion therapy.

I will talk a little about my own experience and why I think it is clear that the Liberals and, in fact, the NDP want to criminalize things that are private conversations, things that people of faith are concerned about in this country.

When I was on the health committee, we studied LGBTQ health. Conversion therapy was one of the topics that came up during that discussion, and I shared some of my experiences. I was a youth leader for about 32 years in various churches, and over that time, I certainly had numerous conversations with young people about their sexuality. These are conversations that they initiated, and I do not think that anyone would be surprised about what a Baptist youth leader would say when they asked what I thought or what the Bible said about sexuality.

I mean, it is not a surprise. However, conversations were had, and I would say that of the individuals, some of them later came out gay, some of them came out straight, and the relationship with everybody was well established. We are still in contact, and the relationships are good, so there is not a problem. I talked about the benefit of being able to have those kinds of conversations for young people who are learning about their sexuality and trying to understand their feelings and bounce those ideas off of someone.

Do members know what the Liberal and NDP members said at health committee? They said that I should be in prison for having those conversations. I do not think I should be in prison. I really do not, but the fact that Liberal and NDP members thought I should be tells me that there is actually an intent on the part of some members opposite to actually criminalize things that are not conversion therapy. This is why I am very concerned and why I am asking to have the government change the definition.

I will share a story of one individual who came to me who was confused about his sexual orientation and had conversations with me when I was a youth leader. That individual has gone on to be a healthy member of the LGBTQ community, and he sees me regularly.

One day, he showed up at my house with a diamond ring. He had become a manager of jewellery store, and I do not know if he gets a discount or what, but he showed up with a diamond ring that he wanted to give me, along with a beautiful card thanking me for all of the mentorship that I had given to him over the years. He wanted me, every time I looked at the ring, to remember the positive impact that I had had on an individual.

● (1805)

I do not think those conversations are criminal conversations. I think they were helpful conversations. I do not think that anybody should be dictating to somebody what kinds of conversations they can have. I think that that is our freedom, that is something that is really important.

It has been apparent to me from Bill C-6, and even discussing these issues, that I have had a huge amount of harassment and a huge amount of hatred directed at me for questioning the definition in this bill. The same people who would put on a pink T-shirt for anti-bullying day, bullied me all day long on this issue. It is not always easy to stand up, but when I think about it, it is worth standing up for.

One of the reasons for that is because I have a good relationship with the LGBTQ community in my area. I attend their events. They invite me to their events. I go. I have been at the crosswalk reveal. I help their members the same way that I help all citizens. I have advocated for their issues, especially when we are working on LGBTQ health and making recommendations to the government about what we could do to help the community in areas like mental health where there are not adequate supports; things like supporting PrEP, which is paid for in some provinces and not in others; looking at all of the things that we can do and then standing up for members of the transgender community. My sister-in-law is transgender. There is a lack of support. These people are disproportionately targeted for violence. There is lots to be done there.

I am not coming to approach Bill C-6 from any position of being against any member of the community. I heard during the debate some members talk about how they wanted to uphold the LGBTQ rights over other rights. I do not want to be in a country where one group's rights are being taken away in order to give rights to another group.

I think we want to make sure we protect everybody's rights. I think we can do that in this bill. We have heard almost 100% agreement among members in the House that we want to ban forced conversion therapy. Other members and I have provided here today definitions that would be suitable, which would have unanimous support in this House. Again, there is this effort to not change the definition.

Twelve million people In Canada are Catholics. I want them to remember at election time that the Liberal government is trying to erode their freedom of speech and their freedom of religion. Their Catholic school boards are opposed to this and the government will not listen. If a person is a member of other faith communities like the Evangelical Fellowship, Baptists, Muslims and Jews, they are also having their rights eroded. I want them to remember that. There are 24 million of them in this country. If they all vote for their freedom of religion and freedom of speech, then the government will have to listen. That will be very important.

In the meantime, I have done a lot of thinking about this bill and whether it is worth the punishment of having all of the trolls out there not understanding that the issue with the bill is not about conversion therapy. Did I mention that 100% of the people who have spoken to me, and I, are opposed to forced conversion therapy? I hope I mentioned that.

There are men and women who fought for our country. In fact, yesterday was D-Day. People fought and died for our freedom of religion and our freedom of speech in this country. With that I am calling on the government to fix the definition in this bill. We want to criminalize conversion therapy but we do not want to criminalize other things. I hope that the government will recognize that it is not too late to uphold the rights and freedoms that people fought and died for.

● (1810)

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I thank the chief opposition House leader for his question of privilege. I wish to inform the Chair and the House that the New Democratic Party will be intervening on this question of privilege as well. We hope to make our contribution to this important question of privilege as soon as is feasible.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I thank the hon. member for the contribution.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, questions and comments.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, wow, just wow, talk about the separation of church and state meaning absolutely nothing to this member. I will have her know that I am one of those 12 million Catholics. I am not just identified as a Catholic; I am a practising Catholic. I can tell her there are many Catholics out there who are against conversion therapy in all forms, not just forced conversion therapy. I note that she used the term “forced conversion therapy” repeatedly throughout her speech. Yes, of course, who would not be against forced conversion therapy? That would literally be trying to hold somebody down against their will to force the demons out of them, as I indicated in the speech I gave earlier about the experiences of a constituent of mine.

However, that is not what this is about. When the member talks about forced conversion therapy, she should realize that the vast majority of conversion therapy is done through tricking people into believing they are not right. Very, very few people come to conversion therapy by being forced against their will. The vast majority are made to believe so they want to be part of it.

For the member to suggest that this bill does not give the right for families to have conversations is nothing more than a red herring. She has to come to terms with whether she will support this bill because it will protect and save Canadians lives, or whether she is going to get hung up, like so many other Conservatives, on this definition and these nuances of the definition—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton an opportunity to answer.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Wow, Madam Speaker, just wow. I guess I would ask the member opposite what he thinks about the fact that Catholic school boards across the country are concerned and that many of their lawyers have looked at this bill, looked at this definition and are still concerned. There are a huge number of people who have an issue.

If I was not clear enough, 100% of people in my riding, myself included, are opposed to conversion therapy. I did not necessarily use the word "forced" all the time. I understand this is a damaging and harmful practice. This is about the definition, and the government needs to fix that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, the debate seems to be venturing into the topic of religion.

I was born at the end of the 1970s. Since my parents had communist connections, I was not baptized. I wanted to make a little aside, but it may not be relevant to the debate. However, we are talking a lot about religious conscience and freedom of religion. We have also received a lot of emails from religious lobby groups.

How does my hon. think that right-wing and religious lobby groups influence the Conservative Party's position on Bill C-6, which we are debating today?

● (1815)

[*English*]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, when it comes to people of faith, many of them have just emailed and phoned, and it is not an organized effort. There have been efforts, as I mentioned, with the Catholic school board, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, the CIJA organization and others, who have put their voices together. The point is not to do anything other than point out the number of Canadians, millions of Canadians, 24 million people of faith, and many of these people have concerns about the definition in this bill.

What is important is to get the definition right so we can all support this and ban conversion therapy, which is what everybody wants.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, there are young people who will be watching what is happening in the House of Commons. There will be young people who will be listening to the member talk about conversion therapy and her failure to support people as they go through conversion therapy. Does she worry about what the impact will be on children who hear parliamentarians talk about how they will not support a conversion therapy ban? Does she worry what the impacts will be?

All conversion therapy, regardless of how it is defined, is saying that something is wrong with one's identity. Every version says that something is wrong with one's identity. Is she comfortable telling young people there is something wrong with their identity? From my heart, I can say that there is nothing wrong with their identity.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, I am not sure if the member did not hear my speech, but I said at least 10 times in it that 100% of the people in my riding, including myself, are opposed to conversion therapy. I would tell young people that this is a harmful practice and we definitely do not want it. On the other hand, I would tell young people that, as a person who has been a youth leader and helped a lot of people over the years, I want to be able to have those conversations and be there to help them through the hard times and their questions.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have to say I was a little astounded at a question put to the member by the member for Kingston and the Islands when he said he was perturbed by the fact that she would be caught up in the nuances of the definition. Is that not precisely what we are dealing with, not conversion therapy in the abstract but a particular piece of legislation? Would my hon. colleague not agree that if we are going to pass a criminal law that imposes a penalty of up to five years behind bars, it had better be clear, it had better be targeted and it had better not be overly broad?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, my colleague is right at the heart of the matter on this one. We know the Liberals knew there was a problem with the definition because they put a clarification on their web page that specifically said that it would not apply to private conversations, counselling, preaching, all of these different things, but they would not put that wording in the bill. Judges have to judge what is in the law and not what is on the government web page, so that is very telling, is it not?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have had the opportunity to listen to a number of Conservatives talk about the legislation. To a certain degree, it is quite disappointing. When we look at the support for the legislation, in the chamber itself there are, not just the governing party, the Liberals, but the Bloc, the NDP and the Greens that recognize the true value of this legislation moving us forward, yet the Conservatives seem to be stuck on an issue within the definition, which the government and others have been very clear on, and for all intents and purposes, cannot be justified as a stalling tactic.

Can the member indicate to the House why she believes that all of the other political entities in the chamber seem to be supporting it, yet the Conservatives, with whatever wisdom, have based their decision strictly on the definition?

● (1820)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, the reality is that I am good at math and I know this bill is going to pass, but, as I also pointed out, men and women have died for our freedom of speech. I firmly believe the definition is not going to protect private conversations, it is not going to protect counselling, it is not going to protect preaching in the public square. I fully expect there will be court challenges in the future. I am trying to prevent that by having an adult conversation about fixing the definition to be something that is in some of the many other pieces of legislation that exists provincially and in other countries. That is what the government ought to do.

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Madam Speaker, it has been very interesting listening to this debate so far. I am happy for the opportunity to participate in this debate as well.

On December 3, Emmanuel Sanchez appeared before the justice committee to tell his story. He said, "I was around five years old the first time I noticed that I was attracted to the same sex." As he grew older, he noticed the attraction more and more. He was bullied by the other boys at school. He was called crude names. As he sought an escape from the bullying, he found himself drawing near to the girls in a desire for safety and protection.

At times, these experiences, previous abuse and the hurtful words of others caused him considerable confusion. He told the committee he began to question his sexual orientation and gender identity. He hated himself. He hated being alive. He felt lonely and he did not feel safe confiding in anyone. He pursued a dark response to these feelings, but thankfully his suicide attempts failed.

As a teenager, Emmanuel began exploring gay culture. He wanted to understand his sexuality. He wanted to belong. At 16, he began to identify as gay and entered relationships with other men, but he feared rejection from family, friends and his faith community. While he knew that not everyone in his life agreed, he still described them as "very loving, caring and supportive of [him] as an individual."

Despite Emmanuel's decision to embrace his truth, he described himself as "still very unsettled". He made the choice to meet with a counsellor. She encouraged him to continue living the life he was living, yet week after week he still felt confusion and not peace. Feeling that he was not getting the support he needed, he made the choice to seek counselling from a pastor. This individual journeyed with him, neither affirming nor condemning decisions related to his sexual identity.

In time, he made a personal decision, his own choice, that he no longer wanted to continue this course that his life was on. He wanted to live his life in a way that was consistent with his faith and beliefs. Had it not been for the guidance and support that he freely sought out and received, he told the committee he did not think he would be breathing today and sharing his story.

This is not a story with a neat and tidy ending. Like every single one of us, Emmanuel is a unique and complex individual. He did not claim that counselling removed his same-sex attraction. He simply said it helped him determine the life he wanted to live.

Emmanuel asked the committee to do two things. He asked that parliamentarians acknowledge that people like him exist, and he asked that they create a well-written bill that truly bans coercive and abusive methods while respecting the individuals' freedom at any age to choose the type of support they want and their desired goal.

While we need multi-party co-operation to do the latter, I can at the very least recognize that Emmanuel and others like him exist. The problem with Bill C-6 is that it writes off people like Emmanuel. It suggests that the choices he has made and the support he has sought are wrong. It removes his agency and tells him that the government knows better than he does what kind of support he needs. Why? The definition of conversion therapy used in Bill C-6 is extremely broad. At present, it could not only capture instances where coercion or violence is present, but also capture something as simple as a good-faith conversation between a struggling teen and a trusted family member or professional.

Let me be very clear. If Emmanuel had described violent and coercive efforts that sought to change his sexuality against his will, this would be an entirely different situation. There is a reason government steps in to protect all of us from those who would cause such harm. It is wrong.

However, that is not what we are talking about. We are talking about a definition that could very well capture conversations. While many members want to pretend that no such problem exists, there were a myriad of witnesses appearing before the justice committee who had the same, or similar, concerns, individuals from the LGBT community, lawyers, medical professionals, clergy. Members might not agree with the view expressed, but when an issue is raised time and again by a diversity of voices, we should at least be paying attention.

Some witnesses warned of potential consequences should the bill not be amended.

Lawyer Daniel Santoro said:

> The first problem is that the definition of conversion therapy is overly broad and imprecise. It's likely to capture situations that are not actual conversion therapy and cause confusion. The second problem is that the existing exception for medical treatment is too narrow, because it specifies only one lawful form of treatment: gender transition. The third and final problem is that the exception allowing exploration of identity is unclear and does not adequately protect charter freedoms.

Psychologist Dr. James Cantor said:

> We will end up with clinicians...with a chill effect, simply unwilling to deal with this kind of issue; the service will become unavailable. Without a clear indication of what counts as an "exploration" and exactly what that means, anybody would have trouble going into this with the kind of confidence that a clinician needs in order to help their client.

● (1825)

I choose not to believe the Liberal government set out to restrict the choices available to Canadians based on their sexual orientation, but that is now exactly what will happen should this bill pass. It is not just these folks who will face limitations. Bill C-6 fails to affirm the right of parents to raise and educate their children in accordance with their beliefs. Whether we are talking about religious beliefs or a secular world view, the state has a duty to respect the values that parents choose to instill in their children.

This is not about allowing violent or coercive actions. The law should never protect those committing such acts against children, but the ambiguity created by this bill creates the fear that parents may not be able to set house rules about sex and relationships. In essence, parents of straight children would not be under the microscope, but parents with children questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity could feel as though journeying with their child through this period could result in criminal penalty. The fact the bill could restrict some parents from fully supporting their child and not others is an issue.

Family physician Dr. Jane Dobson told the justice committee:

> My question is: Why is the government telling people what sexual or gender goals they should have? They are effectively doing this with Bill C-6, as the bill broadens the definition of conversion therapy from abusive and coercive therapeutic practices to also include talk therapy, watchful waiting, interpersonal conversations and spiritual practices, widening the net to now potentially criminalize parents, spiritual leaders and medical professionals for simply [raising] tested and tried therapy to help an individual reach their self-directed goals.

These are real concerns that many in this place have chosen to ignore in the name of political expediency. It is political expediency. We know this bill was reintroduced after the Liberal decision to prorogue Parliament. It was originally thought cleared from the agenda. The concerns I have mentioned were flagged to the government at that time, so when it later reintroduced Bill C-6, it could have been improved to ensure wide support, but it was not. The justice minister was fully aware of the changes he could have made to better this bill. He chose not to. It would have made sense indeed.

After the first introduction of the legislation, the Department of Justice put the following disclaimer on its website:

> These new offences would not criminalise private conversations in which personal views on sexual orientation, sexual feelings or gender identity are expressed such as where teachers, school counsellors, pastoral counsellors, faith leaders, doctors, mental health professionals, friends or family members provide affirming support to persons struggling with their sexual orientation, sexual feelings, or gender identity.

Why did the department feel the need to clarify if the definition of conversion therapy in the bill is any good? If anything, the only clarity brought on by this clarification is that the bill is in need of much more work. The reality is that a disclaimer on the department's website is not the same as legislation. That is why Conservatives sought to find common ground by proposing reasonable amendments that would bring real clarity to the legislation. These amendments were focused to ensure that voluntary conversations between individuals and their teachers, school counsellors, pastoral counsellors, faith leaders, doctors, mental health professionals, friends or family members would not be criminalized.

Finding a balance between protecting individuals from violence, abuse or coercion while maintaining free and open conversation is a balance I think most Canadians would appreciate. Unfortunately, despite the clear indication the Liberals are aware of the bill's ambiguity, they refuse to support these amendments. In free societies, governments must leave space for individual citizens to make decisions about their lives. This includes the space to seek counsel on personal matters, such as one's sexuality.

Canadians can expect their government to respect the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, including the freedoms of conscience, religion, thought, belief, opinion and expression. Like Emmanuel, those with deeply held convictions, who may want to seek advice and support on questions of sexuality, deserve the right to do that. No one should be able to be told by the government that seeking guidance, asking questions or helping to reconcile faith and sexual attraction is off limits to them.

I stated earlier that Emmanuel had asked parliamentarians to do two things, which were to acknowledge the people who can exist and to create a well-written bill that protects from violence while respecting the rights of individuals to receive their chosen support. Unfortunately, I find that Bill C-6 fails on both points, and as long as it fails Canadians like Emmanuel, I will not support the bill.

● (1830)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have been thinking about something all day. If I have a drug or alcohol problem, it is considered a pathology and I have the right to seek treatment. My Conservative colleagues are making it sound as though they see sexual orientation as a pathology.

I would like to hear it from my colleague's mouth. Does he consider any sexual orientation other than heterosexuality to be a pathology?

[*English*]

Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, the member's question is a good one. The problem with Bill C-6 is that the definition is so cloudy, poor and overly broad that one cannot clearly define what would be acceptable as far as having conversations, or asking for counselling or asking for help from a spiritual leader or a pastor. That makes the bill very ambiguous and it would capture instances of conversations and counselling that I do not think it intended to do.

As I said earlier, the Department of Justice on its website tried to provide clarification as to the definition. It should not have to do that if the bill were clear. At the end of the day, the legal system will look at what is in the bill, not what is printed on the department's website.

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague's leader has unequivocally stated, "Conversion therapy is wrong. In my view it should be banned." He said, "I want everyone to feel accepted in our society." He further said, "To be forced to change who you are is not okay" and "if that is the intent of this bill" it needed to be clarified.

It is good to hear that the leader of the Conservative Party believes conversion therapy is wrong, but if the Conservatives will not support him and this bill, then what? What happens?

Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, perhaps I did not say it from the outset, but I, like all my Conservative colleagues and I believe everyone in the House, feels that conversion therapy that would be violent, degrading, abusive and coercive should be banned. That is what we have been consistently saying, whether it is my leader, the hon. member for Durham, or anyone else in the Conservative caucus or at committee. We are opposed to violent, coercive, unwanted therapies of any kind. However, that is not what the bill clearly identifies. The bill actually muddies those waters by not providing that clear definition of what conversion therapy is or what is meant by conversion therapy.

As Conservatives, we have asked at committee to please let us put forward amendments that would bring clarity to the bill, something we could all get behind. As I said, we do support conversion therapy, but we 100% support a person's desire and ability to retain counsel and to have good faith conversations, whether it is with youth leaders, as the previous speaker mentioned, or with friends and pastors or professional counsellors. We need to protect that right for all Canadians.

● (1835)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there they go again. We are all against violent conversion therapy. Violent conversion therapy? Is violence not already illegal? We cannot inflict violence upon somebody without it already not being illegal.

This is just more of the same rhetoric that we heard from the previous member, going on and on, making it seem as though they really care about this issue. All they are doing, and Canadians see right through it, is looking for justification not to vote in favour of this when the reality is that they are against conversion therapy.

Why does the member just say that he is against conversion therapy? He would be a lot more honourable doing that.

Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, the member for Kingston and the Islands is getting a little worked up. As I have said all along, the Conservatives and all members of the House know exactly what conversion therapy is and we are opposed to it. What we are not opposed to is parents having a conversation about sex and relationships, about pastors, youth leaders, professional counsellor or medical people having conversations about sexuality. For whatever reason, the member does not understand that. I do not get it. Why does he not understand—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-6, which proposes a ban on conversion therapy. I want to say at the outset that I too am opposed to conversion therapy.

Coercive and degrading practices should be banned, and I think my colleagues in the House would agree with me on that. We would not find anybody in this place who is supportive of conversion therapy. However, this bill proposes to criminalize much more than coercive and degrading practices, and we need to protect people from being victimized.

I have spoken and consulted with, and received feedback from, many of my constituents and Canadians from across the country regarding this bill. In a recent mailer, I polled my constituents, and the vast majority of them were not happy with Bill C-6. They are opposed to conversion therapy; however, many are concerned about the definition given in the bill. They fear that it is overly broad and that many conversations would be criminalized.

The voices of the people of Peace River—Westlock echo those of many Canadians who are concerned that this bill might and will criminalize certain types of voluntary counselling and conversation. There are concerns that this overly broad definition of conversion therapy will criminalize different supports, and that this will hurt the people we are trying to protect.

The bill seeks to ban counselling that is related to managing sexual behaviour. My colleague from Cypress Hills—Grasslands described that nowhere else in the world has the same definition of conversion therapy that is presented in this particular bill, which would ban counselling for sexual behaviour. No individual should be prevented from getting the mental or behavioural supports they want.

A Nanos poll conducted earlier this year found that 91% of Canadians support the right of Canadians to get counselling of their choice, regardless of their sexual orientation. Canadians are concerned about the lack of clarity and the broad scope of the bill regarding what constitutes conversion therapy, and this has led them to petition the government to fix the definition.

As a member of Parliament, I have tabled many petitions in the House on this very topic to raise their concerns about the legislation. Some of their concerns include that pastors and religious educators might be thrown in jail for teaching or holding traditional views on sexuality. There are also concerns that this bill would restrict the choices and freedoms of the LGBT community by limiting their access to professional services based on their orientation or gender identity.

As legislators, it is of utmost importance that our bills and definitions are clear. We should not write bills that are imprecise or overbroad and that would be quick to lead to court challenges. I note that the Bloc member who sits on the committee repeatedly brought this point up. He said that we should get this definition right, and I commend him for his work on the committee.

When most people talk about conversion therapy, they think of coercive, harmful, degrading practices such as electroshock therapy, chemical castration and forced lobotomies, among others. These horrific practices should, and have been in many cases, banned. However, this bill would very well criminalize counselling and conversations that are freely sought if they seek to limit or change a person's behaviour, orientation or expression.

The bill before us was first tabled as Bill C-8, but as a result of the prorogation of Parliament, it was reintroduced as Bill C-6. For Bill C-8, there were concerns that the definition of conversion therapy was overly broad, and because of the prorogation there was time for the justice minister to offer greater clarity and a precise definition. However, the bill was retabled without the definition being fixed, and after being introduced and having a short amount of time in debate at second reading, Bill C-6 went to committee.

Many members of this chamber voted to send the bill to committee so that the definition could be amended and given more precision. In its meetings, the committee heard from many witnesses and made some amendments to the bill, but it did not fix the definition. Furthermore, gender expression was included.

● (1840)

There are indeed concerns that people have expressed with the bill before us, including many Canadians who want to maintain the freedom and ability to make their own choices.

We heard recently from my colleague for Provencher about Emmanuel who had shared his story about how he was engaged in a lifestyle where he was bullied and shamed by his school peers, because he was gay. Because of this, he hated himself and even tried to kill himself. After his failed suicide attempt, Emmanuel decided to embrace his identity. Throughout this, Emmanuel's family supported and loved him, and because his Christian faith was a big part of his life, he sought counselling in this area. While he found a diversity of approaches, he finally found a counsellor who became a real mentor for him. Emmanuel said that the mentor counselled him in ways he wanted to be challenged, and he credits his counselling for being alive today.

Now, Emmanuel is clear that he is firmly opposed conversion therapy and supports laws to prevent it, but he is also clear that anyone seeking answers on their sexuality should be free to choose the support that they want. He is concerned that the current definition, unless fixed, would prevent this. In the justice committee he said that:

> I stand with you in your efforts to see LGBTQ+ individuals protected and loved. Therefore, I ask that you create a well-written bill that truly bans coercive and abusive methods while respecting the individual's freedom at any age to choose the type of support they want and their desired goal. I trust you will make a decision that will benefit and protect the citizens of Canada while upholding fundamental rights and freedoms.

With the passing of Bill C-6, there are many fears that religious counselling would be banned. Many different faith traditions have teachings about human sexuality. Several teach that there is a difference between behaviour and orientation and that they are not the same thing. There is a variety of reasons why someone might not want to act in a particular way, including their personal faith tradition or just not wanting to do something. If a religious leader offers counselling, sharing their experience or a teaching on sexuality, there is a fear that Bill C-6 would criminalize that conversation.

Canadians may have a variety of reasons of why they might want to reduce a particular behaviour, which may be unwanted or undesired. I know people who have porn addictions, and reducing their sexual behaviour is something that they desperately want to do. It is important that we do not remove or eliminate the tools and resources that enable people to be able to seek the support that they want—

● (1845)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to interrupt the hon. member. He will have about one minute and 20 seconds to finish his speech when the bill next comes up for debate.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals have one thing among them of which we can be sure: that they will always help their friends to jump the queue, to secure that sole-source contract, to get that insider access and to make sure they are always appointing Liberals to the bench.

Time and time again, the names that are found atop the list of judicial appointments are also found atop the Liberal donor list. This time, the justice minister let it slip that one of his own major donors, not just a donor to the general election fund, but to the minister's nomination campaign and then to his local election campaigns directly, will be receiving an appointment to the bench. This creates the appearance that if lawyers want to be a judge in Canada, they had better start giving to the Liberals instead of focusing on the quality of their work.

Canadians want judges to be appointed on their merit, not on how much they have donated to the Liberals and, specifically, not on how much they have donated to the justice minister. Canadians want a culture change in Ottawa, one that shifts appointments and contracts away from Liberal insiders and back to those who, on their merit alone, are the most deserving. Canadians deserve better.

We have seen it over the last six years. Very notably, as the government spent all kinds of money in aid to folks during the pandemic, the Liberals found themselves at the front of the line. It was not just the WE scandal, the former minister of finance being besties with the Kielburgers or the Prime Minister's ill-fated trip to billionaire island. What about the then fisheries minister and "clam scam" or the then finance minister and his forgotten French villa. On and on it went with ethical lapses of "Oh, I forgot" and "We're not really that close friends and that's why I thought it was okay."

Here we have a situation where the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, for a second time, has found himself on the front page of the newspapers because his donors find themselves on top of those appointment lists. Most notably in this more recent accidental outburst of honesty from the minister in a now-deleted tweet, we see a donor to the minister's nomination campaign. To outsiders, that might not mean anything, but folks know that when they run to be the candidate of record for a party, it is usually friends and family who find themselves donating to those nomination contests. First is the donation to the nomination and then the donation to the local election campaign. The link is quite clear.

What Canadians want and what Canadians deserve are judicial appointments that do not give the appearance that they are based on anything other than merit. It does a disservice to the lawyers who are nominated, it does a disservice to the Canadians who bring their cases before the courts and it does a disservice to this place when there is the appearance of anything other than the most upright and forthright actions by all members in this place. Canadians have grown tired after six years and now they demand better.

● (1850)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if we take a look at what has taken place over the last number of years, we see a government that has appointed more than 450 judges. I would suggest to members that they were exceptional jurists who represented the diversity and strengths within Canada. I see that as a very strong positive. In fact, since 2019, 58% of judicial appointments were women, 5% were indigenous, 16% were visible minorities and 9% were LGBTQ2. Canada is a diverse country, and when we look at the appointments, I am very proud not only of our government's track record in making outstanding judicial appointments, but also of the open, transparent and independent process we put in place to select them.

The member seems to be of the opinion that, if there was a political contribution of some sort, that person should be completely disqualified. I wonder if he would apply that very same principle, if there were appointments that were made of a person who gave a contribution to the Conservative Party. In the Conservative world of Stephen Harper, that might have been one of the criteria, back then, but that is not the criteria that is used by this government and this Prime Minister.

Our appointments are always merit-based; they are also based on the needs of various benches, the expertise of various candidates and the recommendations of independent, and I would like to underline the word "independent", judicial advisory committees. Our government made important reforms to the appointment process, strengthening it to make it more transparent and more accountable. Under this process, qualified candidates for judicial appointment complete a questionnaire that is submitted to the Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs.

The appropriate judicial advisory committee is then required to assess all applications on the basis of three categories: highly recommended, recommended or unable to recommend. The results of these assessments are provided to the Minister of Justice.

Judicial advisory committees are fully independent. They are broadly representative, including three representatives of the public who are chosen through an open application process. Committees are designed so that the assessment of judicial appointments is made by those closest geographically to the court in question and who therefore possess in-depth knowledge of local circumstances and needs.

The point is that there is a change that has taken place between Stephen Harper and the current Prime Minister and government. We finally have a government that is more transparent and more accountable. We have seen over 450 appointments in the last number of years, and these appointments are based on merit. It is the advisory committees that are putting forward these names for recommendation.

Is there a chance some of these members might have contributed to a political party, whether it is Liberal, Conservative, NDP or perhaps even the Bloc? That member probably knows better than I, because I have not done that sort of research, because it was not necessary. Our appointments are based—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, what the parliamentary secretary is saying is disingenuous.

I would draw his attention to articles from last year in the CBC, The Globe and Mail and a former Liberal staffer even saying, "I denounced practices that raised serious ethical issues. I would have much to say on the topic and feel it would be in the public interest."

We have cabinet ministers, Liberal MPs, plugged-in lawyers and provincial Liberal Party presidents being consulted on judicial appointments. The PMO tracks these using the Liberal research bureau and the internal party database Liberal list. That is not merit-based selection; that is insider dealings. It is unacceptable, and it undermines Canadians' confidence in the judicial system and in this legislative body.

We deserve better.

● (1855)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the government has delivered better. If we do a comparison between the era when Stephen Harper was prime minister of the Conservative government and what we have today, the member will see that there is a better, more accountable and more transparent appointment process. Our government has appointed over 450 judges, as I said. They are exceptional jurists who represent a diversity of strengths within Canada. The member might not like to hear what I have to say, but that is the reality.

Our appointments are made based on merit, and our advisory committees do a phenomenal job in the canvassing that is necessary to provide recommendations to the government. Since October 2019, 58% of judicial appointments—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Vancouver East.

HOUSING

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, a 2019 report from CMHC shows that 11% of metro condos are owned, at least in part, by people living outside of Canada. According to Andy Yan, director of the SFU city program, who did a further analysis into the numbers, of the 965 billion dollars' worth of residential real estate in the Vancouver census metropolitan area, $75 billion is tied to at least one non-resident owner. Out of that 75 billion dollars' worth of residential real estate, at least 34 billion dollars' worth is owned by non-residents in Vancouver. Since Vancouver's residential real estate is estimated to be in the range of $341 billion, this means that about 10% of the residential real estate in the city involves non-residents.

Andy Yan also indicated that foreign ownership is particularly high in the condo market. In the case of Richmond, one in four recently built condos has a non-residential owner. Yan's analysis shows that one in five of our new condos is being purchased by those who do not even live in the country. He notes that it has taken 10 years to get this information, and he rightfully asks this: Now that we have the data, what are we going to do about the fact that one in five of our new condos is being purchased by those who don't even live in the country?

The government, in the first budget that has been tabled in two years, responded with a 1% tax on vacant homes owned by non-Canadians living outside of Canada. The idea is to target people who are solely interested in contributing to and profiting from the unsustainable increases in Canada's housing market. While it is a step in the right direction, it is merely a passing nod to the uncontrollable cost of housing. Given that the cost of housing in Canada increased in 2020 by 31% alone, does the minister believe that a 1% tax on vacant homes owned by non-Canadians living outside of Canada will deter foreign investors from fuelling and benefiting from the housing market?

The NDP believes the tax should be much stronger and that we can do better. We are concerned that 1% will not be much of a deterrent given that the cost of housing increased 31% on average in 2020 alone. Even the parliamentary secretary to the minister of housing recently admitted that things are not working for Canadians. He said that Canada is "a very safe market for foreign investment but we're not a great market for Canadians looking for choices around housing." Meaningful action needs to be taken to address this growing concern.

For comparison, in B.C. the tax on foreign-owned properties, combined with the speculation vacancy tax, amounts to 2.5% annually, plus a 20% foreign buyers tax in metro Vancouver. The government's proposal is very narrow and must be increased. The government should, at the very least, expand the initiatives in B.C. nationally.

This must also be combined with other measures to address the housing crisis. The government needs to step up in supporting the provinces and FINTRAC with resources for combatting money laundering; must introduce other measures, such as a beneficial ownership registry, to increase transparency about who owns real properties; and should make tax avoidance of capital gains on secondary residences more difficult. The government should also take action to stop tax evasion on the capital gains tax for secondary homes.

Urgent action is needed. We need a comprehensive package to address the out-of-control costs for housing, including home ownership. The time to act is long overdue.

● (1900)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing), Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Vancouver East is absolutely correct on almost all of what she just said. I did say in an interview a few weeks ago that we have found ourselves with a housing system that makes it easier for foreign investors to purchase and own property in this country than for Canadians to achieve their dream of home ownership, particularly for first-time homeowners.

That situation must change. It is why we have introduced the vacant home tax for offshore owners. It is also why we are working with the Province of British Columbia on money laundering and making sure that FINTRAC has the resources to uncover that part of the investment portfolio, which not only is illegal but is also driving up home prices for Canadians. It is why we have taken steps in the recent budget to move forward on beneficial ownership disclosure. It is a complex issue, based largely on the way the secondary mortgage market operates, but we have work to do there. I agree that work must be done.

We have also taken steps to build bridges for home ownership for first-time buyers with the first-time home buyer incentive, which has now been modelled around, for the very first time in CMHC's history, regional housing markets to support the acquisition of homes for those people choosing to own their homes.

We have also done things like portfolio funding for Habitat for Humanity to help with targeted approaches to equity-seeking groups and equity-deserving groups in the home ownership market, to make sure that others who have different barriers to home ownership also have an opportunity to make that choice, if that is the choice they want to make.

What has been disappointing is that the Conservatives, who often talk only about market housing, have opposed every single one of our reforms in market housing. While the NDP has spoken very strongly and is a strong supporter of our national housing strategy, it is good to see it now taking on the challenge of market housing—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am sorry. There was some interference, which seems to have stopped.

Could the hon. parliamentary secretary repeat the last two sentences?

Please proceed.

Mr. Adam Vaughan: I will just conclude by saying that we are very pleased that the NDP is now recognizing that housing affordability and affordable housing are paired as critical issues. We look forward to the NDP supporting our budget and the measures we have taken this year. We look forward to working on this file with the NDP and other interested parties, because the impact of high housing prices is a land value issue, and that land value issue is now making affordable housing harder to build in the social sector.

We need to address both issues simultaneously in order to give Canadians the choices they deserve. Our government is committed to exploring all of the options and moving on all of these files to make home ownership a possibility for all Canadians, if that is their choice.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, the Liberals' national housing strategy aims to create 150,000 to 160,000 units of new affordable housing over 10 years. As stated by Tim Richter from The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, the budget has "[l]ittle new dedicated affordable and supportive housing construction". He goes on to say, "To have a fighting chance at ending homelessness and addressing housing need, Canada will need to build at least 300,000 new deep subsidy, permanently affordable and supportive housing units".

The Liberal plan consistently falls well short of what housing advocates are calling for to address the housing crisis. The NDP wants to see a commitment of 500,000 units, and we will continue to push the federal government to increase investments for the construction of new social and non-profit housing. The NDP is also calling on the government to limit the ability of REITs and large capital funds to acquire properties and contribute to the financialization of the housing market. Given the ongoing housing crisis across the country, urgent action is needed now.

● (1905)

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Madam Speaker, the member for Vancouver East and I have run in two general elections at the same time, and I would compare our party platform side-by-side to the NDP platform with her any single day to compare the differences. Not only have we promised more, we have delivered more. Not only have we built more, we are building more. Not only are we talking about repairs, which the NDP's platforms have never done, we are also talking about making sure that all the co-ops and subsidized housing in the federal programs get restored.

Our program is real. It is building real housing for real people. If building housing was as easy as booking a trip to Disneyland and figuring out how to pay for it later, I am sure the member opposite would have some advice. The reality is we are not interested in those sorts of hairy, ridiculous schemes. We are actually interested in building real housing for real people in real time. The rapid housing initiative is just the latest installment of what has been a very successful national housing strategy, almost doubling the targeted number of housing starts. We are back at it again with rapid housing 2.0.

Success is on the horizon, and we are pursuing it. Our platform will pursue it because our budgets are pursuing it and because our housing starts speak for themselves.

TOURISM INDUSTRY

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, last month I put a question to the Minister of Transport about his unilateral decision to extend the cruise ship ban for another year, until February of 2022. The effect of that ban is that no passenger vessels can come into a Canadian port until at least February of 2022. That ban started with the pandemic, of course, and killed the cruising industry in Canada, particularly in my home province of British Columbia on the west coast. It killed it last year, and it is probably going to kill it completely this year. The concern is this. What is the ban going to do to the industry next year and going forward?

The answer I got from the minister was inadequate and missed the point, so I am happy to have this opportunity to expand on it.

The cruise industry is a very important segment of Canada's tourism sector, especially on the west coast in British Columbia. I said in my intervention last month that, every time a cruise ship stops by either the ports of Victoria or Vancouver on its way up to Alaska from Seattle, another million dollars gets pumped into the economy. These are the bus drivers, tour operators, taxi drivers, restaurant and store owners, and farmers, who grow the food that provision the ships when they come in, so it is a big industry and a lot of people are hurting.

In his answer, the minister said his major concern was the health and safety of Canadians and seeing Canada through the pandemic. Of course, we agree with that, but here is the thing. The Americans are now looking at a way to at least salvage the second half of the cruise industry in Alaska for this year. They are as frustrated with the minister's unilateral decision as we are on our side of the border. They were not consulted at all and this is an international endeavour, because cruising is cross-border.

The Americans have figured out a way around it. They are going to amend their legislation, which was designed initially many years ago to protect American jobs, and I do not know if it ever had the effect of doing that, but inadvertently it had a very beneficial impact on Canadian tourism. That American legislation required vessels to stop at a foreign port before stopping in another American port. That is what kick-started the tourism industry in Canada. I guess we thought that was maybe a safety check for us, but the Americans have figured out a way around it. This is American legislation. They can amend it, and they did amend it.

I told the minister about this three months ago, back in March. I said that the Americans were contemplating it, and I do not think he took it seriously. Now, the Americans have done it. Both houses of Congress, in an uncharacteristic time of unity, passed it unanimously, and President Biden has now signed it into law.

The Americans will salvage the second part of the cruising season. They figured out they are ahead of us in vaccinating their citizens of course, but we are catching up, so we are looking for a more creative solution than just an outright ban. The Americans were telling us our minister did not consult with them. He just went ahead and made this announcement. It is very frustrating for them.

My questions for the minister are as follows: First, why did he not consult with his American counterparts before coming up with this unilateral decision, knowing how important co-operation is for this industry? Second, is there any chance the second half of the Alaskan cruise season could be rescued? Third, what is the plan going forward? Do we know if there will be a cruise industry in Canada going forward?

● (1910)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will do my best to provide an answer for my friend.

There are a couple of things I would call into question, in terms of accuracy. For example, the member said that the U.S.A. is ahead of Canada on the vaccine front. I might question that. In fact, today, if we look at the first dosage, Canada is number one in the G20 countries. The United States is a G20 country. On a per capita, on the first dose, Canada is doing better than any other country in the G20. Anyway, that is not the subject matter.

When we think of the cruise industry as a whole, the Government of Canada is very much aware of it. It is sympathetic and wants to do whatever it can to protect the longevity of that industry.

It is important for us to realize that the federal minister responsible does listen to public health officials. That goes beyond the public health officials here in Canada. The minister listens to provincial public health officials and territorial health officials. Consultations are done with indigenous and Inuit groups.

I would like to remind my colleague that at present our borders remain closed. This also has an impact on those exemptions.

In regard to the cruise ships on the west coast, while exemptions to the current interim order prohibiting cruise ships are in fact possible, the granting of any exemptions would be considered only once public health officials have advised us that it is safe to do so.

It is not that the minister just wakes up one morning and decides to do something. There is a great deal of background work, keeping in mind the importance of consultations taking place and the feedback that is coming into the department concerning the industry specifically.

If we look at the tourism industry and the supports the government has provided, business, tourism, and the arts and culture sectors have received an estimated $15.4 billion in federal emergency liquidity support through such programs as the Canada emergency wage subsidy program, the commercial rent subsidy program and the lockdown supports since the beginning of the pandemic.

The government has been there in a very real and tangible way, because we understand how important the tourism industry as a whole is to Canada. We want to be there for the people who are dependent on this industry. We want to be there in that tangible way.

When the time is right, when the health care experts, and the provinces and territories, and people are on side, saying that it is safe to do so, we will move forward. We will be in a better position to do that. Statistically, our numbers clearly demonstrate that, in terms of the return to work, where it has actually taken place in the past. In comparisons, Canada does a very good job. We will continue—

● (1915)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove.

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments from the hon. member.

He is saying that Canada is catching up to America on vaccinating their citizens. That is a good-news story. However, it just goes to support my position that maybe there is room for a more creative solution than just an outright ban for another year.

Why is the minister not talking to his American counterparts to see what they are doing about opening up the cruise industry in a safe, secure and healthy manner? There is rapid testing, making sure that passengers have been vaccinated, better protocols on cruise ships, more health facilities and better cleaning. They have gone through all of that, and they feel they are now in a position to do it in a safe and secure manner. Why can Canada not be more creative about finding a solution?

The member said the government is helping financially to support them. That is great, and Canadians appreciate that. However, what we are looking for is an answer going forward. This temporary solution that the Americans have come up with could become permanent. It is American legislation standing—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, we are thinking in terms of the future. Budget 2021 includes investments that are specifically tailored to the tourism sector. These total $1 billion to restore our supply of tourism products and experiences while also helping to drive the demand for them.

I have been to the west coast. I remember walking along the dock in downtown Vancouver where people were getting off a massive ship. I understand and appreciate the true value of this industry, as all members of the Liberal caucus do. We want to see it get back to the new normal as quickly as possible, but we also have to think of the safety of Canadians. A great deal of effort and thought are put into these measures that are put into place to make sure that—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The motion that the House do now adjourn 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 7:17 p.m.)

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