



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

House of Commons Debates

Official Report
(Hansard)

Volume 151 No. 062

Monday, May 2, 2022

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, May 2, 2022

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)
[English]

HINDU HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.) moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should recognize the contributions that Hindu Canadians have made to the socio-economic development of Canada, and their services to the Canadian society, the richness of Hindu Heritage and its vast contribution to the world of arts and science, astronomy to medicine, and its culture and traditions and the importance of educating and reflecting upon it for our future generations in Canada by declaring November, every year, Hindu Heritage Month.

He said: Mr. Speaker, namaste. *Namaskar*. This is the Hindu greeting with palms held together and centred in front of the chest while bowing the head down slightly. It means “the divine in me bows to the divine in you”. It shows respect and humility.

Our wonderful country Canada is an ongoing successful story of a nation with extraordinary cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity among its residents. Hindus started arriving in Canada more than 100 years back. There are about 600,000 Hindu Canadians, and they arrived here from India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, other South Asian and Southeast Asian countries, African countries, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, other Caribbean countries and many other places.

Hindu Canadians have made and continue to make significant contributions to Canada’s socio-economic, political and cultural heritage as doctors, scientists, engineers, lawyers, business leaders, artists, academics, government officials, elected officials, etc. From building institutions to being philanthropists, Hindu Canadians have excelled in all services and sectors and in all walks of life.

This month, the Angus Reid Institute, in partnership with Cardus, published the results of a survey that offers a comprehensive and first-of-its-kind look at the faith journeys of Canadians across the religious spectrum. According to this survey, Canadians raised in the Hindu faith tend to be more privately faithful. They do not necessarily gather as formally and frequently, but nonetheless profess a strong personal connection to their religion. While for many Cana-

dians of Hindu faith attending a temple is a less frequent activity, many have a shrine within their home. Finally, among the seven religious groups, Hinduism is one of only two that had positive views from Canadians in every religious faith group.

For over thousands of years, Hindus have contributed to mankind's deep knowledge of mathematics, including the invention of zero, architecture, medicine, astronomy, chemistry, navigation, metallurgy and engineering, just to name a few fields. Yoga and meditation are also Hindus' important contributions to world civilization.

On Hindu heritage, Hindus have an ancient, magnificent and robust inheritance, which they have received from numerous sources: our wisdom traditions, our religious rites and rituals, our literature, our many arts and crafts, our elders, our fairs and festivals and, above all, our many *samskaras*, or sacraments in our home. That heritage not only gives us a *drishti*, or world view, but defines our *purusharthas*, or aims of life, and equally defines our *sanskriti*, or culture. In short, Hindu heritage defines our dharma.

In a civilization that is so ancient, what strikes me is that it has not only an unbroken tradition of 5,000 years of recorded history, but also the plurality or diversity of our tradition. Even in the absence of a monolithic religious dispensation, we Hindus, whether in Canada or anywhere in the world, are connected by an invisible thread that binds us together. That is the strength of our Hindu heritage.

Our wisdom traditions, which start from the Vedas, flow into the Upanishads, or forest discourses, and are followed by our Puranas, or our songs and stories, are philosophically rich and form the foundation of our temple traditions. It is the same vast heritage that informs our costume and cuisine, our habits and behaviour and our arts and crafts.

Hindu heritage does not restrict itself to religious matters. We have a strong aesthetic foundation that leads to a celebration of *saundarya*, or what is beautiful. We celebrate beauty in our lives through stories and paintings, song and dance, colour and cuisine, festivals and many family events.

Though ancient, our heritage is alive and growing. It is open to influences from other civilizations and freely adapts and gives to whomever we come into contact with. Thus it is that, for us Hindus, Canada is a comforting and embracing home away from home.

Private Members' Business

Let me now very briefly touch on the Hinduism that is the oldest and one of the largest world religions. Hinduism is also known as *sanatana dharma*, or eternal natural law. Hindus believe in *vasudhaiva kutumbakam*: The world is one family. Hindus believe in the oneness of all living beings, everything in creation and the universe. Om is the most sacred sound and symbol of Hinduism. It is chanted aloud and is known as the sound of the universe, and it means universal consciousness.

The swastika is one of the most sacred symbols for Hindus. In Sanskrit, the word *swastika* means “that which brings good luck and well-being”. One of the oldest languages in the world, Sanskrit is the language of Hindu sacred texts.

While Hindus do not have one holy book, the vedas and Upanishads penned thousands of years ago teach core spiritual knowledge and philosophy. In addition, the Bhagavad Gita and Ramayana are the most loved sacred texts. The Bhagavad Gita teaches us that true knowledge is to see God in each soul. Hindus introduced the concept of *ahimsa*, non-violence, to the world.

I now go back to Hindu heritage. For many people in the world, cultural heritage refers primarily to tangible or material cultural heritage, such as archaeological sites, historical buildings and precious objects like sculptures, pottery and ornaments in museums. For them, they are what matter the most. There has always been an intangible or living cultural heritage underlying material manifestations that has not been promoted to the extent it deserves. This cultural knowledge is typically oral and is transmitted from elders to younger generations.

UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, describes cultural awareness or cultural knowledge as what individuals, groups, communities or nations consider as an element of their identity that guides people to respect special values, attend special places, produce and utilize certain objects and manifest certain behaviours.

The intangible, or living, cultural heritage elements related to Hindu heritage that we need to preserve, celebrate and promote are, number one, oral traditions such as songs, proverbs, tales, legends, myths, epic poetry, dramatic performances, storytelling, etc. *Katha* is Hindu storytelling, performances of which are ritual events that involve storytellers who recite sacred texts, such as the Puranas or Ramayana, followed by comments.

Number two is performing arts, which cover theatre, vocal and instrumental music such as Carnatic and Hindustani music, as well as dances like Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kathakali, Kuchipudi, Manipuri, Odissi and Mohiniattam.

Number three is social practices, rituals and festive events such as Diwali, Ugadi, Holi, Navratri and Vaisakhi, new year celebrations and traditional games, etc.

Number four is traditional knowledge, traditional cuisine and traditional medicines, etc.

Number five is traditional craftsmanship, which brings together numerous traditional arts in the fields of pottery, woodwork, metalwork, jewellery, textiles and leather work.

It also makes business sense to promote culture and heritage. The arts, culture and heritage sectors of the Canadian economy generate more than \$57 billion and provide close to 673,000 jobs in sectors such as music, performing arts, heritage institutions, festivals and celebrations. The activities related to safeguarding Hindu heritage, as per the UNESCO definition, cover awareness-raising, capacity-building and education, inventory-taking, documentation, research, promotion, protection, preservation, revitalization and inscription. This cultural knowledge is typically oral and is transmitted from elders to the younger generations. It is very mobile, as it transcends borders and is adopted by other nations. While it keeps its core, it allows its peripheries to be modified according to the tastes of the time and following the surrounding communities' creativity.

• (1110)

The Hindu-Canadian community has talented individuals, experienced practitioners and creative artists, researchers, teachers and entrepreneurs who can help with these aspects of safeguarding Hindu heritage in Canada. We can have promotional activities such as organizing storytelling events, holding photo and video exhibitions, planning competitions, organizing performing arts events and releasing promotional material through media and online platforms. There are excellent capacities among us that need to be identified and employed.

With the recent census expected to be published next October, the population of Hindu-Canadians is expected to rise much beyond 600,000. Currently, there are more than 220,000 international students from India here in Canada and a majority of them are Hindus. With many of these students expected to become permanent residents and eventually citizens following their education, the number of Hindu-Canadians is expected to go higher.

According to the Pew Research Center, in the U.S. 77% of Hindu-American adults have a college degree and nearly 50% have a postgraduate degree. While this info is not available for Canada, the numbers are probably better here.

Hindu-Canadians are a peaceful and productive community and have contributed to the socio-economic development of Canada. They have also added to the richness of the multicultural fabric of our country. Many organizations and hundreds of individuals have expressed support for this motion. I will just name two or three: the Hindu Federation, the Coalition of Hindus of North America and the Canada India Foundation.

Private Members' Business

I conclude my speech by stating that making November Hindu heritage month across Canada would allow us to recognize, preserve, celebrate and promote Hindu heritage as defined by UNESCO's intangible or living cultural heritage. Proclaiming Hindu heritage month would also provide an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate both current and future generations about Hindu-Canadians and the important role they have played, and continue to play, in communities across Canada.

• (1115)

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for bringing this bill before the House.

As he is a prominent member of the Hindu community in Canada, could he tell us how the community has integrated into Canadian society in the last decades?

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, Hindu heritage is adaptable. Wherever it goes, it adapts to the communities in which it resides. In the same way, Hindu Canadians, who have been coming to this wonderful country for more than 100 years, have adapted to the culture and heritage of Canada and Canadians. Just to give one example, it is very common to see Hindu-Canadian families lighting Christmas trees during Christmastime in Canada, and that is the beauty of Hindu Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his clarification.

In Quebec there are no less than 24,000 members of the Hindu community in Montreal. The Bloc Québécois is obviously in favour of occasions to promote culture and heritage.

My question for my colleague is the following: What is the reason behind my colleague moving this motion at this time to declare November Hindu heritage month?

[*English*]

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, Quebec has always shown welcome to Hindu Canadians. In fact, less than two weeks ago, I was in Montreal celebrating a Hindu-Canadian festive event.

November is a holy month. Mid-October to mid-November is the time when major Hindu festivals, such as Diwali and Navratri, are celebrated, so we thought November would be an appropriate month for Hindu heritage to be celebrated in Canada.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his motion and his intervention today. I have an incredible Hindu community in my riding as well. This weekend we celebrated Holi. I was covered in so many colours and it was wonderful to celebrate that joyous festival filled with love and forgiveness. I want to thank the Srishti Foundation and the Hindu Cultural Centre that is in my riding.

I want to know specifically how the member's motion would financially help organizations like those in my community to have more of these festivals and to grow these festivals, because they teach us more about ourselves and the incredible diversity in our communities.

• (1120)

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, there are several federal government programs that allow multicultural communities to celebrate various events. At Canadian Heritage, for example, I know there are funds for The Great India Festival, a three-day festival that is organized every year in Ottawa. Like many other kinds of heritage, the Indo-Canadian or Hindu heritage is also promoted. In addition, there is one specific program that every not-for-profit organization can use, which is the Canada summer jobs program, where students from the community can be employed to help organize the various events that are happening in their communities.

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Nepean for his excellent private member's bill. My riding of Winnipeg South has the largest and fastest-growing Hindu community in Manitoba. As the hon. member has mentioned, the Hindu community is making incredible contributions to science, the arts and business.

During these last two difficult years, I have made the observation that the Hindu heritage is one of service and our Hindu community stepped up mightily. I wonder if the hon. member could reflect on the past two difficult years and how the Hindu community stepped up, not only for Canada but for India.

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, Hindu Canadians, like all other Canadians, stepped forward and helped. Hindu charitable institutions organized vaccination drives, organized food for the needy, and helped those in need who were struck by this pandemic.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to second this motion, and I commend the hon. member for Nepean for bringing this matter before the House.

Canada, as is so often observed in this place, is a community of communities. We may not all be immigrants, but all of us, even our first nations, can trace our roots to another place. With such diversity, it is important to celebrate our heritage and to remember our roots as we come together to forge this still young nation.

Private Members' Business

Our neighbour to the south, the United States, has for years proclaimed itself to be a melting pot. Those who go there are expected, to a certain degree, to forget their former culture, to melt together to form one America, with a homogenous culture and vision. That was especially apparent when it came to language. How well that has worked in recent years is a matter of debate. The American dream may not be as accessible as it once was, though the ideal remains strong. Different communities are making their voices heard in a way that did not happen in the past.

In Canada, we have never been a melting pot, never a place where immigrants were expected to become something completely new. Sociologists refer to the Canadian experiment not as a melting pot but as a mosaic, a place where each cultural group retains its distinct identity while contributing to the nation as a whole. In Canada, we celebrate our differences and try to learn from them, to better our cultural understanding of what makes our nation a great nation.

Hindu heritage month would celebrate Hindu Canadians and the contributions they have made to the socio-economic development of Canada. It would highlight their service to Canadian society, the richness of Hindu heritage and the contributions Hindus have made to the arts and sciences, both in Canada and around the world.

Hindu heritage month would bring to the forefront the Hindu religion, something many Canadians know little about. As a religion, Hinduism is one of the oldest in the world, with almost a billion adherents worldwide, dating back beyond recorded history. Today, there are nearly 900 million practising Hindus worldwide, about 9% of the world's population. It is the world's third-largest religion, after Christianity and Islam. While most Hindus call India home, there are more than half a million living in Canada. They follow a rich religious tradition, one with high ethical standards and practices designed for both individual and cultural enlightenment.

The first Hindus came to Canada more than a century ago. They are found in every province and territory. Each one has a different story of how they or their ancestors came to this country, and I do believe the hon. member for Nepean has his own story, too. What they have in common is their desire to become part of Canadian society and to contribute to its well-being.

When I think about the contributions of Hindus to Canadian society, the first name that comes to mind is that of the late Deepak Obhrai, who served this House and all Canadians as the member of Parliament for Calgary Forest Lawn from 1997 until his death in 2019. Deepak was a proud Canadian, an air traffic controller who retrained as an accountant when he came to Canada and opened his own small business. Before becoming an MP, he served the community as president of the India-Canada Association of Calgary, the Monterey Park Community Association, and the Hindu Society of Calgary. He also served as a vice-president of the National Indo-Canadian Council.

• (1125)

When first elected, Deepak served as an opposition MP. Then, when the Conservatives formed government, he became parliamentary secretary to the minister of foreign affairs and to the minister of international co-operation. In those roles, he was able to visit other countries as a representative of his adopted country. His offi-

cial visits took him to more than 100 different lands. He could tell stories about his adventures in practically every country in the world.

Deepak was known for his support of immigrants in general and the Hindu community in particular. He may have lived in Calgary, but he was known to every Canadian of Hindu or Indian descent. He was proud of his roots and proud of his adopted country and the opportunities it offered to immigrants like him. He understood that there are no limits to what may be accomplished by those who make Canada their home.

In 2017, he ran for the leadership of the federal Conservative Party. His goal was to become the first Hindu prime minister of Canada. He dared to dream big, even knowing the odds were against him. That is the Hindu spirit. His presence enriched the campaign and the Conservative Party at that time.

Deepak Obhrai's story, as I have said, is but one of so many success stories that can be told of Hindus in Canada. All too often, though, these stories are not well known outside a limited community. Setting aside November every year as Hindu heritage month would allow the Hindu community a platform to present their history, their culture and the stories of their people to a wider audience. As Canadians, we like to celebrate our diversity. We are a nation of stories and storytellers, painting a rich tapestry of cultures that is envied by nations the world over.

That tapestry has been made stronger by the contributions of Hindu Canadians. Whether their origins are in India, Fiji, Mauritius, South Africa, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Eastern Africa, like my friend Deepak Obhrai, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan or Sri Lanka, their presence has enriched Canadian society. They have become an important part of the Canadian mosaic, and it is only fitting that we recognize that fact.

I am confident that all the members in this House will support the member for Nepean in his desire to see the establishment of Hindu heritage month. I congratulate the hon. member for Nepean for bringing this bill before the House and thank him for his service to Canadians.

• (1130)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, *namaste*.

I am very pleased to rise in the House as my party's critic on living together to speak to Motion No. 42, which would declare November Hindu heritage month.

The motion, for the benefit of my colleagues, reads as follows:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should recognize the contributions that Hindu Canadians [and Quebecers] have made to the socio-economic development of Canada [and Quebec], and their services to the Canadian society, the richness of Hindu Heritage and its vast contribution to the world of arts and science, astronomy to medicine, and its culture and traditions and the importance of educating [this is very important, I will come back to it] and reflecting upon it for our future generations in Canada [and Quebec] by declaring November, every year, Hindu Heritage Month.

First, I want to say hello to my colleague from Nepean who moved this motion. It has the support of 14 other members, so it must be relevant. I will state right away that, for many reasons, and I will not go into them all today, we will be voting in favour of this motion. I would nevertheless like to explain why we, in the Bloc Québécois, are the sort of people who appreciate this kind of initiative.

The reason is that this is an era of extremes. These days, people are so afraid of offending anyone that they are constantly walking on eggshells. Victimhood activists everywhere are monopolizing the public debate to the extent that many people hesitate to speak up out of fear of inadvertently making a faux pas. This silences voices that would be more worth listening to than the ones we hear nowadays, which yell but, of course, do not listen.

I recently learned that I, a white man in my fifties—by the way, I am turning 54 tomorrow, for those who would like to know—am not allowed to talk about racism or social injustice, or even express an opinion on certain situations, not even to defend the oppressed. The simple reason is that as a white man in my fifties, turning 54 tomorrow, I am privileged, which means I do not know what I am talking about. My opinion is immediately considered to be patronizing for the individuals or groups who define themselves as victims of oppression, injustice or inequality.

However, I call myself a progressive. I consider myself to be someone who has actively worked on opening doors and removing barriers so that immigrants can join our society as smoothly as possible, with respect for our respective values, both their values as new Quebecers and ours as Quebecers of all origins who have been in Quebec for one generation or many.

My generation played a role in making progress for groups that have been oppressed and discriminated against. My generation recognizes that there is still a lot of work to be done before every person is included and respected. However, the pendulum is swinging so far the other way that it seems people in my generation would no longer be included in these efforts.

I object to how people like me and many of my colleagues are being shut out of the discussion. It upsets me because this is a divisive, not to say polarizing, debate that serves as a distraction from what I feel is the most obvious point when we are talking about cultural diversity and the integration of immigrants in Quebec and Canada.

The only reason that intolerance and racism are still an issue in 2022 is ignorance. The only way to combat ignorance is through education, which is precisely what Motion No. 42, which we are debating today, would allow for, and that is why I support it, as I said. Activism is not what will help swing that pendulum back to the other end of the spectrum. As I said earlier and as we can see, when the pendulum moves so swiftly, there is no time for any nu-

Private Members' Business

ance, for discussion or for education. If people are to learn, they need education. They need to be taught. People need to be able to speak up, talk to each other and explain things without having others constantly take offence. As members know, everyone has a thin skin these days, but it has not always been this way.

I would like to take a moment to look back on the past, my past. Let us imagine that it is 1971 in Quebec City. I am a little boy. My brother and I are excited because we are about to welcome our little sister, who my parents just adopted. This baby, who was born in Jamaica, is going to become part of our family, and our lives are about to take a rather unexpected turn as a result. It is important to understand that there were not a lot of Black people in Quebec City in 1971. I always joke that, besides my sister, the only Black people in Quebec City in 1971 were one or two African professors at Laval University and a guy who got lost trying to find his way back to Montreal and ended up staying.

● (1135)

I was lucky. I had a sister who opened our minds and helped us become aware of the issue of difference at a very young age. I am not yet talking about racism. As we grew up, we felt the disconcerting sidelong glances that people gave not only my sister, but us as well, her family members. Although we did not feel as hurt by this as she did, we were still targeted.

I heard every kind of comment imaginable, from derogatory remarks to things that were less hurtful but that clearly showed that ignorance and fear of the unknown were the cause of the resulting intolerance and racism. Ignorance does not always manifest itself in a disparaging or mean way. Sometimes, it can even be a bit funny.

Here is one example. My sister was probably about two years old when a woman approached my mother to ask, intrigued, how she would understand my sister when she started talking. Had my mother learned the language of my sister's native country? My mother gave me a little wink and told the woman that she was completely fluent in the language of my sister's country.

All through my childhood, I answered questions about my sister. How long was her hair when she straightened it? Could she get a sunburn? It was naive ignorance. Unless it is addressed head-on with education and discussion, that kind of ignorance can grow and morph into intolerance, racism and fear of the other.

I feel that I did a pretty good job of educating people around me about my sister at the time because, a little later, when we were teenagers, my friends' questions about my sister changed. Was she single, and would she mind if they called her?

Private Members' Business

I just wanted to share that story to illustrate how important it is to be open-minded and to educate each other. That is the secret to a diverse society in which people of all different backgrounds must and can live together and integrate while upholding the host society's basic values and still honouring their own culture. In my ideal world, all these diverse cultures actually help strengthen Quebec society's guiding principles with their customs, flavours, music, poetry and traditions.

I am not talking here about Canadian-style multiculturalism, which I think is more like a Tower of Babel than an integration model. I am talking about my dream society, where all cultures converge and become part of a strong tree whose roots serve as a foundation for each one to thrive in a context of mutual respect. It is about opening up, and learning from and about each other.

Just talking about Hindu heritage month made me learn 100 times more than all I knew or thought I knew about the culture and Hinduism. One of the things I learned is that we have architectural treasures. In Dollard-des-Ormeaux, for example, there is an absolutely majestic temple that is worth a visit for its architecture, as well as the history of its design and construction.

I also learned a lot about certain rituals that had to be adapted because events cannot always be celebrated outside, as they are in India or in other places in the world where the weather allows it. The dates of celebrations and events have even been moved during the year to adapt to the weather in Quebec.

I was fascinated to learn so much in so little time while doing a bit of quick research for my speech this morning. If I could learn so much in the little time I had, imagine what an entire month could do if used properly.

What will we do that month?

We are often asked to devote months to different cultures or different themes. I am certainly open to declaring November Hindu heritage month, but my one hope is that the month will be used for communicating, sharing and promoting the culture, because that is how these months become relevant, in my opinion.

I will quickly close by congratulating Sunil Chandary, a constituent in my riding who made a lot of sacrifices to come here. I know that he is watching today. I want to tell him how glad I am to have him here and how much I appreciate the advice he gave me for my presentation this morning. I want to assure him that we will help him and be there for him throughout the process to get his wife and son here from India so they can join him in Drummondville and enrich our society, just as people from all backgrounds do.

• (1140)

[*English*]

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, today I am proud to rise in support of what I believe to be another crucial and important opportunity for us and all Canadians to reflect on what this place, this land and this territory really mean.

When I was young growing up in the Fishing Lake Métis Settlement, one of eight Métis settlements in Canada, one of the things my *kokum* would always mention is that people come here from all walks of life seeking refuge, peace and safety. When our ancestors

welcomed people into our community onto these territories, we did so with open arms. We did so wanting to understand one another. We did so wanting to cherish one another. We did so knowing that we could do that in peace. However, today, we have to go much further than that. We have to recommit ourselves to understanding the impact that Hindu Canadians have had on our society and redouble our efforts in making sure that they are recognized, they are seen and their achievements are truly noted.

I want to give a special thanks to my hon. colleague, the member for Nepean, for ensuring that we recognize each November as Hindu heritage month and that we continue on this very important and, I would say, sacred obligation to recognize each and every member of our community here in Canada and their unique contributions to building this place.

As we recognize and celebrate the achievements of various diaspora communities in Canada, the New Democrats are proud to stand in support of the motion to do the same for Hindu Canadians, which is truly what is right. They have built a better Canada for us. They have contributed to a Canada that we enjoy today, and we must ensure that their recognition stands the test of time.

As one of the oldest living religions in the world, Hindus' teachings of love, equality and peace resonate here in Canada. In many ways, they are the very same values of my people, the Métis and the Cree: the values of love, the values of equality and the values of Canada.

I feel it is extremely important to remember the contributions of the nearly half a million Hindus who came to Canada from all parts of the world and now call this great place home. From advancing science and technology to making their mark in our academia, politics and overall Canadian society, it is truly something worth recognizing.

Canadian Hindu communities deserve complete recognition, because often, through recognition, we also have to recognize pain. Many communities have come to Canada after fleeing and finding a way to escape this pain. We have to ensure that the next generation not only recognizes the hardships of their ancestors and maybe even the current generation, but projects that into strength for the community.

I want to take a moment to highlight and condemn the many attacks on places of worship that we have seen in large Hindu communities. It is truly troubling in Canada. Burglaries and hate attacks are on the rise, and we must have the courage to stand and defend our fellow Canadians and our Hindu Canadians.

As the member for Nepean highlighted, Hindus possess a great cultural knowledge base that has scientific roots and deep intellectual roots. There have been immense contributions, particularly to astronomy. We have seen, for example, the formation of the number zero, which has laid the foundation of advanced mathematics, the same mathematics we use here today. It is a contribution we must recognize. It is something that our children right now in schools across the country continue to learn.

We are truly blessed in the way that our country has the ability to bring these teachings to one place, to one foundation, for the betterment of all people. I believe that is the spirit of Canada. That is the spirit of my ancestors. When we welcomed Europeans here for the first time, it was our intent to create peace, mutual prosperity and, moreover, a place where each and every one of us can truly be ourselves.

• (1145)

Canada has been a refuge and home to various communities, particularly now, for example, with welcoming many Ukrainians and Afghans. We must not forget our existing commitments to the world, but this is an example of what happens when we invite people into our community and our homes. We are truly all the better for it, just as we welcome many more today.

I want to call on the federal government, in relation to this motion, to contribute funds and resources to the Hindu community so that we can continue to see the impact in each and every one of our communities. Everyone of us in every single one of our districts has been impacted by members of the Hindu community. They have contributed so much, and it is the very least we can do to ensure that their recognition, their visibility and their safety are paramount.

Creating a Canada that is safe for culturally diverse immigrants and the many families that are still here today is a job that is ongoing. We know, people of colour know and immigrant families know that in Canada today, we are still facing the ugly truth of racism and its long-lasting barriers. The fear of not being able to pronounce something correctly is a real barrier to people succeeding in this country. Hindu heritage month seeks to remedy that by demonstrating to all Canadians, businesses, not-for-profits and even the government that Hindus, much like all communities seeking peace, deserve a place here and deserve recognition for their contributions.

This means that we must take a principled position to support these communities and have a unique attention on the fact that hate crimes are affecting them. This must be a motivation for us. This must be a stepping place for us to ensure that we eliminate hate in all places.

It also means providing unique support for languages. The Hindu community has a diverse language and dialect that requires Canadians to adapt to ensure that we create space and opportunity for those folks who would rather speak their mother tongue. In the House, we have spoken about mother tongue recognition. We have spoken about the importance of our cultures and our languages to this country. Recognizing the contributions along with the language is part of that. We cannot fully have the recognition of language without fully having the recognition of culture, peoplehood, nationhood and religion.

Private Members' Business

I am positive that this motion will celebrate diversity. That is its intent. I believe that in celebrating our place here in Canada and celebrating the fact that we are neighbours, we have the opportunity to learn from one another. Canada is a place in the world where we can do that in a way that many other countries cannot. I see that as a strength for us. It is a strength to be able to see our Hindu Canadians succeed. It is a strength to see Hindu Canadians succeed in our academics, politics and cultural institutions. I know Hindu Canadians will contribute greatly to our cultural mosaic and the future of our country.

The New Democrats want to congratulate the member for Nepean for ensuring that this work is done and that Hindu Canadians see themselves this November. We have had a tough year. We have had a tough few years. All Canadians, including Hindu Canadians, have taken a leadership role throughout this time. We want to recognize them for their contributions and sacrifice in making sure that the Hindu Canadian community continues to be resilient and prosperous. When we get to a point when we can celebrate together again, I look forward to this November when we can celebrate the very first Hindu heritage month.

• (1150)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, namaste. It is such a pleasure to rise and speak to my colleague and friend's motion recognizing the significant contributions that Hinduism has offered not only to Canada but to the world. I was very impressed as I listened to his opening remarks. We get a sense of pride in Canada's diversity when a member of the House of Commons stands in this place with a great deal of pride to talk about the importance of Hinduism to every Canadian, no matter where they live, and about the many contributions that people of the Hindu faith have made over a hundred years here in Canada. There are contributions in virtually every political, economic and social sector of our society today. Ultimately, I suggest that it is a part of our Canadian identity. One only needs to listen to what the member for Nepean had to say to get an appreciation of just how important it is to our society.

Members might recall the issue of the swastika. When it is being debated inside the chamber, it is often debated in a very negative sense, but it was our friend who brought its meaning to our attention in a very real and passionate way. He even sent me a YouTube link on the importance of that symbol to Hinduism, and that has not been lost on me, nor, I suspect, on many others.

I say that because in a good way, education is the best way for us to combat issues like racism and intolerance. I genuinely believe to my core that the way to evolve into a better society is through education. Motions like the one the member has presented today are opportunities for all of us to continue along that line. Declaring the month of November as Hindu heritage month would provide each and every one of us the opportunity, if we choose, to ultimately promote and encourage educational opportunities.

Private Members' Business

As passionate as the member for Nepean is on this particular motion, I have seen the member participate in other types of heritage month celebrations. For example, I can recall him standing on the lawns of the House of Commons talking about and participating in Filipino Heritage Month. I say that because when we have a heritage month, it offers a broader opportunity for all of us to become better acquainted with and have a better understanding of faiths and ethnicities.

Hinduism is the third-largest religion and way of life in the world today. It has well over a billion people. As my colleague pointed out, there are just over 600,000 here in Canada. What an amazing community, as the member referenced. I suspect that if we looked at this per capita based on communities, we would be very impressed with the level of education and expertise and the sense of professionalism that can be found among our people of Hindu faith.

While I was an MLA, I had a little more time to go into a number of different communities. I am very grateful for Manitoba Hindu Seniors Inc. It would invite me quite often to its centre, which is located on Ellice Avenue in Winnipeg. Just recently, it was the recipient of a grant from Ottawa to assist in the modernization of its accessibility.

● (1155)

I can tell members that, when I attended events, every one of them provided some sort of educational opportunity, whether it was a celebration of the country of India's independence or providing a better understanding of what Hinduism is really all about. My colleague made reference to a thread of life that unites Hinduism around the world, and Hindus can be united through that thread. The first time I heard something of that nature was at the Manitoba Hindu Seniors centre.

Would one want an appreciation of brilliant colours and to know the importance of colours to the world? We already had one member make reference to the celebration of Holi and the many different colours one can experience. If someone wants a good sense of that, they could attend a Holi celebration sponsored by members of our Hindu communities, and they would see the joy, happiness and love in the hearts of people in a real and tangible way.

Thousands of Winnipeggers, non-Hindus, see that every year, with the exception of the last couple of years because of the pandemic, when they attend a traditional summer festival known as Folklorama. At Folklorama, people can go to the India pavilion where they will see many religious symbols of the Hindu community and see many of the different dances that originate from the Hindu faith or followers of the Hindu faith. It is very inspiring.

I remember one of the dance instructors I got to know and knew for many years. She once talked to those in attendance, these young ladies, about how it is an impressive art that the dance provides to the community. She was very much boastful of her students. She talked about how, at the time, somewhere around 80 students had graduated from her school, and 67 of them had gone on to become doctors. I suspect the discipline in learning the dance, the understandings and the meanings of the dance, contributed to that.

The member made reference to the importance of the preservation and encouragement of the many aspects of the Hinduism faith.

It is so critically important. We see that the contributions go far beyond the faith alone. It is rooted in the faith, a faith that has been in existence for a while. I have heard it called the oldest religion. I think it gets that because of a script that was written thousands of years ago. In fact, it might be the first script written of a religious nature. Do not quote me on that, but I believe that is where it comes from. We are talking about thousands of years ago. Around 4,000 years would be my best guesstimate.

It is a religion that has a great deal of tolerance. I have had the opportunity to participate in special engagements, be at the temples, see the shrines come to life and see the manner in which that is conducted. There is an understanding and appreciation of other faiths. There is a lot to be learned by that. That is why I think having a heritage month for Hinduism in November would be of great benefit to all Canadians. It would not be just for the Hindu community, but for all Canadians. I look forward to future months of November when we will see extra celebrations because of this motion ultimately passing through the House of Commons.

● (1200)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is rare moment indeed when I find myself agreeing with the member for Winnipeg North, but from what I see of what is on the agenda today, I will have plenty of opportunity to disagree with him for many hours to come.

Today, we are debating Motion No. 42, which is a motion to establish Hindu heritage month in Canada. Canada's Parliament has by now an established tradition of discussing and generally unanimously passing bills or motions to designate a particular month for the purpose of recognizing and celebrating the contributions of a particular community. I think this practice originated with the recognition of February as Black History Month.

Canada now has recognized many months to celebrate a number of communities, including the Tamil community, the Jewish community, the Dutch community, the Mennonite community, the Irish community, the Asian community, the Italian community, the Filipino community, the Portuguese community, the German community and the Sikh community. I may have missed some. I know there are lots, and I did my best to find them all. I also believe there are some other months recognized at the provincial level, which may be different from the ones that are recognized federally.

There are lots of opportunities to celebrate in this country. These initiatives might not reflect the number one priority of the community in question, but they do constitute a valuable opportunity for us to recognize and appreciate the substantive contribution of people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds, and that practice contributes to a sense of national inclusion and pluralism.

It is noteworthy that we have shifted recently from previously only recognizing ethnocultural communities to now also recognizing religious communities with these months. It is important to reflect on this because religious traditions and religious diversity by their nature bring something different to our national life than ethnocultural traditions and ethnocultural diversity do.

One's membership in a particular ethnic group may be very important to one's identity and can be associated with a broad range of cultural practices, but religious identity reflects an individual's voluntary choice. It is a choice to believe in and associate oneself with a community that believes in a particular system of thought that seeks to answer fundamental questions about the ends to which life should be directed.

Many people embrace a religious identity as part of membership in a community and see a close tie to their cultural identity, but these things are conceptually very different. I see great value in recognizing the contribution of religious traditions, specifically, as well as ethnocultural traditions.

We cannot pass the first hour of debate on this without recognizing the contributions of the great Deepak Obhrai, the first member of Parliament of Hindu origin elected to this House and a former Conservative leadership candidate. I believe, if he were still alive today, he would be running again, and no doubt would have been a juggernaut in this one. It is therefore important to recognize Deepak Obhrai, and I will have much more to say on the subject of Hinduism and its contribution to Canada at a subsequent time.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank members for their interventions. The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

MOTION NO. 11—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: I am now ready to rule on the points of order raised on April 28, 2022, by the chief opposition whip and the House leader of the official opposition concerning, respectively, the admissibility and division of government business No. 11.

The chief opposition whip challenged the admissibility of subparagraph (b)(ii) of the motion which will prohibit quorum calls after 6:30 p.m. on extended sitting days. The member argued that a 20-member quorum is a constitutional requirement, explicitly stated in section 48 of the Constitution Act, 1867. To this I would add that this quorum obligation is also found in Standing Order 29. The member alleged that the motion would render this requirement meaningless, as there would be no means of enforcing it. He also suggested that the House cannot, by motion alone, alter a constitutional requirement in regard to the minimum presence of members.

For his part, the House leader of the official opposition maintained that government business No. 11 is an omnibus motion, consisting of several parts, each capable of standing on its own. In his view, the motion could be divided into seven separate questions, each debated and voted on individually, while noting that some parts could be grouped together for debate. Citing instances when this had happened, he asked the Chair to exercise its authority and divide the motion as per his suggestion.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the government House leader countered that the motion does not require any division since the unifying theme is to organize the business of the House for the remaining weeks before the summer adjournment. He submitted that

Speaker's Ruling

similar motions containing many provisions relating to the business of the House have been adopted in the past, without being divided.

• (1205)

[Translation]

The Chair will begin by addressing the elements brought forward by the chief opposition whip. While he is correct in stating that certain elements of our procedure are provided for in the Constitution and are not subject to amendment or suspension by motion alone, the Chair does not believe that this is what the motion does. It instead prevents members from drawing the Chair's attention to the absence of a quorum during a particular part of the sitting. As the chief opposition whip readily concedes, there is ample precedent for such motions, as they are regularly adopted by unanimous consent in relation to debates taking place in the evenings. I find it difficult to conclude that such motions are constitutional when adopted by unanimous consent, but unconstitutional if proposed in a debatable government motion.

[English]

Secondly, members will recognize that there are already circumstances during which quorum calls are not permitted. For example, Standing Order 29(5) authorizes the Speaker to take the chair when the Usher of the Black Rod is at the door whether quorum is present or not.

Moreover, it is a well-established practice that a quorum call is not permitted during Oral Questions, Statements by Members, Adjournment Proceedings or the taking of a recorded division. Therefore, in the Chair's view, this provision alone does not render government business No. 11 inadmissible.

[Translation]

As for the second matter concerning the division of the said motion, I would like to reiterate the ruling of one of my predecessors, cited by the House leader of the official opposition which can be found at page 65 of the Debates of October 17, 2013:

In adjudicating cases of this kind, the Chair must always be mindful to approach each new case with a fresh eye, taking into account the particular circumstances of the situation at hand. Often, there is little in the way of guidance for the speaker and a strict compliance with precedent is not always appropriate.

I would suggest, like my predecessors, that the Chair should exercise caution before intervening in the business of the House and, more precisely, before dividing a motion.

[English]

With this in mind, the Chair has considered the arguments put forward and reviewed the provisions of government business No. 11. There is indeed an overall theme to the motion, relating to the management of the House's schedule and its business, and therefore the Chair does not believe it meets the threshold required to be divided for the purpose of individual debates. However, the Chair does agree that some provisions of the motion are sufficiently distinct to be the subject of a separate vote.

S. O. 57

Therefore, I rule that the motion will be divided in three parts for the purpose of voting, which are as follows: part I, consisting of paragraphs (a), (b), (c) and (d), relating to the business of the House for the remaining sitting weeks until June 23; part II, consisting of paragraph (e), which relates to deadlines set for the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying; and part III, consisting of the last paragraph that seeks to permanently amend Standing Order 28(1), listing the days on which the House shall not meet.

[*Translation*]

I thank all members for their attention.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1210)

[*Translation*]

EXTENSION OF SITTING HOURS AND CONDUCT OF EXTENDED PROCEEDINGS

MOTION THAT DEBATE BE NOT FURTHER ADJOURNED

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in relation to the consideration of government business No. 11, I move:

That the debate be not further adjourned.

[*English*]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously I stand with profound disappointment, for two reasons. The first is that we are even in a position where Motion No. 11 is needed by the government. The second is the fact that the Liberals have invoked closure after just two hours of debate. This is an admission by the government. What makes it worse is the fact that I suspect that the NDP is complicit in the government's action. This is a mismanagement of the government's House time on the part of the government House leader and the government.

There has been a decline in democracy in this country, and it is a pattern that has existed with the current government. We saw it with Motion No. 6 in previous Parliaments. In fact, when COVID first hit, there was an introduction of a bill that would have given the government complete taxing power and power over Parliament. This pattern of disdain and contempt for this Parliament is consistent with the current government. Now that the Liberals have the NDP in their hip pocket, while this is outside the scope of the supply and confidence agreement, I suspect that we are going to see this pass.

Given the circumstances and the confidence that Canadians have with respect to their public institutions and with respect to the way this place operates, how can the minister expect that this is going to create any greater confidence in the face of the decline in our democracy, when the Liberals are pulling stunts like this?

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, I, too, am disappointed. However, I am disappointed in the behaviour that is being shown by the Conservative Party in this House, obstructing, at every single turn, every single piece of legislation. We are doing this in order to facilitate debate, in order to allow the hon. members the time in which to speak.

We spent 12 days debating Bill C-8. Among the things the bill would do is to help farmers get their tax credit on the carbon tax, the price on pollution. There would be billions of dollars for rapid tests. There would be ventilation for our schools. We all know a lot of parents who are concerned because their kids are going to school in the pandemic context and they want better ventilation for their schools. We had 12 days of debating a fall economic statement that includes measures to aid the lives of human beings. Can they imagine what will happen when we get to the budget? We are doing this to facilitate debate because of the obstructionist tactics of the Conservative Party.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Madam Speaker, time and time again, this government has obstructed democracy with the help of its NDP pals. That has to be getting a little embarrassing.

They have moved an omnibus motion to run roughshod over democracy, and now here they are with a closure motion that does the same thing.

The Liberals are brazenly running roughshod over democracy, which is a big deal, and it is all because they cannot for the life of them manage the legislative calendar. They are amateurs.

During question period, we always point out how amateurish the Liberals are, and when we look at debate in the House, that is abundantly clear.

My question is simple. Are they not tired of being such amateurs?

• (1215)

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from La Prairie for his question.

I am surprised that he is aligning himself with the Conservatives, who are blocking the work of the House. What we are doing here is giving members time to debate issues as they are presented. That is all. We are here to organize the legislative calendar. Canadians and Quebecers elected us to get things done.

We have an ambitious agenda, and we want to implement it. We want to work with the members of the House, but the obstructionist tactics of the Conservative Party, supported by the Bloc Québécois, are creating obstacles. That is why we want to put an end to the procedural gridlock to bring more democracy and respect to the House.

As I said, I am surprised to see that the hon. member for La Prairie does not support us.

[English]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am surprised at the Conservatives' attitude. They have been blocking bills that would actually provide supports, talking about Bill C-8, to teachers and farmers, and around COVID. The Conservatives have been blocking these bills for months without any explanation, except that they want to block everything that comes through the House.

The solution that is being offered is that we extend debate and sit until midnight. Past Conservative governments did the same thing, with one notable exception: The Conservatives never showed up. We remember that during the dismal decade of the Harper government, we saw these kinds of motions brought forward, and over 200 times, Conservatives who were scheduled to speak did not show up to work. It is unbelievable that they would let down Canadians in the way that they have.

For the life of me, I cannot understand why Conservatives object so strenuously to sitting until midnight, because that is the solution. Let us sit longer. Let us work harder. Let us get bills passed to help Canadians.

My question for my colleague is simply this: Why do Conservatives object so strenuously to sitting until midnight?

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, I share that frustration. I saw it with Bill C-5 in the previous Parliament, which is now being slowed down in this Parliament, again by the Conservative Party, for ideological reasons that actually have nothing to do with the empirical evidence behind the bill.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby, like all Canadians, wants to get things done in this House. He wants to see us accomplish measures that better the lives of Canadians, and that is what we are doing. That is what we are doing with this bill. As the hon. member pointed out, we are here to extend hours. We are here to give every issue adequate time to be ventilated and for adequate discussion to be had in order to move forward with a progressive, substantive agenda.

That is why we are here. We are here to organize that. These are measures that have been taken in the past in this House. We are doing it again, and we are doing it to facilitate and prolong debate. I, too, share the surprise at the Conservative Party's not wanting to stay for fulsome debate.

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Madam Speaker, there is an example of the Liberal-NDP marriage, the NDP in the corner, carrying the water for the government, when it should be debating and acting as the opposition, fighting the government.

We are prepared to work, and we have been working. What the minister has set up as holding up debate on this is actually debating, doing our job as a democracy, speaking against bills when we think we should be against bills. Canadians are expecting us to be against this terrible budget, yet the government says that is obstructing Parliament. It is called debate. That is our job. This is from the Minister of Justice. It just baffles me that he would come with that as the foundation of his argument.

S. O. 57

I would ask him one simple question. This is going to have major effects on committees. How many committee meetings is he planning to stop with Motion No. 11?

• (1220)

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, I know that our House leadership has been careful to make sure, in proposing this motion and moving forward with this plan, that the various kinds of work being done in Parliament outside of this chamber are also done in a safe, secure and healthy fashion. I am not worried about working harder. I know that members opposite like to repeat the same arguments over and over again. That is what they call debate, but they do not add anything new. We are going to give them a chance to do that for as long as they want without impeding the work of this place.

It is critically important that we get legislation through. We have seen, as I have said, 12 days on the fall economic statement, which contains real measures to aid the lives of Canadians, including people they claim to want to represent, like farmers and parents. It is baffling to see the way they block and block. We are taking measures to make this place work better.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, what is baffling is having the justice minister actually stand in this place and talk in the way he is. Bill C-8 was not introduced until December 15, so he is playing around a bit with the facts here. It went to committee February 1 and came back from committee on March 1. After December 16, the House was not sitting for six weeks, so there was no obstruction going on.

Nobody on this side of the House is afraid to work. These are multi-billion dollar bills that the government for some reason expects the official opposition and the third party just to simply rubber-stamp without questioning, without proposing and without amending.

How can the Liberals contribute to the further decline in our democracy? People in this country are looking at this place as its symbol, yet the government continues to contribute to the decline in democracy. I do not understand how the justice minister can stand here and defend this action by his government.

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, I dispute the hon. member's narrative of events. I have been here since 2015, and I have watched the Conservatives' systematic obstruction time and time again. I have seen it on my own bills as minister, and now we are seeing it again. I welcome the day when cameras show all the members of the House of Commons at the same time, so that Canadians can actually see the kinds of things that are happening when there is somebody speaking.

It is critically important that we get our legislative agenda through. It is what the vast majority of Canadians elected us to do, and it is what we are going to do. We are using measures that have been used in the past by governments of all political stripes. The measures are going to allow for debate to happen. They will incentivize members of Parliament to use their time better, and we will get our progressive agenda through, working with other members of Parliament in good faith.

S. O. 57

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, we just had the opposition House leader admit to the Conservatives' blocking these bills for two months. He just stood up, went through the timeline and admitted to everybody that for two months, Conservatives blocked the bills, despite the fact that Canadian teachers have been writing to them wanting to get the tax credit that is in Bill C-8 and Canadian farmers have been writing to them.

The Conservatives have thrown aside any kind of public input. They are just running rogue. They are renegades, yet they reference democracy. This is the same party that had members of its caucus endorsing the so-called "freedom convoy", whose vowed objective was the overthrow of constitutional government. We then have Conservatives standing up in this House and trying to say that somehow they actually support democracy, with that as their track record. What a joke.

What happened to the Conservative Party that in December endorsed the ban on conversion therapy, that was productive and working well in this minority Parliament? What has happened to the Conservatives over the last few months that they will even refuse to sit late and refuse to pass legislation that Canadians are asking for? What is it about the Conservative Party that has turned?

• (1225)

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, the hon. member indeed reminds me that Conservatives, whether inside or outside the House, seem to have fallen in love with blocking and blockades.

We are here because we have many other pieces of legislation, including a budget. There is not just Bill C-8, which, as we have mentioned, has had 12 days of debate and obstruction and concurrence motions and everything else that the Conservatives can throw up in order to delay it, but also Bill C-7, which we have not debated yet, and Bill C-9, which we have not debated yet. There is Bill C-18 and there is Bill C-19.

There are all kinds of things that we have yet to debate, as well as the budget, and that is because the official opposition simply wants to run out the clock; delay, delay, delay; and use every tactic at its disposal to throw this government off its agenda. Canadians do not want that. They want us to work together.

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was here from 2011 to 2015. The most shocking thing I have seen today is the member for New Westminster—Burnaby swallow himself whole. He routinely raged against any motion for closure and routinely raged against any motion for time allocation. It was as if the sky were falling. Now he is in the Liberals' back pocket, saying this is a great thing.

Growing up, my parents always told me that when someone shows us who they are, we should believe them. Let us look at some things. Who would bring forward this kind of a time allocation on this motion? Perhaps it would be someone whose leader said he admired China's basic dictatorship and a justice minister who said that debate is obstruction. We see where these people are going.

If this is all about debate and we want more time for debate, why does the motion include the ability for a cabinet minister to move to

adjourn the House for the summer? If it is about debate, why do the Liberals not take that out and prove it is about debate? I can tell members that they will not.

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, I found the hon. member's intervention quite amusing, and I am sure he meant it that way.

The House leadership, and our government House leader, have made it clear that particular provision is a common motion that is used at the end of every parliamentary session. We have put it in now with the engagement to not use it until the very last week when it is commonly used. It is there as part of this package in order to get more pieces of legislation through, and get us through to the end of June. It is there to be used at the end of the session, when it is traditionally used, on consent by all the parties, working together. That is how it will be used again.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, this debate is an embarrassment.

I have listened to the debate on Motion No. 11. I listened to the very lengthy speech my colleague from Winnipeg North gave on this motion last week.

Everything in the rhetoric we hear from the Liberals and NDP seems to suggest that there are good democrats, in other words, those who support Motion No. 11, on one side of the House, and then there are bad democrats, basically the Conservative and Bloc Québécois members who oppose the motion, on the other side.

Motion No. 11 is not just about extending our sitting time. It also contains a number of measures to muzzle the opposition.

The funny thing is, when I think about the Liberals and democracy, I remember the Prime Minister, with his hand on his heart during the election campaign, talking about electoral reform, saying he was going to do this and that. Is that what democracy is? When are those things going to happen?

Who prorogued Parliament in the summer of 2020? Who sent the country into an election when there were lots of bills close to being voted on that were important to Canada?

The Liberals called an election and wiped the slate clean, killing bills like the one on the Official Languages Act, which is an important piece of legislation. There was also the bill to reform the CRTC, which was very important, but it too was killed.

Are those folks over there really the democrats they claim to be?

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his presentation.

Obviously we must never forget that the Bloc Québécois is the master of obstruction. That is their whole purpose.

We know that we must work together to advance legislation and reforms that are supported throughout Canada.

We want to ensure that we have enough time to hold real debates on real issues without obstruction. We are here precisely to set out a process on how to proceed until the end of the session in June, one that will give all parliamentarians the opportunity to have their say and help to pass good bills.

• (1230)

[*English*]

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I want to give the justice minister an opportunity, because I believe he did misspeak. Perhaps he did not understand that there is a constitutional obligation for quorum to be held in this place.

He said that this has happened before, but it only happens in take-note debates. It also happens in emergency debates when no vote on government legislation is held. In fact, this has never been held before. I would give the justice minister an opportunity to correct himself and not mislead the House.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): If I may, hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil, it was the ruling of the Speaker. It was not the Minister of Justice who made the case.

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, the Minister of Justice just said that this has happened before when in fact it has not happened before, with the exception of emergency debates and take-note debates. That is what I am seeking clarification on.

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, in responding to the hon. member's point of order and the question, to the extent that that is what it was, the Speaker has just made a ruling on this. These kinds of proceedings happen routinely at the ends of sessions.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have not been in the House for that long, since January 2019—

An hon. member: Or that often.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Or that often, Madam Speaker, because of the rules put forward by the Liberal government. I would say that one thing here is very different from where I grew up: When I had a job to do, generally it was my priority to get that job done. I did not have to blame someone else for not getting my work done. Right now, we are having this debate on Motion No. 11 because the Liberals cannot get their work done, and they are trying to blame Conservatives for standing up for people and debating on what the House puts forward. It is interesting that we are talking about billions of dollars going forward that would be going out to the people of Canada, and they do not want to debate it. Where I grew up, if I had to get a job done, it was my responsibility to do that job. How can this government be blaming the opposition for doing our job because it cannot get its legislative agenda forward? It does not make any sense.

I would ask the minister this. When he does extend sitting hours, will he let the people who are doing the fine work in interpretation know so that they have time to do their schedules and have forewarning if the Liberals are going to extend the schedule until midnight? That would be the proper thing to do, because we know that the staff here is overworked, and they should have some notice if they are going to have to be here until 12 o'clock or not.

S. O. 57

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his two questions. I will answer the second one first, as it is a critically important question, and I am glad he asked it.

The leadership in this place is going to make sure that interpreters and others have advance warning of when sessions will be extended. We are very mindful of their rights, their health and safety, and their working environment. It is an engagement that I know my House leader in this place has made. I thank the hon. member for that question.

We are here to work, and we are proposing this motion precisely because obstruction is not work. I worked on construction sites, and my friend has probably worked a fair bit in his day too and is proud of it, as am I. However, it is working together. It is rolling up our sleeves and getting the job done. If one person on that job site is obstructing, we have to help that person to move somewhere else, and this is what we are doing here. Obstruction is not work. Obstruction is not debate. Debate is about the exchange of ideas, and that is what we are facilitating here.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I came to this House to get something done for my constituents and to help them in any way, shape or form that I could, and I am proud to be able to do that work here in the House.

Before I was elected to the House, I worked for many members of Parliament. During a Conservative majority government, I watched the then hon. House leader, Peter Van Loan, argue that the government needed those long hours to sit until midnight. Those extended hours were not just on an as-needed basis: It was constant, night after night, that I had to send my member in to get that work done. That was under a majority Conservative government.

I would like to hear from the hon. minister why it is important to note, in the debate on this motion, that it is on an as-needed basis.

• (1235)

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, I send my regards to the members for whom the hon. member worked.

It is a critical point that the member raised. This is “as necessary”. It is going to happen when we need it and only when we need it, as necessary. It is not meant to be every night. It is only meant to be there for the amount of debate that is necessary for any particular bill. Again, it is there precisely to eliminate the ability to simply obstruct for no good, substantive reason.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is really interesting to hear members from both the NDP and the government side talk about how this is all about debate, and that it is all about making sure that we get all the time that we need to discuss these bills so that we can have extended hours. We can work harder and we can work longer, yet they put a provision in there that they do not actually have to show up after 6:30 p.m. They have made sure that they can do whatever they can to be away from here and not be here to participate.

S. O. 57

Based on the assertions that we are hearing from the justice minister and the member for New Westminster—Burnaby, my question is to make sure that they are going to be true to their word: Will they be here until midnight, in person, every single time they use this measure to have debate until midnight? That way they will not be seen as not being true to their word.

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, we are proposing this piece of legislation to facilitate debate, not to give other opportunities for the silly kinds of obstructionist motions that we have seen in spades over the last number of weeks and months. We are here to give members on all sides the ability to say what they feel they need to say in the context of the House. That is precisely why we are here, and that is precisely why we are proposing the motion we are proposing.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Madam Speaker, there is something illogical about my colleague's argument. He is being asked why the Liberals included in this motion the possibility for the minister to adjourn for the summer without agreement from the other parties. He is telling us that this is done routinely at the end of every season and that is why they included this measure in the motion.

If this measure is preventing people from being in favour of the motion, why not simply remove it since, in any event, adjournment is usually done with no problem, with the agreement of all parties? Why not proceed as usual?

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, we added the possibility of adjourning the House because this is very common and is typically done in cases like this. We are being efficient.

In any way, this motion will have to be put to the House for a vote before it will apply, and some safeguards have already been included in the motion.

We are all here to advance the debate. This does not prevent opposition members from having their say during their speaking time.

[English]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I find the Conservatives' comments on this unbelievable, because I can remember back in 2014 when the Harper government, during its dismal decade in power, put in place similar measures without any agreement from any other party, and Conservatives systematically, night after night, did not show up when it was their turn to speak. We had a chalkboard in the lobby. There were 200 times when Conservatives did not show up to work. There were 200 times when Conservative MPs were out doing I do not know what, but they were not in the House standing up as members of Parliament for their constituents. It was 200 times, so when a Conservative MP asks if New Democrats are going to show up to work, of course the answer is yes, because we always do.

We have the track record to prove it; the Conservatives do not. They have failed their constituents so many times in the past, and now they are objecting to having us work harder, having us work longer and having us move around their systematic blocking of the House of Commons, so that teachers can get their tax credits, farmers can get the supports they need and all Canadians can get the

supports that are in Bill C-8. The Conservatives say they support it, but are blocking it now, as the official opposition House leader has admitted, for two months and running.

Why are the Conservatives doing this, and why do they not recognize the hypocrisy of trying to condemn the behaviour they participated in so willingly in the past?

• (1240)

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for New Westminster—Burnaby for his long view of these various kinds of questions. I would add that, as he has mentioned, there are 24,000 farmers potentially waiting for a credit on the price on pollution they have had to pay, and there are 45,000 teachers waiting for that improvement of the supply credit they are going to get, as well as other very proactive measures that are contained in Bill C-8 and other pieces of legislation that are meant—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, I am sorry to interrupt this important debate, but for clarity, are we to be asking our questions to the member from the Liberal Party or the member from the NDP?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I think that is a question.

The hon. minister.

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, that question just demonstrates exactly why we are here. We are here to help Canadians and we are here to work for Canadians, because that is what we are here to do. We are not here just to throw up every single objection and participate in every single blockade anywhere it exists in Canada. We are here to work for Canadians proactively, positively and in good faith. These provisions are here because one party has failed to do that. We are here in order to give all parties an opportunity to do better.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forth with the question on the motion now before the House.

[Translation]

The question is on the motion.

[English]

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 Barrie—Innisfil.

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Call in the members.

• (1325)

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

(Division No. 63)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blaney
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Garneau	Garrison
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Johns
Joly	Jones
Jowhari	Julian
Kayabaga	Kelloway
Khalid	Khera
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Kwan	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	McDonald (Avalon)
McGuinty	McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod
McPherson	Mendès
Mendicino	Miao
Miller	Morrissey
Murray	Naqvi
Ng	Noormohamed

O'Connell
O'Regan
Powlowski
Robillard
Rogers
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Schiefke
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sorbara
St-Onge
Tassi
Thompson
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Virani
Weiler
Yip
Zarrillo

S. O. 57

Oliphant
Petitpas Taylor
Qualtrough
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Singh
Spengemann
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Trudeau
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Vuong
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi— 182

NAYS

Members

Aboultarif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benzen	Bergen
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Carrie
Chabot	Chambers
Champoux	Chong
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
Desbiens	Desilets
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferrieri
Findlay	Fortin
Gallant	Garon
Gaudreau	Généreux
Genuis	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Larouche	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lemire
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	MacKenzie
Maguire	Martel
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
Melillo	Michaud
Moore	Morantz

Government Orders

Morrice	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Normandin
O'Toole	Patzner
Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Perkins	Perron
Plamondon	Poilievre
Rayes	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ruff
Savard-Tremblay	Scheer
Schmale	Seeback
Shields	Shipley
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Small	Soroka
Steinley	Ste-Marie
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Thériault
Therrien	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Trudel	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Vien
Viersen	Vignola
Villemure	Vis
Wagantall	Warkentin
Wagh	Webber
Williams	Williamson
Zimmer— 151	

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

MOTION NO. 11

The House resumed from April 28 consideration of the motion.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, it gives me pleasure to rise and speak to government Motion No. 11.

However, before I get into the specifics of it, let me just address a couple of issues that came up during the closure debate earlier. It was a very vigorous debate. I want to address one issue. There were several claims, both from the government side and the NDP side, which is the same side, about members of the opposition not wanting or being willing to work. Let me state unequivocally that Conservatives are here to do the business of the nation. We want to work. I have no problem with extending the hours. I really do not.

My profound concern, and I stated this in my interaction on Friday, is about the staff. We have seen, over the course of the last couple of years, that staff have been tested. The measure of the staff has been certainly tested around this place. We have heard about the interpreters, about the health challenges that have gone on. We have seen an increase in occupational injury risk for the interpreters. We are concerned about that work-life balance.

For two parties that espouse and say they are for the working class, they are not showing any empathy or compassion for what families are going to have to deal with, with respect to this motion, specifically the timeline for the extension of those sitting hours. It is causing me, as I said the other day, tremendous concern that with just one minute's notice, the government can come, with the NDP's help, and say they want to extend the hours. What is that going to mean for the staffing around this place? What is that going to mean

to committees, when we start transferring resources to deal with some of these late-night sittings?

My staff in the House leader's office just informed me before I got up to speak that two committees already today are going to be cancelled: the Afghanistan committee and the medical assistance in dying committee. The meetings that were scheduled for today are going to be cancelled because they are going to have to allocate or transfer resources from those committees to the extension of the House sitting hours.

The government has said, and I heard the justice minister say, that this happens all the time. This happens, actually, once the agreed schedule is applied. All of the House leaders get together and we discuss. In fact, we are in the process of discussing the schedule for next year. Within the last two weeks, there are asterisks in the schedule. Those asterisks indicate there will be an extension of hours. It is agreed to. It is understood. However, what this does is basically give the government last-minute appeal. It can impose late sittings when it wants to.

We saw some news coverage over the weekend of the government saying that this was not what it was going to do and that it was going to give enough notice. If it is going to give enough notice, why would it put it specifically in this motion that it could do it up until 6:30 p.m. of any given day? I would suggest that this is the intent of what the government is going to do.

Cynically, I can think of only one reason this would happen: to keep the opposition parties, both the Conservatives and the Bloc, on their toes. This means that every day and every night, we are going to have to carry debate. We are prepared to do that. This is not a rubber stamp factory where multiple billions of dollars and pieces of legislation are debated and proposed, and where amendments are proposed at committee. We are already seeing the committee work being affected, but this is not a rubber stamp factory. There is a constitutional obligation on the part of the opposition to hold the government to account. That is our constitutional obligation.

With this motion, the Liberal Party and its Prime Minister are getting exactly what they have always wanted, with the help of the NDP. I will talk about the NDP in a second. With the help of the NDP, the government and the Prime Minister are going to get an audience, not an opposition. That is what he has been hoping for over the past six and a half years, and now with the NDP in the government's hip pocket, they have it.

● (1330)

Going back to the debate before, I just cannot believe the hypocrisy of the House leader of the NDP. For six and a half years, I have sat in this place and we have all sat in this place, those members who were elected in 2015, and how many times did the opposition House leader of the NDP talk about the fact that the Prime Minister was worse than Stephen Harper when it came to time allocation? He said it many times, and yet, the hypocrisy is that he stands here today and blames Conservatives for obstructing. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Government Orders

They talk about Bill C-8 as their benchmark piece of legislation that they look at. Bill C-8 was introduced on December 15. The House rose shortly thereafter. We sat in our constituencies and worked there for six weeks. We did not come back until January 29. It received second reading on March 1, went to committee and came back on April 1. There was a time allocation motion that was put in on April 4, and the NDP refused to support the government on time allocation. For them to sit here and blame Conservatives for obstructing that bill is disingenuous and, I would suggest, misleading the House, because maybe someone should hold the NDP House leader to account as to why he did not agree to that.

Here is the problem. When we look at the motion and we look at all the things that are in the motion, as I said earlier, it gives the Prime Minister exactly what he wants: an audience, not an opposition.

I appreciate the ruling of the Speaker this morning, but the reality is that, in previous circumstances, the issue of quorum was let go for non-votable matters. It was agreed to by the House leaders. Anything to do with take-note debates or emergency debates, we would allow quorum not to be called as part of an agreement. What the government is doing with this is basically imposing a sledgehammer to say that the Liberals are not even required to show up. The NDP is not even required to show up. In theory, what we could have is opposition-side members debating themselves on pieces of legislation that the government is proposing, asking ourselves questions and comments when the Liberals are not even required to be here.

As I said the other day in question period, they can effectively be sitting at home in their PJs and their fuzzy slippers watching reruns of *This Is Us* and those socialist documentaries that they covet so much. That is what they could effectively be doing without the constitutional obligation of having a quorum call in the House.

Who does not want to show up to work? Why are they putting that in this motion? Conservatives will be here; I can guarantee that. With this motion and no quorum call, it means that the government and the NDP do not even have to show up to debate their own legislation. How ridiculous is that?

I talked about the “without notice...to adjourn the House”. This is egregious, in the sense that what the government is proposing with this particular part of this motion is that it can prorogue Parliament without proroguing.

I will take us back, as I said earlier, to the WE Charity scandal. When the heat got really hot on the Prime Minister, he did the very thing he said he was not going to do in 2015, and that was to prorogue Parliament.

Let us picture this scenario. There is a situation where we have a scandal brewing. We have the RCMP potentially deciding to investigate the Prime Minister on whether he granted himself permission for that vacation to that luxurious island that cost over \$200,000. What if, with regard to the Winnipeg lab document scandal, we were able, through committee or some other means, to have those documents produced and they show that the government did something? What if we had another SNC-Lavalin scandal or any other scandal that gets too hot for the Prime Minister to handle? One

minister of the Crown, just one, can decide to shut this place down. Can members imagine that?

It is stunts like these that cause further erosion in Canadians' respect for our democratic institutions and the faith they have in our democratic institutions.

• (1335)

When a government of the day, with a fourth party in its hip pocket, can decide that it is going to seize control of this place and do whatever it wants, how can Canadians not be cynical of the institution? How can they not be cynical of our Parliament? How can they not be cynical when they are witnessing right in front of them, as we all are, a decline in our democracy? There are measurements used that determine that decline. We have seen that over the course of the last six and a half years, and we are further seeing an erosion in the decline of our democracy as a result of stunts like this by the government. It can shut it down with one minister of the Crown proposing it. Yes, it will come to a vote. Surprise, surprise: I wonder what that vote will be when it has the NDP in its hip pocket. There is a lot to be concerned about in this.

What we are seeing, and perhaps Motion No. 11 is further evidence of this, is the shady, backroom deals that are going on here. The government House leader does not even give me the courtesy, nor does he give the Bloc Québécois House leader the courtesy, of saying what is going on. What do the Liberals do now? They do not go to the official opposition or the third party in this place. They do an end-around to the fourth party, say what they are going to do and ask if it will support them. There are shady, backroom deals: exactly the thing that further diminishes the confidence that Canadians have in our democracy.

As far as the standing order changes, I am really appreciative of the ruling that the Speaker made earlier in having a separate vote for that. What the government was doing, with the help of its NDP partner, again led to this cynicism and further erosion. The Liberals were putting a poison pill in the motion to force the opposition to vote against it. I stood here the other day and said very clearly that Conservatives unequivocally supported call to action 80 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, to make sure that we had a stand-alone day for truth and reconciliation. I was very glad for the Speaker's wisdom in that decision. The Speaker saw right through what the government was trying to do: putting in this poison pill, probably under the suggestion of its partner in the NDP, to force the Conservative Party to vote against it as an omnibus procedural motion. I am glad the Speaker did that, because we will be supporting that particular part of the motion when it is carved out of this omnibus motion and will vote in favour of national day for truth and reconciliation.

Government Orders

Of course we all know the history of the Prime Minister on this one. Last year, what did he do? He did not get involved. He went surfing in Tofino. The schedule for the Prime Minister even said he was having private meetings. It did not give a true indication of what was happening. What was happening was that, on the most important day in this nation, he went surfing in Tofino. How dare the Liberals use this poison pill for political purposes to further wedge, further stigmatize and further divide Canadians, especially those who supported the Conservative Party in the last election and who understand the importance of truth and reconciliation, because it was Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper who started that commission from which those recommendations came.

I am obviously profoundly disappointed. I am really concerned about where this place goes from here. I really am. The government was elected with a minority. The NDP was the fourth party in the last election and now, between the two of them, they are going to be able to control every aspect of this place. What about those voices who elected a minority government? What about those people who said they wanted the government to be held in check? They wanted the government to be held to account, they wanted transparency from the government, they wanted to make sure that multi-billion dollar bills that the government proposes, these big-money appropriation bills, deserve the level of scrutiny that they should. What about those voices? That is not going to happen anymore because of this alliance, this coalition, between the NDP and the Liberals.

I said earlier the impact this was going to have on committees. What about the finance committee? What about the ethics committee?

● (1340)

What about other committees, such as important committees on Afghanistan and the invocation of the Emergency Measures Act? How are they going to be impacted? The resources of the House will now go towards evening sessions, further putting in jeopardy the ability not just of those committees but of parliamentarians on the opposition side and Canadians in general to get to the bottom of what they are looking for. When I go back to the invocation of the Emergencies Act, we have already seen that the government is not going to allow cabinet confidentiality. What other documents are not going to be available to the committee because the committee is not going to be able to sit?

This is a government that ran in 2015 on the principle of being accountable and transparent by default. How times have fallen. The hypocrisy of those words is being shown by the government. This is a government that is anything but transparent and accountable. This is a government that has undermined the very role of this institution of Parliament: the constitutional obligation of the opposition parties to hold the government to account, not to basically ram legislation through when it sees fit.

This is not a rubber stamp factory. This is a place for vigorous debate. It is a place where the government is held to account. It is not a place where, as much as the Prime Minister wants it to be, he gets an audience. This is a place where he gets an opposition. Conservatives will work as long and as tirelessly as we need to in order to hold the government to account. We are going to expose this

coalition unholy alliance, and these backroom shady deals that are being made by the NDP-Liberal government.

We are going to work as hard as we can to make sure it is held to account, that there is transparency and there is accountability on behalf of every single Canadian who did not vote for them, but voted for a minority government in this Parliament.

With the little time I have left, the opposition party is proposing what we consider to be reasonable amendments. Again, I thank you, Mr. Speaker for your judicious, intelligent ruling this morning to carve out those pieces that are poison pills meant to obstruct the opposition and in fact make the opposition vote against something that none of us would ever consider voting for. I do appreciate that. I am going to move the following amendments.

I move:

That the motion be amended

(a) in paragraph (a),

(i) by replacing the words “a minister of the Crown may, with the agreement of the House leader of another recognized party” with the words “a House leader of a recognized party may, with the agreement of the House leaders of two other recognized parties”;

(ii) by replacing the words “but no later than 6:30 p.m., and request that the ordinary hour of daily adjournment for the current sitting or” with the words “request, with at least two sitting days’ notice, that the ordinary hour of daily adjournment for”;

(iii) by adding, after the words “a subsequent sitting”, the words “, other than a Friday,” and

(iv) by adding, after the words “a day when a debate pursuant to Standing Order 52 or 53.1 is to take place”, the words “or a day appointed for the consideration of business under Standing Order 81(4)(a)”;

(b) in paragraph (b),

(i) by deleting subparagraph (i),

(ii) by deleting, in subparagraph (ii), the words “quorum calls or”, and

(iii) by deleting, in subparagraph (iii), all the words after the word “Crown”; and

(c) in paragraph (c),

(i) by replacing, in subparagraph (ii), the word “35th” with the word “15th”, and

(ii) by deleting subparagraph (iv).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful for these reasonable amendments I am proposing, which take into account not just how this place functions and how properly it should function but also take into account, as I said at the onset, the concern that we have for the lives of the people who work here, and how they are going to be impacted.

● (1345)

I am not specifically referring to members of Parliament, but to the work-life balance of the staff who make this place operate, whether it is the clerks, the administration, the bus drivers, the security officers, the food services branch or any others, and not least the translators, who have seen tremendous injury and impact. I do not understand why the government would want to expose them to that.

● (1350)

The Deputy Speaker: The amendment is in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by thanking the House leader of the opposition for bringing forward this amendment because by doing so he is giving the member for Winnipeg North another opportunity to speak to this. I did not have an opportunity to hear what the member for Winnipeg North said on Thursday, so I am looking forward to hearing his thoughts on this one. He speaks again for the second time to this.

My question for the opposition House leader is quite simple. He seems to be quite concerned about staff members right now and the impact that asking them to stay until midnight will have on them. I wonder where his empathy was a couple of years ago, when the Conservatives literally made this house vote for 30 hours straight, or a couple of years after that, when they made this house vote for 22 hours straight. They knew full well it would produce absolutely nothing with respect to a tangible result of improving this country; rather, it was just for the purpose of being destructive.

Can the member justify for me the hypocrisy I am hearing from him when he talks about being so overly concerned about staff and the impacts on them? That party will force staff to stay here for 30 hours straight just to appease its own desire to see this place move as slowly as possible.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, that is an important question. Those were appropriation bills. If members recall, at one point we were very close to seeing the government fall. It was 4:30 in the morning and it was very close to actually falling.

These are legislative bills and a failure on the part of the government to propose its legislative agenda. It is actually a massive failure on the Liberals' part. We have only had 19 pieces of legislation, and within that time only eight have passed. The government's inability or failure to push through its legislative agenda is not our fault, nor is it the fault of the people who work here. There is no need to expand beyond the normal course of business. That is already addressed in the Standing Orders for the last two weeks of June. It was agreed to by all parties.

Most importantly, what this motion does is it creates a trap: It gives the government the ability to basically shut down this place if there is a scandal or if and when it decides to do that. We are here to work on behalf of Canadians and will continue to work despite the assertions from the other side.

• (1355)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I would like to hear his thoughts about how this government is rushing through things and failing to allow for in-depth studies into topics such as medical assistance in dying.

There is a lack of seriousness in committee. I do not want to make accusations, but I am asking my Conservative colleague because, in this case, his party seems to be the one that is obstructing.

Government Orders

Members can be for or against a given topic. However, I think that those who are against always benefit from studying it properly. Now the government has issued a gag order that, of course, puts off the final report until October. We will not have enough time to study this issue.

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

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague. The four House leaders jointly proposed extending the committee until June 23.

[*English*]

We actually did that. As I hope the hon. member understands, this is another example of a failure of the legislative agenda. That committee was supposed to legislatively report back in May. It was not until the end of March that we actually started talking about it. We agreed with the May deadline, but we proposed to extend it until June 23, which we did. Now the government is going to put that off until October 17, and I understand there are very important issues around that.

We just heard, in advance of my taking the floor today, that the medical assistance in dying committee is going to be cancelled today because of the government's plans to prolong or extend hours of debate. The Liberals cannot manage anything, and that is why we are in this situation we are in. We now have to deal with the government's failure to push forward a legislative agenda to manage the time of the House, and it is Canadians and all of us who are going to be paying the price for the mismanagement of their legislative agenda.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for bringing our attention to the incredible work that is done by the staff in the House. They are with us through all of this, and I am always so grateful for their support, their professionalism and their work.

They do need additional resources, and I agree with the member that this is required. I know this will take conversations and agreements among the parties, so I am asking if he would support that move. Will he push on the government to ensure that additional resources are provided to interpretation, security and the staff in this place so that we can get the work done that we are elected to do?

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, time and time again, as we have heard, the problem specifically with regard to the interpreters, which I suspect affects other parts of the operation of the House of Commons, is the issue of hybrid Parliament. Let us stop this. Let us stop hybrid Parliament and let us get back to normal. Let us do what other legislatures around the country are doing and return to being here in person. The interpreters have paid a dear price for this hybrid Parliament, and anybody who has read the reports understands that. We cannot just manufacture interpreters. There is a shortage, and a pool of resources is unavailable to us.

My suggestion is that we get rid of hybrid Parliament, come back, deal with this and make it easier on the interpreters. We can make it easy on all the staff who work so hard to support this place. Let us do what other legislatures are doing. Let us get back to normal and not hide behind masks like the other parties are doing.

Statements by Members

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saenich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have to ask the hon. House leader of the official opposition to reflect on this: that the dysfunctionality of this place cannot be blamed on one recognized party. When the House does not work well, it is because we have brought the partisanship of election campaigning into the daily work of the House, which is not how it should be. It is not how it always was in the past. I think it would go away if we changed to proportional representation as our voting system to increase co-operation in this place.

Since the Conservatives had more votes in the last two elections, are they ready to consider perhaps changing our voting system?

• (1400)

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, we can respectfully disagree on that.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

UKRAINE

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when Vladimir Putin senselessly invaded Ukraine, he attacked not only the people of Ukraine but Ukrainians everywhere, including those here in Canada. I was recently joined by the Minister of Public Safety to meet with the Durham Ukrainian Canadian Congress. We heard truly inspiring stories from people with family and friends on the ground fleeing violence or staying to fight and defend their country. We heard stories of the members of the Ukrainian community in the Durham region who wake up each day focused on helping those who have been affected.

The Durham chapter of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress is coordinating an extensive support system and has even set up separate committees to help with housing, food, clothing and much more as it prepares to support over 2,000 refugees, including the hundreds that it is already helping. I would encourage everyone who wants to provide support to visit supportukrainians.ca/durham to find out how they can assist. The dedication, level of organization and perseverance exhibited by the Durham UCC is nothing short of amazing.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PLAY BY LOCAL THEATRE TROUPE

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, many projects of all sorts in our ridings had to be shelved because of the pandemic.

For over two years now, town celebrations, festivals, dances and many other events have had to be postponed or, in most cases, cancelled.

Today, I am happy to say that, just as we are now seeing signs of spring, we are also beginning to see signs of a return to normal life. I am also pleased to announce that the Théâtre populaire régional theatre troupe will be putting on a play at the Salle André-Gagnon in La Pocatière on May 27 and 28. Amateur actors and friends have

been waiting for nearly three years to present *George Dandin ou le mari confondu*, a comedy by Molière.

I know many of the actors and so I know that this play will make people smile.

I invite everyone to attend to cheer themselves up as the pandemic draws to a close.

Let us encourage our artist friends and celebrate our culture.

* * *

[*English*]

HONORARY CONSUL OF LEBANON

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a pillar of the community, His Excellency Wadih M. Fares. Mr. Fares is an engineer, entrepreneur, innovator and community builder who has put his time, talent and treasure into a multitude of local, national and international boards and committees. His unwavering support of and commitment to society have earned him numerous awards, accolades and honours, including the Order of Canada.

For the past 26 years, he has served as the honorary consul of Lebanon for the maritime provinces. At the end of May, under the patronage of Ambassador Fadi Ziadeh, the community will gather at the silver jubilee celebration, where the Order of Merit, Lebanon's highest order for civilians, will be bestowed upon him as a token of gratitude for his service to Lebanon and the Lebanese community in the Atlantic provinces. I ask all parliamentarians to join me in thanking and congratulating His Excellency Wadih Fares.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, May 1 is International Workers' Day. It is an opportunity to recognize the many battles workers have waged to improve working and living conditions in our societies.

The reason we have eight-hour work days and labour standards today is because there were workers who made a lot of sacrifices and stood up for their rights and those of future generations. When faced with repression and injustice, they chose to stand in solidarity and push the limits of what is possible.

The theme yesterday was about ensuring health and safety as we come out of the crisis, and thousands of workers from Quebec marched in the streets to remind us of that.

I salute all those men and women who fought and are still fighting. Happy May 1.

ABDELGHANI DADES

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Outremont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to wish *Eid Mubarak* to the entire Muslim community back home in my neighbourhood in Montreal and across the country.

As we mark the end of the sacred month of Ramadan, I am thinking of our Moroccan community, and in particular its patriarch, Abdelghani Dades.

My friend, Mr. Dades, is the driving force of the Moroccan-Canadian community. He and I share the mission of bringing the Jewish and Muslim communities together, both here and around the world.

Mr. Dades is most certainly wondering why I am paying tribute to him today. This year, we are celebrating the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Canada and Morocco.

I would like him to hear his name in the House of Commons, and I would like him to know how much our government appreciates everything he has done and will continue to do to ensure this friendship lasts forever.

* * *

● (1405)

[English]

AMHERST LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, “If you build it, [they] will come.” I am certain that many, if not all, Parliamentarians recognize this quote from *Field of Dreams*.

For almost 75 years, Amherst, Nova Scotia, has been the home of many incredible baseball players and volunteers, which has allowed this community to enjoy many championships and banners. Given its residents' incredible community spirit and desire to move to evening programming, the enrolment for little league baseball has soared.

The community needed another T-ball field. The Amherst Little League Baseball association applied to the Jays Care Foundation's Field of Dreams program, and this year they are the recipients of a much-needed grant of \$70,000. This is, of course, a testimony to the strength of their volunteers and players, and to the history of baseball in the community over the past 75 years.

I send my congratulations to the Amherst Little League Baseball association and to the many young people who will benefit from their involvement in little league baseball over the many seasons to come. Let us play ball.

* * *

PAKISTANI-CANADIAN COMMUNITY LEADERS

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to all my Muslim brothers and sisters, *Eid Mubarak*.

I would like to congratulate Senator Salma Ataullahjan on being honoured by the president of Pakistan with one of the highest civilian honours, the Sitara-e-Pakistan, in recognition of her humanitarian work. She is the chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Hu-

Statements by Members

man Rights and is working hard to help Afghan families desperately trying to come to Canada.

I would also like to recognize Dr. Anis Ur Rahman, Sadaf Ebrahim, Dr. Syed Aziz and Syed Kashif Alamdar of the Canada Pakistan Association. I also appreciate Faheem Affan, Iftkhar Mirza, Mashooda-Lubna Syed, Mobeen Khaja, Moinuddin Siddiqui, Muhammad Zulfiqar Bangash, Qamar Masood, Tawahar Rana and Uzma Khan. All these community leaders are working hard for the Pakistani-Canadian community and beyond in Ottawa. I would also like to recognize the important contributions the Pakistani community has made to the socio-economic development of Canada.

* * *

CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Brampton East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canada summer jobs program provides youths with great opportunities to develop their skills and gain valuable experience. This year, the CSJ program has over 140,000 federally funded summer jobs across Canada. In Brampton East, there will be more than 400 summer jobs available with organizations such as the City of Brampton, TRCA, Wet 'n' Wild Toronto water park and many other organizations.

During the early days of COVID-19, youth were hard hit by pandemic related job losses, and our government has stepped up with more support through increased investments across our youth programs, which will provide young Canadians with additional opportunities. Youth will be able to build upon their confidence and leadership skills and gain from positive work experiences through the CSJ program. Our government understands young people are the future of tomorrow. If someone is between the ages of 15 and 30, they can check out the Government of Canada job website. There are thousands of amazing opportunities for young Canadians now posted at www.jobbank.gc.ca/youth.

* * *

DOURO MINOR HOCKEY

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, can members imagine a place where everyone is included, regardless of gender, religion, political or socio-economic status. Can they imagine a place where children learn the value of teamwork and hopefully learn that tough losses are often the best lessons. Can they imagine a place where communities are strengthened, relationships are built, fundraisers happen and important stories are shared. If members have not guessed yet, this place does exist. It is called a community centre.

I grew up in Douro, Ontario, home to one of the best community centres in this country. It was recently named as one of the four finalists for Kraft Hockeyville, where \$250,000 is up for grabs. Douro Minor Hockey is hoping to use the money to meet the needs of its growing and diverse community.

Statements by Members

This is how inclusion and empathy start, at the grassroots level, with a community centre saying it invites and includes everyone. I am very proud of my progressive community of Douro-Dummer. Voting happens on only one day, May 6, so I encourage everyone to log on to krafthockeyville.ca and vote as many times as they can.

* * *

• (1410)

GAELIC AWARENESS MONTH

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker,

[Member spoke in Scottish Gaelic and provided the following translation:]

May is Gaelic Awareness Month in Nova Scotia. This is a good time to celebrate Gaelic language and culture. Since the 18th century, thousands of Gaels from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland came to North America. The early settlers did not come with much, but they built many communities in Canada.

When I was young, I heard Gaelic in Cape Breton, Glengarry and at the Gaelic Society of Toronto. Children learned Gaelic from their parents. They learned stories, songs, piping and Highland dancing. Today, Canadians are learning Gaelic in Nova Scotia, Toronto and across Canada, joining a million learners from around the world. Up with the Gaelic.

[English]

* * *

MENTAL HEALTH

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge and recognize my constituent Angela, who lives in my riding. Angela's son Luka was diagnosed with autism at the age of four. The mental health stress on Angela's family, as well as on many other families across our country, is compounded by many challenges. They are navigating the many disconnected services and long wait-lists for much-needed care for their children, as well as very expensive therapy treatments. This is taking a toll on Canadian families. Parents of children with special needs often have to work a second job in order to pay for the services and care their children require.

Families in Canada are struggling and, with the increased inflationary pressures, the federal government needs to acknowledge the challenges they face. It is our responsibility to assist Canadians who are struggling to balance family obligations with personal mental health difficulties.

* * *

GRACE MCSWEENEY

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to mourn the tragic loss of Grace McSweeney, a 12-year-old girl from my riding who passed away last month by suicide after a long battle with depression. While her mother, Lauren, and her stepfather, Jeremy, were well aware of her struggles, yet they felt helpless. Her age and the price tag for services were persistent barriers when it came to accessing professional help. They have also raised concern over the devastating effects over-the-counter medi-

cation can have. They are now fighting for stronger label warnings and child-proof caps on all acetaminophen products.

I commend Grace's parents for channelling their grief into advocacy, and I am honoured to bring their voices to the House today. As today marks the first day of Mental Health Week, I encourage all members of the House to do more in providing mental health resources to kids who are struggling. We must work together to prevent tragedies such as the passing of Grace.

May she rest in peace.

* * *

ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE OFFICER CADETS

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the mother of two serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces, I stand today heartbroken at the news of last Friday's tragic deaths of four officer cadets at the Royal Military College in Kingston. This senseless accident has shaken our community to the core with the deaths of Officer Cadet Jack Hogarth, Officer Cadet Andrei Honciu, Officer Cadet Broden Murphy and Officer Cadet Andrés Salek.

[Translation]

These fourth-year Royal Military College cadets were going to graduate in just three weeks and then start their official military careers. They served their country with dignity and pride. I invite their classmates to continue their legacies.

[English]

I would like the families of officer cadets Hogarth, Honciu, Murphy and Salek to know that their military family and all Canadians mourn the loss of their sons. I ask my fellow members of Parliament to join me in honouring their service to Canada.

* * *

• (1415)

MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today Canadians mark the start of national Mental Health Week. In recognition of this important week, the Canadian Mental Health Association acknowledges the importance of empathy, saying, "It's the capacity we share as human beings to step into each other's shoes. To understand where they're coming from and what they're feeling. To listen hard and refuse to judge." I could not agree more.

Through these challenging times, we need to walk together with empathy and kindness. Today and every day, we need to recommit to destigmatizing mental illness and to do all that is required to make sure mental health supports are accessible to all so that no one is left to suffer in silence. New Democrats will continue to fight for barrier-free, culturally appropriate and accessible mental health supports.

To the countless heroes who have been working tirelessly across the country and in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith to provide mental health supports at a time when we need it most, I thank them.

* * *

[Translation]

GINETTE RENO

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, our great lady of Quebec song, Ginette Reno, was named a Knight of the Legion of Honour, the highest national honour of the Republic of France.

This singer, with a distinctive voice that is both tender and powerful, can sing that she is *qu'une chanson*, only a song, but everyone in Quebec knows that she is much more than that. She knew how to take her craft *Un peu plus haut, un peu plus loin*, a little higher, a little further, by showing that *L'essentiel*, the main thing, is *Quand on se donne*, when you give yourself, completely.

To give you an idea of the depth of her talent, when Ginette sings *O Canada* before a Canadiens game, she gives even separatists goosebumps.

A warm and authentic person known for both her engaging personality and her talent, she is an incomparable ambassador for Quebec and a living treasure of French culture. We salute this touching initiative by our French cousins who also offered her *Des croissants de soleil pour déjeuner*, croissants made of sunshine for breakfast.

Thank you to France, and congratulations to Ginette.

* * *

[English]

ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE OFFICER CADETS

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, early Friday morning, four cadets at the Royal Military College died in a tragic accident when the vehicle they were in entered the water off Point Frederick. Fourth-year officer cadets Jack Hogarth, Andrei Honciu, Broden Murphy and Andrés Salek all voluntarily joined the Canadian Armed Forces understanding that they may be required to make the ultimate sacrifice in service to Canada.

Losing a member of the Canadian Armed Forces is never easy to accept for family and friends, but losing someone in an accident just a few short weeks before graduation is that much harder. I do not know the personal details of all the families, although Officer Cadet Broden Murphy was the son of a fellow class of 1997 classmate of mine, Major Dave Murphy, and his wife, Stephanie. I cannot imagine the pain and loss they and all the families are currently feeling.

Oral Questions

On behalf of all members of the House, I offer Dave, Stephanie, and all the families and friends of Jack, Andrei, Broden and Andrés, my deepest condolences and sympathy. I ask all members and all Canadians to keep them all in their thoughts and prayers.

“Truth. Duty. Valour.” Lest we forget.

* * *

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 20th anniversary of Asian Heritage Month in Canada. It is a time to recognize the achievements and contributions of Asian Canadians.

This weekend, I attended an event honouring Dr. Vivian Poy, the first Canadian of Asian descent appointed to the Senate. Dr. Poy's story is one of passion, creativity and achievement, and it was she who originally moved to designate May as Asian Heritage Month. This year's theme, continuing the legacy of greatness, reminds us of the generations of Asian Canadians who helped build this country in the face of adversity and discrimination.

Anti-Asian racism has seen a sharp rise recently. To help combat it, I encourage Canadians from coast to coast to learn about multi-Asian diversity, which includes Canadians who trace their roots to over 40 countries; challenge stereotypes; call out acts of racism and unconscious bias; and support local Asian businesses and organizations.

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1420)

[Translation]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government bought itself a majority to protect its leader until 2025. The NDP sold its soul to ensure the Liberal government's survival.

Today, the NDP is preparing to compromise its very principles by officially renouncing its opposition role. There is still time for the members of the NDP to save a little of their dignity by saying no to the Liberal whip and voting against Motion No. 11.

Will the Liberal whip at least let the NDP members vote freely?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Motion No. 11 is all about extending the hours to enable members of Parliament to debate more. That is an open invitation for all members, whether New Democrat, Conservative, members of the Bloc or even of the government. It provides each member an opportunity to speak past 6:30 in the evening. Millions of other Canadians work past 6:30 p.m., too.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]***ETHICS**

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister was the first federal leader in office to be found guilty of breaking the law.

The Prime Minister fired his justice minister, Jody Wilson-Raybould, because she did not follow his instructions with respect to SNC-Lavalin. He bought off NDP members so that he would not have to answer for his actions in the Winnipeg lab scandal. RCMP documents now show that he just narrowly avoided being accused of fraud in the matter of the illegal gift worth \$215,000.

Who in this government will stand up and say that enough is enough?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, nothing has changed in the past six years. We have seen the Conservative Party, the official opposition, make personal attacks against the Prime Minister or other ministers. While the Conservative Party remains focused on personal attacks, I can assure the House that the ministries of this government will continue to work day in and day out for the betterment of all Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is a pathetic excuse that does not hold water. This is a specific situation where the Prime Minister has admitted that neither he nor anyone else authorized him to accept an illegal gift.

Time does not erase the horrors of the past. We only have to ask the victims of crime who wait years to report their attacker.

Is this MP leader actually telling victims to keep quiet and not report these crimes? Why does the Minister of Justice not initiate an investigation into the matter currently involving the Prime Minister and ask the RCMP to reopen its investigation?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that the government remains focused on the job at hand. As the Conservatives want to continue to have personal attacks against different ministers of the government, as I said, we will continue to remain focused on the economy and on making life better for all Canadians.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary can sit here and be part of a government cover-up. That is why, this morning, I again wrote to the RCMP commissioner regarding the RCMP's criminal brief on the investigation into the Prime Minister's \$215,000 private island vacation. The criminal brief says that the RCMP deferred to the Ethics Commissioner's interpretation that the Prime Minister's actions were not criminal in nature. However, we now know, from the news, that former commissioner Mary Dawson was unfamiliar with the Criminal Code offence of fraud against the government. She had no interpretation to give.

Has the Prime Minister spoken to the RCMP in the past week about his criminal behaviour?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to recognize that, even before the Prime Minister was the Prime Minister, even before he was the leader of the Liberal Party, Conservative members always had personal attacks against the Prime Minister. Ever since we have been in the government, their focus has been on character assassination.

While they want to focus on that, we will continue to focus on programs that matter, and an excellent example of that is the national child care program. It is a program that is serving Canadians in every region of our nation today.

● (1425)

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister should really answer his questions. He can run, but he cannot hide from the law. The RCMP's deference to the retired commissioner Dawson was asserted as one of the justifications for why it was not in the public interest to pursue a criminal investigation, but all the public interest arguments by the RCMP for not pursuing charges have been undone in the past week. It is in the public interest for Canadians to know that the Prime Minister is not above the law.

Will the Prime Minister and his staff co-operate with the RCMP in this investigation of fraud on the government by the Prime Minister?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we are witnessing is an ongoing continuation of political theatrics from the Conservative Party.

Three leaders ago, the Conservatives were talking about this. At the end of the day, as I have pointed out in previous questions, they can continue. They can do what they want with their focus. I can assure Canadians that this government, whether it is the Prime Minister, other cabinet ministers or the Liberal caucus as a whole, will continue to focus our attention on making life better for all Canadians in every region of this nation.

* * *

*[Translation]***PUBLIC SAFETY**

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this weekend saw the return of the convoy protesting health measures. This time, the Ottawa police, the Ontario Provincial Police and the Parliamentary Protective Service worked together, from the get-go.

When people tried to get their vehicles into the security perimeter to again block the downtown core, they were immediately stopped. There were no blunders, businesses stayed open. In short, three days later, it was already over, because everyone had done their job well.

Oral Questions

Miraculously, the Emergencies Act was not needed. Here is the thousand-dollar question: In the end, what was the purpose of invoking the Emergencies Act this winter?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, we are relieved because of the good work of the police forces on the ground, including the RCMP, which added resources to assure everyone that public safety would be maintained.

In response to my colleague, we invoked the Emergencies Act at the time because we needed it.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that is the proof that the Emergencies Act was not needed in the first place. There just needed to be some coordination of the work being done by each level of government and the police, the same fine work that put an end to the siege this winter.

That is exactly what this government refused to do during the blockade. Do not forget that the government spent days blaming the City of Ottawa and called the occupiers a bunch of complainers. It took many long weeks before there was any coordination. Much like Pontius Pilate, the government first washed its hands of the situation and then made the whole thing worse. All we needed was for the government to do its job.

Why was the Emergencies Act invoked?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect for my colleague, there was a lot of disruption in January and February with people gathering at the borders in British Columbia, Manitoba and Ontario and on the Ambassador Bridge. It was a public safety threat.

At the recommendation of police, we invoked the Emergencies Act to protect Canadians, because keeping Canadians safe will always be this government's priority.

* * *

COVID-19 ECONOMIC MEASURES

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, two important benefits that make it possible for parents to stay home with their young children and for workers to stay home when they are sick expire next Saturday, May 7.

Meanwhile, we are still waiting for employment insurance reform and paid sick leave, which are long overdue. Canada is going through the sixth wave of the pandemic.

Can the Minister of Finance explain why her government is once again leaving workers out in the cold? Will she renew these extremely important matters?

• (1430)

[*English*]

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect and deserve an EI system that is responsive to their needs. EI sickness benefits are an important support for Canadians who need to leave work because of illness or injury.

Workers receiving important treatments, or requiring a longer period to recover from an illness or injury, face a stressful income gap between the time they exhaust their benefits and when they are healthy enough to return to work. That is why we extended EI sickness benefits from 15 to 26 weeks, providing approximately 169,000 Canadians every year with additional time and flexibility to recover and return to work.

There is more to do, to be sure, and we will keep working so that EI is there for Canadians when they need it most.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister is right: Canadians do deserve an employment insurance system that is there for them and that works. In fact, they should have had that in place before the Liberals ended pandemic benefits that allowed them to stay home with their children when they were sick, and that allowed them to stay home from work when they were sick to not put their colleagues in danger.

Instead, what we have is a situation where the government is allowing these benefits to end without having put the 10 paid sick days in place and without having put the employment insurance reforms in place.

Will the government either present these reforms immediately or extend the benefits until it reforms EI and puts the 10 paid sick days in place?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague knows, we have brought forward legislation that has passed through this place with regard to 10 paid sick days. We have also worked hard to modernize the EI program so that it responds to the needs of all Canadians and is fair and equal. That includes giving parents the choice of taking either 12 or 18 months for parental leave and introducing the new parental sharing benefit so they can share the joy and work of raising their children more equally.

We are following through on our promise to modernize the system with targeted consultations with Canadians. That will bring forward a vision for a new and modern EI system. We know there is more work to do and we are getting to it.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, throughout my prosecutorial career, I worked on hundreds of cases that took years to complete. Notwithstanding many unknowns, procedural delays and complicated evidence, the truth always prevailed. Criminals must always be punished. Now Canadians demand answers from our Attorney General.

If new evidence comes to light in relation to the member for Papineau's illegal vacation, even after six years, will the minister follow his oath of office and ensure that the member for Papineau will not be let off the hook?

Oral Questions

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows from his long experience as a prosecutor, both the police and the prosecution services are independent in our Canadian system.

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a former Crown prosecutor and somebody who taught at a law school, I note that an investigation can be reopened years after if new evidence surfaces. In the case of a fraud in hundreds of thousands of dollars, this may result in a penitentiary sentence on conviction.

My question for the Attorney General is this. Would he support the reopening of an investigation into a serious criminal fraud if new evidence surfaced six years later?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, as the Conservatives want to be able to continue to get into personal attacks, we will continue to focus our attention on what is important to Canadians. That is one of the reasons why we have seen the type of response and different types of pandemic support programs, whether it was packages such as the CERB or the wage loss program. There are so many things that as a government we have done in order to support Canadians because we remain focused on them as opposed to what the Conservatives are remaining focused on, which is personal character assassination.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when asked about his very luxurious and illegal trip, the Prime Minister says that it happened six years ago and that there is no point talking about it anymore. However, any other Canadian would have had to face due process. Apparently the Prime Minister thinks he is above the law.

Is the Minister of Justice okay with this? Does he not think the case should be reopened in light of this new information?

• (1435)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if you ask the question four times, five times, or whatever number of times, the answer is really not going to change. Not you, Mr. Speaker, but—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order, order.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I am trying to give some advice to the Conservative opposition. No matter how many times they might, as the opposition party, want to rephrase a particular question, I understand that their focus is more on character assassination, whether it is of the Prime Minister's or other ministers'. My suggestion is that no matter how persistent they are at that, we will be equally if not more persistent in serving Canadians by developing good legislation and good budgetary measures that are going to help Canadians every day of their lives.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for three weeks, MPs, staff and members of the public all walked through the protest in downtown Ottawa. Meanwhile, the government is claiming that the national security threat was so serious and so dangerous that it could not be addressed using any other law.

If that is the case, how were we all permitted to walk through that protest every day? Either there was not a real threat and the Liberals were just overcompensating for their incompetent management of the protest, or they were knowingly putting us all in danger.

Which one was it?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with great respect to my colleague, she knows full well that the Rideau Centre was completely shut down and that small businesses were shut down. She knows full well that Ottawa residents were unable to get to work and unable to drop off their children at day care. If she does not take my word for it, she can listen to the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, which said that the Emergencies Act was “critical to assisting law enforcement in addressing the mass national and international organization of the Freedom Convoy 2022.”

We invoked the act because it was necessary, and it worked.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to adequately justify the use of the Emergencies Act, the government must demonstrate that there is not an already existing law in place that could deal with this so-called emergency. Since the Prime Minister invoked the act on February 14 in response to the Ottawa protesters, I have to assume that there is in fact good evidence that procedure was followed. However, to know for certain, we need access to certain documents that are held by cabinet right now. The Prime Minister is hiding behind secrecy. This is strange for a Prime Minister who has committed to openness and transparency.

Therefore, the question really is this: Why the cover-up?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been transparent all along about the reasons why we needed to invoke the Emergencies Act. We debated that motion right here in this chamber. It is very discouraging to hear the members of the Conservative Party continue to diminish and downplay the severity of the national emergency that beset this community and multiple ports of entry.

Again, if the Conservatives do not want to take it from the government, let them listen to what the president and CEO of the Surrey Board of Trade said in British Columbia, calling it “an unacceptable sabotage of the economy”. She said, “The impact of these blockades is choking already impacted supply chains”. I would encourage and urge my Conservative colleagues to speak to Canadians.

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I certainly hope this is not the evidence the government is hoping to rely on.

During the appointment process for the Emergencies Act inquiry, which led to the selection of Justice Rouleau, can the Minister of Public Safety confirm whether any ministers or members of their political staff spoke with the judge before his appointment? If so, did they discuss what kind of evidence the inquiry would or would not seek, including documents covered by cabinet confidentiality or solicitor-client privilege?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to my colleague's original comment about his not wanting the commissioner and the parliamentary committee to consider the testimonials and lived experiences of Canadians, including the president of the Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas, small business leaders and ordinary Ottawans who live outside of this chamber, I would encourage him to revisit his position. We are listening to Canadians about the impacts of the illegal blockades.

Of course, Judge Rouleau will carry out his inquiry independently and transparently to ensure there is accountability on his decision.

* * *

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last Friday the Prime Minister refused to grant any immigration powers to the Premier of Quebec.

It would be less insulting if the federal government were the least bit competent, but everything it touches is a disaster. The wait time is now 31 months for Quebecers applying for permanent residence. There is a backlog of 29,000 case files. The government is being sued by people who have been waiting for 13 years.

Does the Prime Minister realize that not only should he give Quebec the powers it is asking for, but he should be grateful to do so?

• (1440)

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, immigration is essential to our economy.

As the member opposite knows, Quebec sets its own immigration targets. Last year the province welcomed over 50,000 new permanent residents. This year Quebec has increased its immigration targets significantly, which will help reduce wait times.

Oral Questions

We will always work very closely with the Quebec government to ensure that the immigration system continues to work for Quebecers and Canadians.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, they cannot even name the problem, so it will be really difficult to solve it.

There is a backlog of 29,000 files, and there are court cases that have been dragging on for 13 years. These are people. They are not files; they are people. That is what the Prime Minister is forgetting in his quarrel with Quebec.

The federal government has proven, year after year, that it is either incapable of taking care of these people or does not consider this issue important enough to do better.

Why not simply give Quebec the power to manage its own immigration?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would again like to thank the member for the question, but he is well aware that Quebec sets the selection criteria for immigrants coming to Quebec, and that includes language skills.

Immigration is crucial and, as I have already told the member, we have welcomed more than 50,000 new permanent residents to the province. Quebec and Canada are working together to welcome more immigrants here, in Canada.

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Ottawa must also give Quebec the power to manage temporary foreign workers.

Each year, the federal government creates delays by forcing every business to produce labour market studies that already exist. Quebec already produces them for all of its economic sectors. Quebec could simply apply them to temporary foreign workers by integrating them into its labour strategy. It is as easy as that.

When will the federal government stop burdening our businesses and transfer the management of temporary foreign workers to Quebec?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Quebec reaps significant benefits from the Canada—Quebec accord on immigration.

In fact, Quebec selects 74% of permanent immigrants. It sets the criteria, including knowledge of French. Quebec also determines the profiles for temporary foreign workers and foreign students, including their knowledge of the French language. In 2020-2021 alone, we sent nearly \$700 million to Quebec to help integrate immigrants, which includes French-language learning.

We are working together despite the fact that the Bloc would like to stir up trouble where there is none. We are working well together.

Oral Questions

[English]

HOUSING

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we cannot trust these Liberals. They tell hopeful millennials who make good wages and are stuck in their parents' basement, time after time, that they will act on housing affordability.

Let us take blind bidding. These Liberals promised that they would ban it. Outside of making it a criminal offence, it is clearly an area that is under the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces. Will the minister admit today that their election promise to ban blind bidding in the last election was false right from the start, or are they planning to start criminalizing real estate agents who take blind bids on behalf of their clients?

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

We on this side of the House are well aware that the dream that Canadians have of owning a home is becoming increasingly difficult to achieve. One of the many measures in our budget is about working on a home buyers' bill of rights in collaboration with the provinces and territories, because on this side of the House, we believe that housing is a right, and that is what we want to work on.

I would encourage the member and all his colleagues to vote for the measures in budget 2022. That is leadership.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada now has the third highest inflation rate in the G7 at 6.7%.

What this means for Canadians, in concrete terms, is that if they did not get a 6.7% wage increase in the past year, they became poorer. On top of that, the cost of groceries has gone up 8.7% over the past year, and that is the second highest rate in the G7. It seems as though the minister is wearing rose-coloured glasses while making her budget forecasts. Obviously, it is not working.

When will she change her approach and start acting for Canadians?

● (1445)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

I am glad the Conservatives are finally admitting that inflation is really a global phenomenon. Canadians understand that very well. The latest inflation rate reported for Canada was 6.7%. In the United States, it is 8.5%. For the OECD, it is 7.7% and for the eurozone, it is 7.3%.

Putin and COVID-19 caused inflation.

[English]

HOUSING

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, housing affordability in Canada is so bad that it is now affecting our military families. It is so bad in CFB Trenton, Canada's largest air force base, in my riding, that currently 360 families are on a waiting list for housing on the base. Military families that cannot afford homes in the community now do not have anywhere to live, and this is affecting our ability to retain and attract military personnel.

My question for the Minister of Defence is this: How much of the \$15 billion in the budget for the military is going to create housing for our Canadian military families?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are making critical, major investments in personnel, equipment and infrastructure that will support continental defence, will support military families, and will support equipment and resources for the Canadian Armed Forces. We agree that the lives of military families, as well as CAF personnel themselves, are of the utmost importance. That is why budget 2022 committed \$8 billion toward increased defence spending, and that is on top of a 70% increase under "Strong, Secure, Engaged".

* * *

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a scathing report from the environment commissioner showed that Infrastructure Canada is no longer accurately tracking emissions for the projects it funds. Local communities depend on this data. They are on the front lines of climate change and are committed to meeting climate targets. They need the federal government to provide reliable information, as well as the stable funding they have been requesting.

How can the Liberal government claim to support local communities when it is not even tracking the climate impacts of the infrastructure it funds?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we welcome the findings of the commissioner's report. We believe, like him, that Canada should always do better when it comes to fighting climate change.

Specifically on infrastructure, we are doing things that have never been seen before in Canada, such as using infrastructure dollars to invest in nature-based solutions. All across the country, this is one of the best ways not only to fight climate change but to mitigate the impacts of climate change and adapt to those impacts.

*Oral Questions***PUBLIC SAFETY**

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Peguis First Nation is once again facing devastating flooding and unprecedented water levels, with 900 people evacuated and over 600 homes impacted.

In 2009 and 2011, the Manitoba NDP government and the federal government supported Peguis. Today, the situation is worse. This is a climate emergency. Peguis needs support now, including from the military, which has stepped up for first nations during emergencies.

Will the federal government work with Peguis and the province to ensure they get all the help they need, including urgent military support now?

Mr. Vance Badawey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned that Peguis First Nation is experiencing flooding events again this year.

They have been impacted significantly by previous flooding, and their communities have been working to rebuild their homes and their community. The Canadian Red Cross and Indigenous Services Canada are working with Chief Hudson to evacuate residents as required. We will continue to work with the community to ensure that they have the resources and supports they need, as this is an active event.

* * *

• (1450)

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, francophones outside Quebec need strong institutions to help their communities grow and prosper. Francophones in Sudbury and northern Ontario would like to see the University of Sudbury return to its francophone roots as an autonomous French-language university under the principle of governance by and for the francophone community.

Can the Minister of Official Languages tell the House how this government is turning that dream into reality?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her important question.

Our government understands that we need to invest in the institutions that support our official language minority communities, in particular the French-language education system. Last Friday, I had the privilege of joining my colleagues from Nickel Belt and Sudbury in announcing that our government will contribute over \$2 million to the University of Sudbury. This money will strengthen the university's capacity and ensure it has the right tools to train the next generation of francophone leaders.

[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, around the world there is consensus that we are moving into the endemic phase of COVID-19. Unfortunately, federal employees continue to be left behind. In Canada, federal mandates persist and many employees are losing their jobs because of their personal choice. This would include approximately 1,000 members of the Canadian Armed Forces, who we now know cannot find housing, at a time when recruitment and retention are already at an alarmingly low rate.

On which date is the government going to give Canadians a federal plan to lift these mandates?

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, having a vaccinated workforce makes our workforce and our communities safer. We asked employees of the federal public service to attest to their vaccination status and they stepped up: 99% of public servants have attested to being fully vaccinated. We are currently reviewing this policy and will be back to Parliament to share our decision.

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at the health committee, Dr. Isaac Bogoch stated that this complicated science the Minister of Health keeps referring to with respect to mandates could be summarized in one page. We also heard again that there is going to be a regular review of these mandates. Where is it?

When is the Prime Minister going to be transparent and make us all aware of the scientific benchmarks and government reviews, and release Canadians who have disagreed with him from these vindictive and overly punitive mandates?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his collaboration on the health committee. I would like to acknowledge that he has served for many years not only in the Canadian Armed Forces, but also as a family doctor. He knows that today we know more about COVID-19 than ever before and are in a very different place than we were two years ago. We have safe and effective vaccines and a highly vaccinated population. We also have new treatments that can help patients from getting seriously ill.

Our government will keep making decisions, as we have been over the past couple of weeks. It would be nice if the Conservatives would acknowledge that things have been changing over these last couple of weeks. We will continue to adjust our advice and public health measures based on the evolution of this virus.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are in a different place, but there are nearly four million Canadians whose charter rights are still being violated. They cannot leave or enter the country and cannot even travel domestically, even though all of the provinces have lifted their vaccine mandates. They are being prevented from visiting relatives, who in some cases are dying.

Oral Questions

Will the transport minister admit that vaccinated and unvaccinated people can both get and transmit COVID and that there is no longer any justification for violating the charter rights of Canadians?

Hon. Omar Alhabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the last two years have been very difficult on Canadians. We have had lockdowns. We have had public health measures. People lost their jobs because of the uncertainty of the pandemic. Governments around the world, provincial governments and municipal governments were all grappling with doing the right things to protect the health and safety of Canadians. Many decisions included vaccination mandates and other public health measures. We are seeing that our government and other governments are slowly adjusting these measures. We will continue to consult our experts as we review those decisions.

• (1455)

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are two years in and the testing of incoming international travellers is creating significant bottlenecks at Canadian airports. Many Canadians still cannot travel. The public servants who could be working from home to clear the current government's backlog on just about every single service it offers have been cast aside.

The ideological crusade of the government is having an impact on our reputation. When will it admit that it got it wrong and lift the ineffective and now obviously vindictive federal mandates?

Hon. Omar Alhabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Conservative Party does not agree with our government's decisions when it comes to public health measures. However, talking down vaccines and public health measures is not a wise thing to do to bring Canadians along. We can debate the need for those measures, but calling them vindictive is unwise. I call on my hon. colleague to realize that we are doing everything we can to protect the health and safety of Canadians. If the Conservatives disagree with us, they can argue that with the health experts.

* * *

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is the same thing every spring.

Just as predictable as the return of warm weather is the return of federal delays in processing temporary foreign workers. Once again, the same farmers must pay for the same market studies. Once again, the arrival of workers is delayed and farmers are afraid they will miss their chance to harvest their crops.

As Albert Einstein said, insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. When will Ottawa finally put an end to this tradition of failure and transfer the program to Quebec?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that immigration is vital to fighting the labour shortage. IRCC is prioritizing work permit processing for in-de-

mand occupations in industries such as health, agriculture, food and seafood production.

In the first quarter of 2022, we processed more than 100,000 applications for work permits. That is nearly double the number of work permits processed in the same period last year.

We will continue to ensure that Canadian employers have access to the workers they need to ensure the economic recovery of Canada and Quebec.

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois has proposed plenty of possible solutions.

At the very least, the federal government could eliminate the requirement for the same market impact assessments every year when everyone knows there is a labour shortage. It could speed up foreign workers' arrival in Canada by collecting their biometrics here. It could deal with their work permits once they arrive in the country.

There are plenty of things that the government could do, but it refuses to do better. Since it is refusing to take care of temporary foreign workers, why not let Quebec take on that responsibility?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that the temporary foreign worker program is vital to the Canadian economy.

Employers should be able to get decisions regarding workers' contracts. That is why we are taking additional measures to address the labour shortage.

[*English*]

We are moving the cap on low-wage positions for employers in seasonal industries. We are extending LMIA validity from nine to 18 months, and we are expanding flexibility for LMIA applications in low-wage occupations. We are also increasing the maximum employment duration for high-wage and global talent streams from two to three years. We will continue collaborating with employers to ensure—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Beauce.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PASSPORT CANADA

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government has pulled off a hat trick, managing to destroy a trifecta of services: immigration, employment insurance and passports. Everything is a complete disaster.

My constituents are sick of sitting on hold or waiting weeks, or even months, to get answers from the officers handling their files.

Did the government not anticipate a surge in passport renewal applications after two full years of no travel? This government is always in reaction mode. When will it take action and reduce wait times for passport renewals?

• (1500)

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. As I told the House, we are seeing an incredible increase in demand for passports.

That being said, Service Canada is working very hard to ensure that Canadians get their passports before their travel date. Just this past weekend, we opened 12 Passport Canada and Service Canada centres on Saturday to help process passport applications.

Our employees are working at night and on the weekends to make sure that Canadians get their passports on time.

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am not looking to stir up trouble, given that I am not a member of the Bloc, but the majority of Canadians are starting to return to in-person work after two years of a pandemic.

However, certain federal workplaces are still largely shuttered, and Passport Canada is no exception. Visits are by appointment only, but if anyone wants to make an appointment, they had better be ready to spend hours on the phone.

Canadians deserve better service. How is it possible that we members can work on site, when that is not the case at a Passport Canada office?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have good news. Passport Canada and Service Canada will be opening nearly all of their service centres this week.

We have spoken with unions and the employees, who are already working long hours, even at home, for the specific purpose of serving Canadians. We know that it is important because there are many people who want to travel right now. Services will be available in offices across the country.

[English]

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, poor planning has resulted in unacceptable wait times for Canadians to get a passport. The Liberal government is profiting from Canadians' desire to travel yet offering less service. It knew this need was coming yet clearly was not prepared, and now Canadians are paying the price. Passport Canada is charging a \$45 transfer fee, plus an additional \$110 fast processing fee. All these unnecessary processing fees are making a 10-year adult passport \$315 instead of \$160.

Why are Canadians paying for the Liberals' inability to plan?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said numerous times in the House, we are experiencing an incredible increase in demand. For the past two years, many Canadians followed the advice of government and did not travel. Now they are looking for-

ward to travelling again, and therefore there is a big increase in demand.

That being said, Service Canada and Passport Canada are doing everything they can to meet this unprecedented surge in demand. Just this past weekend, we opened 12 centres on Saturday to assist. Passport officers are working day, night and on the weekends to meet the demand. We will continue to provide the best service possible that we can to Canadians, understanding the—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Fredericton.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, eliminating all remaining long-term drinking water advisories on reserve is a priority for the government. To accomplish this long-awaited aspiration, it is indispensable that first nations communities need to access reliable funding for their water and waste-water services over long periods of time.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services inform the House on how the government is working in partnership with first nations at every step of the way to ensure sustainable access to clean drinking water in first nations communities, specifically in Atlantic Canada, a territory governed by the peace and friendship treaties?

Mr. Vance Badawey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, access to clean drinking water is fundamental. That is why budget 2022 will provide \$173.2 million to support the transfer of services in 17 communities to the Atlantic First Nations Water Authority. Recently, Chief Ross Perley stated, "It gives us self-determination on drinking water."

We will continue to work with all communities to find and support indigenous-led solutions to strengthen water management on reserve.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this year's budget raises more questions for Canada's wine industry than it answers. Last year's budget dedicated \$101 million over two years in support of a trade legal excise exemption replacement program, an amount the industry says falls way short of what it needs. This year's budget now forecasts the government generating \$135 million over that same two-year period.

Where is that extra \$34 million in forecasted revenue going? Will it be given back to the wine industry to support its needs? Which is it? You promised to make them whole. Will you do so?

Oral Questions

• (1505)

The Deputy Speaker: I will remind the member about the usage of “you”.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we announced in last year's budget, we will be providing more than \$100 million to support wineries in adapting to ongoing and emerging challenges. The program is expected to open for application intake this summer.

As I am sure the hon. member knows, Canada had a WTO dispute with Australia. We settled that dispute in July 2020, and our settlement required the repeal of our exemption by June 30, 2022.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have followed public health measures and have made tremendous sacrifices during the COVID-19 pandemic. Canada has one of the highest vaccination rates in the world. Provincial health officials have followed the science to remove vaccine and mask mandates.

With all the provinces and most countries moving on from pandemic restrictions, why will the Prime Minister not follow the science and immediately end all federal vaccine mandates and restrictions on Canadians?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague is well aware, Canada is a really big country and public health advice can vary across the country due to local epidemiological situations in various provinces and territories. I would also like to say that out of all the other countries named in the House lately, we have the lowest death rate. We should acknowledge that our very low death rate is due to the very high vaccination rate and the strict adherence to public health guidelines throughout the ongoing pandemic that we are all experiencing. We all want this pandemic to be over, and by following the public health restrictions, we will make sure that it is over soon.

* * *

SENIORS

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, record inflation under the government affects not only Canadian seniors but their children too. With two children in university, an all-too-familiar Alzheimer's diagnosis forced a family in my riding to dip into their meagre retirement savings to support their loving father in his time of need. This is a reality that far too many Canadian families are experiencing.

Informal caregivers are the backbone of this care economy. What specific measures will the government be introducing to help young families care for their aging parents?

Mr. Darren Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. colleague for the question.

When it comes to supporting Canada's seniors, budget 2022 provided great news, including \$5.3 billion over five years for dental care; engaging with experts on creating a career extension tax credit; creating an expert panel to study the idea of an aging at home benefit; doubling the qualifying expense limit of the home accessibility tax credit; \$1.5 billion to extend the rapid housing initiative, creating at least 6,000 new affordable housing units; and, finally, \$475 million to provide a one-time \$500 payment to those, including seniors, who are facing housing affordability challenges.

* * *

[*Translation*]

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, prejudice, barriers and discrimination are a daily reality for too many Canadians, including Black, racialized and indigenous people.

As Canada's largest employer, the federal government has a responsibility to lead by example in addressing these challenges.

Can the President of the Treasury Board tell us what concrete measures have been taken to strengthen diversity and inclusion in the public service?

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question and for the hard work he does in his riding of Vaudreuil—Soulanges.

We will continue to take concrete measures to eliminate discrimination within our institutions. We created the Centre on Diversity and Inclusion, launched programs to remove barriers to recruitment and promotion, released disaggregated data and amended the Public Service Employment Act.

Discrimination has always been entrenched in society. Eradicating it will require a constant and unrelenting effort.

* * *

[*English*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Mohamedou Ould Slahi spent 14 years in prison in Guantanamo Bay despite being innocent. During his wrongful detention, he faced extreme conditions, including torture. He has filed a lawsuit with the Federal Court alleging that, while living in Canada, Canadian authorities shared false information that led to his unjust arrest. CSIS monitored him and passed along incorrect information about Mr. Slahi.

Will the public safety minister admit that, once again, our national security agencies were complicit in the detention and torture of an innocent person?

Government Orders

[*A moment of silenced observed*]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1510)

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in line with our values, which are enshrined in the charter, Canada, of course, condemns all forms of torture. Canada has a duty to uphold fundamental rights and freedoms in all instances, and, of course, it would be inappropriate for the government or any member of this chamber to comment on matters that are before the courts.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, my question is this: How is the government ensuring that with new publicly-funded plutonium technologies and so-called SMR reactors, we are not increasing the risk of proliferation of nuclear weapons undermining global treaties?

The experimental Moltex salt reactor in New Brunswick is being built by a company that has never done it before, of course, because no one has. However, the British company, Moltex, has admitted through its CEO that there is a risk. He said the company had to ensure that it has “got the risk of weapons proliferation managed and sufficiently low”.

What on earth is “sufficiently low”, in an era in which Putin is sabre-rattling nuclear weapons?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, small, modular reactors are under development in several countries around the world, not simply Canada. We can look to the United States and to the United Kingdom.

As the hon. member knows, nuclear energy plays an important role in Canada’s current energy mix. In the recent budget, we provided resources for the independent Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission to focus on readiness to regulate SMRs. Going forward, Canada is committed to ensuring its nuclear industry continues to comply with all existing international obligations.

* * *

ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE OFFICER CADETS

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and I believe if you seek it, you will find the unanimous consent of the House for the following. I move:

That this House mourn the tragic loss of four officer cadets on Friday, April 29, 2022, and express its deepest condolences to their families, their friends and the Royal Military College community during this very difficult time.

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

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

(Motion agreed to)

The Deputy Speaker: Following discussions among representatives of all parties of the House, I understand that there is an agreement to observe a moment of silence in memory of the four officer cadets who lost their lives in Kingston. I will now invite hon. members to please rise.

• (1515)

[*English*]

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL UPDATE IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2021

The House resumed from April 29 consideration of Bill C-8, An Act to implement certain provisions of the economic and fiscal update tabled in Parliament on December 14, 2021 and other measures, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 3:14 p.m., pursuant to order made Thursday, November 25, 2021, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motions at report stage of Bill C-8.

Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 1.

[*Translation*]

A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 2 to 10.

• (1525)

[*English*]

(The House divided on Motion No. 1, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 64*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultiaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Benzen	Bergen
Berthold	Bezan
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chambers
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	Deltell
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Gallant
Généreux	Genuis
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly

Government Orders

Kitchen	Kmiec	Erskine-Smith	Fillmore
Kram	Kramp-Neuman	Fisher	Fonseca
Kurek	Kusie	Fortier	Fortin
Lake	Lantsman	Fragiskatos	Freeland
Lawrence	Lehoux	Fry	Gaheer
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Garneau	Garon
Liepert	Lloyd	Garrison	Gaudreau
Lobb	MacKenzie	Gazan	Gerretsen
Maguire	Martel	Gill	Gould
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)	Green	Guilbeault
McLean	Melillo	Hajdu	Hanley
Moore	Morantz	Hardie	Hepfner
Morrison	Motz	Housefather	Hughes
Muys	Nater	Hussen	Hutchings
O'Toole	Patzer	Iacono	Idlout
Paul-Hus	Perkins	Ien	Jaczek
Poilievre	Rayes	Johns	Joly
Redekopp	Reid	Jones	Jowhari
Rempel Garner	Richards	Julian	Kayabaga
Roberts	Rood	Kelloway	Khalid
Ruff	Scheer	Khera	Koutrakis
Schmale	Seeback	Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Shields	Shipley	Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Small	Soroka	Lametti	Lamoureux
Steinley	Stewart	Lapointe	Lattanzio
Strahl	Stubbs	Lauzon	LeBlanc
Taylor Roy	Thomas	Lebouthillier	Lemire
Tochor	Tolmie	Lightbound	Long
Uppal	Van Popta	Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
Vecchio	Vidal	MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
Vien	Viersen	MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Vis	Wagantall	Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
Warkentin	Waugh	Masse	Mathysen
Webber	Williams	May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Williamson	Zimmer — 118	McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra	McKay	McPherson
Ali	Anand	McLeod	Mendicino
Anandasangaree	Angus	Mendès	Michaud
Arseneault	Arya	Miao	Morrice
Ashton	Atwin	Miller	Murray
Bachrach	Badawey	Morrissey	Ng
Bains	Baker	Naqvi	Normandin
Barron	Barsalou-Duval	Noormohamed	Olipphant
Battiste	Beaulieu	O'Connell	Pauzé
Beech	Bendayan	O'Regan	Petitpas Taylor
Bennett	Bergeron	Perron	Qualtrough
Bérubé	Bibeau	Powlowski	Rodriguez
Bittle	Blaikie	Robillard	Romanado
Blair	Blanchet	Rogers	Sajjan
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney	Sahota	Samson
Blois	Boissonnault	Saks	Savard-Tremblay
Bradford	Brière	Sarai	Schiefke
Brunelle-Duceppe	Carr	Scarpaleggia	Sgro
Casey	Chabot	Serré	Sheehan
Chagger	Chahal	Shanahan	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Champagne	Champoux	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sinclair-Desgagné
Chatel	Chen	Simard	Sorbara
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Singh	Ste-Marie
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier	Spengemann	Sudds
Coteau	Dabrusin	St-Onge	Thériault
Damoff	Davies	Tassi	Thompson
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens	Therrien	Trudel
Desilets	Desjarlais	Trudeau	Valdez
Dhaliwal	Dhillon	Turnbull	van Koeverden
Diab	Dong	Van Bynen	Vandenbeld
Drouin	Dubourg	Vandal	Villemure
Duclos	Duguid	Vignola	Vuong
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz	Virani	Wilkinson
Ehsassi	El-Khouiry	Weiler	Zahid
		Yip	Zuberi — 210
		Zarrillo	

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

Hon. David Lametti (for the Minister of Finance) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

The Deputy Speaker: 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 please rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded vote please.

● (1540)

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

(Division No. 65)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blaney
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Garneau	Garrison
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Housefather
Hughes	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis

Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lametti
Lapointe
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
May (Saamich—Gulf Islands)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mendicino
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
Oliphant
Petitpas Taylor
Qualtrough
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Singh
Spengemann
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Trudeau
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Vuong
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi— 183

Government Orders

Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maloney
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Morrice
Murray
Ng
O'Connell
O'Regan
Powlowski
Robillard
Rogers
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Schieffe
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sorbara
St-Onge
Tassi
Thompson
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Virani
Weiler
Yip
Zarrillo

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benzen	Bergen
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Carrie
Chabot	Chambers
Champoux	Chong
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
Desbiens	Desilets
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferrier
Findlay	Fortin

Routine Proceedings

Gallant	Garon
Gaudreau	Généreux
Genuis	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lemire	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
MacKenzie	Maguire
Martel	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
Melillo	Michaud
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Motz
Muys	Nater
Normandin	O'Toole
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Perkins
Perron	Plamondon
Poillievre	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ruff	Savard-Tremblay
Scheer	Schmale
Seeback	Shields
Shipley	Simard
Sinclair-Desgagné	Small
Soroka	Steinley
Ste-Marie	Stewart
Strahl	Stubbs
Thériault	Therrien
Thomas	Tochor
Tolmie	Trudel
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vignola	Villemure
Vis	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williams
Williamson	Zimmer — 148

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary 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 one petition. This return will be tabled in an electronic format.

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, entitled “The Canada Infrastructure Bank”.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, entitled “Collection and Use of Mobility Data by the Government of Canada and Related Issues”.

INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS

Hon. Marc Garneau (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and, if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs presented on Monday, April 25, 2022, be modified to substitute the name of the organization “First Nations Finance Authority” with “First Nations Financial Management Board” on page 16 of the report in English, and page 20 in French.

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

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

(Motion agreed to)

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC) moved that the third report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, presented on Thursday, March 31, 2022, be concurred in.

He said: Mr. Speaker, as always, it is an honour to be able to stand in this place and enter into debate on such important subjects.

Let me first state that I will be splitting my time with the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

Once again, we find ourselves in this place, debating what has become the trend of the Liberal government, the trend of corruption, lack of ethics and failure on the front of integrity time and time again.

I rise today not to talk about ancient history, as the Liberals would often like to suggest the Conservatives want to talk about. I rise today not to talk about something that does not have direct impact on Canadians. I rise not to simply have character assassinations as in question period we heard the Liberals suggest is all Conservatives were worried about. I rise today to talk about the integrity and the trust that Canadians need to be able to have in their institutions.

Routine Proceedings

When it comes to the report and the amendment that has been brought forward by my hon. colleague, we have an opportunity as parliamentarians to once again discuss the fact that there has been a significant erosion of trust in our public institutions within the country. I would suggest, and the reason I make this suggestion is that I hear it each and every day from constituents, that there has been a significant erosion of trust in our democracy within the country.

I rise today to speak to what is known as the question of conflict of interest and lobbying in relation to pandemic spending, something that most Canadians would know as the WE Charity scandal, where the Prime Minister awarded a massive contract to his friends.

I had the honour during the first session of the last Parliament to sit on the ethics committee in the midst of what was an unprecedented time in Canadian history, certainly, and in the world, facing a pandemic, and the fact that supports were needed. Conservatives did support, contrary to what the Liberals would like to suggest, some of those supports that Canadians needed so much.

What we saw transpire over the year 2020 was that there was an unprecedented level of, obviously, lobbying that resulted in a massive contract being awarded to an organization with very close ties to the Prime Minister and his family and other central members of the government.

What was supposed to be \$800 million to go toward students finding summer employment during what was a very challenging year for all Canadians ended up being bogged down in scandal. Not only is there the question of ethics and integrity, but certainly, I would suggest, the government met the definition of corruption. I would suggest today in this place that it did show itself to have an unprecedented level of corruption, whether in this program or the many other scandals that we have seen from it.

We saw that Canadians suffered. We saw students not getting the supports and resources that they need. We saw the fact that, as I mentioned before, questions were being asked, with more Canadians questioning each and every day the fact that they do not know if they can trust our institutions. They do not know if they can trust our democracy. On and on it went.

There was a prorogation, even though the Liberal Prime Minister promised to never prorogue Parliament. Well, he broke that promise. We all know what that means. He broke that promise. The timeline for breaking that promise, I might add, and I know this authoritatively because I was on the committee, was within a number of days of when documents that very well may have been very revealing of the Prime Minister's relationship with this organization were supposed to have been submitted.

● (1545)

The Prime Minister participated in a hundreds of millions of dollars coverup. The Liberals' defence quite often was that it was not \$800 million, that it would have only been about a \$400-million scandal. Well, \$400 million is beyond the imagination of most people, the number of dollars that have been wasted by the government in terms of corruption.

Let me first thank the committee. It did get back to work. I was involved in the first session of that Parliament. Something the Liberal government certainly does not like is the fact that it does not have a majority, although it seems to have bought one here more recently. It was faced with the fact that the committee did decide to do good work. The Liberals filibustered that committee for countless hours. I know because I participated in many of those hours of filibuster. They tried to teach committee members Latin. They had a whole litany of excuses. It will go down as one of the most unprecedented coverups in Canadian history.

We saw that the committee did good work. It brought forward 23 recommendations. A number of months ago, I moved the motion in the ethics committee, which I now have the honour of sitting in again in this Parliament, to retable the report, the good work that the committee did, along with those 23 recommendations, the significant research and testimony and even the admissions of contempt. In a parliamentary democracy, contempt is a significant allegation, but there were admissions of contempt on the part of the Prime Minister.

Last year, at the end of the summer of 2021, we saw something which unfortunately is not that uncommon. We saw the Prime Minister flip-flop. He misled Canadians on a whole host of issues. He stood in this place, with his integrity being shown and then a few months later called an election. He promised not to do that. The definition of the word for that is not allowed to be said in this place, but Canadians know what it is.

It is an absolute shame that we find ourselves in this situation once again. Now we have seen over the past couple of weeks that once again the integrity of our Prime Minister is showing. This time it is not simply a contract being given to friends of the Prime Minister, but the possibility of criminal charges.

I do not know if the Prime Minister simply goofed up when he admitted to the fact that he did not give himself permission to absolve himself of criminal charges, but that is a big deal. The fact is that we have a Prime Minister in this place that seems to have admitted to criminality.

In the last couple of minutes of my speech, I'll mention that I hear from Canadians often. They ask questions. They ask how he can get away with this. They ask how we can have a government with the litany of scandals that litter the path of our Prime Minister as he jet-sets from coast to coast to coast. It could be for surfing vacations or for friends to get lucrative government contracts or the fact that during a pandemic there was significant evidence of sole-source contracts for ventilators, as one example, that were never delivered. There are serious questions that Canadians need answers to.

Canadians need answers to these questions because there has been a significant erosion of trust, not to mention all of the political and policy differences. Coming from a rural east central Alberta riding, I can say there are a lot of policy differences. I could go on and on about those things.

Routine Proceedings

At the heart of it, it should not be about politics when it comes to the integrity of our democracy. Over the course of the next number of hours, I hope we get to once again seek clarity for Canadians, but not for political interests or so-called character assassinations as the Liberals simply like to pivot to when they are afraid to answer questions.

• (1550)

All of us have the responsibility to ask the questions when it comes to ensuring that tough questions are asked of our elected officials, in this case the government and the Prime Minister as the leader of that government, that the answers are given and that accountability can be brought back to this country, because I am fearful that the damage that is being done to our democracy is putting it in great peril.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, to say that I am disappointed, I would say yes. To say I am surprised, I would say no. It is unfortunate that the Conservative Party continues to demonstrate to Canadians its willingness to play games. We are actually supposed to be debating Motion No. 11 to ultimately see parliamentarians be able to sit longer for a debate, in order to accommodate more debate. Now the Conservatives take yet another tactical report, something that focuses on their interests, not the interests of Canadians, and that is what they want to debate, as opposed to debating other, more substantive issues, such as Motion No. 11, Bill C-8 and so forth.

Does the member not see the hypocrisy that is oozing from the Conservative caucus on the whole issue of credibility in standing and addressing the issues that Canadians are facing today? It is shameful.

• (1555)

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, what is shameful is the fact that the member is complicit in a government that is so corrupt that it refused to even allow the conversation of accountability within this place.

Specifically when it comes to the government's legislative agenda, it is nothing short of incompetence to the extreme that the Liberals cannot seem to manage anything: government, their ethical conduct, let alone their legislative agenda. I look forward to debating Motion No. 11. Unfortunately, the government, in what is the height of hypocrisy, moved closure to limit debate on what is a motion that would limit the ability of MPs in this place to have their say.

This is incredible. Motion No. 11, which the member just referred to, would give the Prime Minister unilateral ability to shut this place down on his whim. That is not democracy. That is tyranny and certainly lands pretty close to the allegations I hear often from constituents who suggest that this is not a Prime Minister but rather a dictator.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, those are huge words that are being hurled around in the House by the Conservatives yet again. Many Conservative MPs, not all, fortunately, were very supportive of the so-called “freedom convoy”, which sought the overthrow of democratic gov-

ernment in this country. It sought the ripping away of all democratic values and traditions that we know in Canada.

The member says this is an important issue, but he has to answer a very simple question. The Conservatives are now presenting the same concurrence report this week that they presented last week. The House dealt with it last week. They are coming right back and presenting the same motion this week. They talk about the time that needs to be spent in the House to ensure that we actually get in place legislation that would help teachers, that would help farmers. I know the member, like everyone else in the House, has been hearing from teachers in his riding because of the delays that the Conservatives have caused around Bill C-8. I know that he has heard from farmers in his riding who have said the same thing, that the Conservatives are blocking all pieces of legislation. Now they are doing it by running a rerun, running a redebate of what was already debated last week and will be debated in an evening session once all parties come to an agreement.

Why is the member presenting exactly the same thing, exactly the same debate, when the House already considered that last week?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, that is a little revisionist history from the member, so let me correct the record. We had indeed endeavoured to move this last week, but the government simply moved to orders of the day, which restricted the ability for members of this place to actually enter into discussions on this incredibly important matter.

When it comes to the coalition or confidence and supply or the fact that the Prime Minister bought his majority, my simple response is this. I encourage all NDP members of this place to go to their constituents and be honest with them when they try to explain and justify the fact that they are involved in a cover-up of unbelievable proportions each and every day, that they are enabling the incompetence of a government that cannot manage not only its legislative agenda, but government itself. The fact that they seem more than happy to play games—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Battle River—Crowfoot for splitting his time with me and for his great intervention.

We brought forward this concurrence motion last week, but because the government does not want to discuss the WE scandal in any more detail, it moved a motion to go to orders of the day, which essentially shut down the debate on the concurrence motion.

I want to thank the ethics committee from the 43rd Parliament, second session, which tabled the report “Questions of Conflict of Interest and Lobbying in Relation to Pandemic Spending” in June 2021. I also want to thank the current ethics committee, in this Parliament, which has now tabled it on March 31.

Routine Proceedings

It is important that we have a chance to revisit what happened in the WE Charity scandal, why this is important and why we need to continue to look at how we can improve upon our officers of Parliament, like the Commissioner of Lobbying, the Ethics Commissioner and the Privacy Commissioner, and ensure we have better oversight of government officials who are being lobbied and entering into certain contracts that oftentimes put ministers of the current Liberal government into a conflict of interest. We have now seen multiple reports done by the Ethics Commissioner, both the previous Ethics Commissioner, Mary Dawson, and the current Ethics Commissioner, Mr. Dion.

I do not think we need to spend a lot of time reminding everybody of the unethical behaviour of the current Prime Minister. Again, during question period I asked him about the criminal investigation the RCMP had started with respect to the luxury vacation gift he got on a tropical island. Not only was he found in violation of the Conflict of Interest Act by the former Ethics Commissioner Mary Dawson, contravening sections 5, 11, 12 and 21 of the Conflict of Interest Act, but we also know that the RCMP investigated him under paragraph 121(1)(c) of the Criminal Code for fraud in relation to the government.

We also know the Prime Minister was found guilty of contravening section 9 of the Conflict of Interest Act over the issue of SNC-Lavalin and the prosecution going on there with respect to influence. He essentially had a concerted campaign against Jody Wilson-Raybould, our former Attorney General, who refused to offer a plea deal to SNC-Lavalin, what we call a deferred prosecution agreement, and stood on her principles as the Attorney General of Canada to ensure that it faced the music. However, she lost her job because she stood up to the Prime Minister and stood up for the principles of justice. We know that the Treasury Board president of the day, Jane Philpott, who sided with Jody Wilson-Raybould, was also fired from cabinet, and ultimately the two of them were kicked out of the Liberal caucus. That scandal in itself had huge overarching impacts on the Liberal Party of Canada. The principal secretary to the Prime Minister at the time, Gerald Butts, had to resign. The Clerk of the Privy Council at the time, Michael Wernick, also resigned. They both resigned in disgrace.

The Prime Minister is not the only person who has acted unethically. I want to get to former finance minister Bill Morneau right away, but when the current Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, who is the MP for Beauséjour, was Minister of Fisheries in the last Parliament, he was caught up in a lucrative clam scam because he practised nepotism and made sure that family members received lucrative \$24-million contracts for clams.

Then we come to Mr. Bill Morneau, our former finance minister, who was found guilty of violating the Conflict of Interest Act when he failed to disclose to the Ethics Commissioner that he had a luxurious villa in the French Riviera. It took him two years to disclose his property, when all members of Parliament, and especially public office holders, whether members of cabinet or parliamentary secretaries, are required to submit all of their financial information to the Ethics Commissioner for review and public disclosure so that people will know if there is any way members of this House, and public office holders in particular, can be influenced.

• (1600)

As I mentioned already, the Prime Minister was found guilty on four different charges for the luxurious vacation that he took on the private island and he has been investigated for fraud, but it is important to point out that both the Prime Minister and Bill Morneau failed to recuse themselves from discussions around WE Charity. We know that WE Charity was offered a chance to develop a program for summer students and to support students during the pandemic. That was over half a billion dollars.

Both Bill Morneau and the Prime Minister had relations with the Kielburger family, as well as with WE Charity. Bill Morneau's daughter worked for it. Bill Morneau and the Prime Minister had received benefits directly from WE Charity. They were both close personal friends of the Kielburgers. Because they failed to recuse themselves from the discussions at the cabinet table, awarding a sole-sourced contract to WE Charity, that is what was found to be in contravention under the Conflict of Interest Act. We know that because of it, Mr. Morneau was removed from cabinet and resigned as a member of Parliament.

We also know that WE Charity produced 10 videos of the Prime Minister, which were essentially campaign-style videos. They were valued at over \$217,000. To make the point, in one of the videos, the Prime Minister said he pledged to work hard for all Canadians, something that we hear from him in question period. Then he went on to say that he is going to invest in our youngest leaders: the students. This is a campaign-style promise by the Prime Minister to these future voters. It clearly was a political message.

We also know that the Prime Minister's wife had received a \$20,000 getaway vacation to speak at a WE Charity event in London, England, and that was just a week or two after the Liberal government awarded the Kielburgers and WE Charity the half-billion-dollar sole-sourced contract.

As we dive into this report, we find out that there were multiple people in Morneau's office and the Prime Minister's Office, as well as the member for Waterloo, who were working directly with the Kielburgers on how to design the program. Why did they have to work with WE Charity to design the program? It was because WE Charity had never done a program like this, ever. It did not have the capabilities to offer this program and it was designed specifically for it to orchestrate this program. Because of the hand-holding that took place, we know, as the member for Battle River—Crowfoot just said, that public trust in our democratic institutions was eroded.

Routine Proceedings

On Thursday, March 25, 2021, some of those staffers who worked in the Prime Minister's Office and Minister Morneau's office were asked to appear at committee by a House order. Ben Chin, Rick Theis and Amitpal Singh were all ordered to appear. Ben Chin was senior adviser to the Prime Minister and directly messaged with Craig Kielburger of WE. We know that Rick Theis, who worked in the Prime Minister's Office as director of policy and cabinet affairs, met with the Kielburger brothers from WE as well, and then Amitpal Singh, who worked for Bill Morneau, also worked directly to make the tailor-made program for WE Charity. All these people failed to comply with the order from the House and are in contempt of Parliament. Because we had an election and we are in a new Parliament, that does not purge them of their contempt of Parliament. We also need to dive more into the role of the MP for Waterloo.

• (1605)

I wish to move an amendment to the motion. I move:

That, the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following: the Third Report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, presented on Thursday, March 31, 2022, be not now concurred in, but that it be recommitted to the Committee for further consideration, provided that (a) the committee be instructed (i) to make every effort possible to receive evidence from Ben Chin, Rick Theis and Amitpal Singh, the witnesses who did not comply with this House's Order of Thursday, March 25, 2021, to appear before the Committee, (ii) to consider further the concerns expressed in the Report about the Member for Waterloo's failure "in her obligation to be accurate with a committee", and (iii) to report back by Monday, October 17, 2022; and (b) the committee be empowered to order the attendance of the Member for Waterloo, from time to time, as it sees fit.

• (1610)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The amendment is in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am wondering if the member sees any hypocrisy when the official opposition members say that they would like to be able to have more debate on issues, and then they filibuster concurrence reports to prevent debate from happening and are voting against the government's Motion No. 11 to extend debate time so that members would have more time to debate. On the one hand, the government is providing the opportunity to debate and, on the other hand, the opposition members are saying that they want to be able to debate but are denying any opportunity for yourself. It is almost as if you want the chamber to self-destruct in terms of debate.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Just as a reminder, I do not want to self-destruct.

The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, I think we all sit here and witness every day the member for Winnipeg North self-destruct on an ongoing basis.

When we really want to get down to it, the member for Winnipeg North stands in here every day to help with the cover-up of government corruption and unethical behaviour. We know that we just voted on a closure motion to ensure that there was a vote on Motion

No. 11. Motion No. 11 is going to be coming into force whether we like it or not. The government, with its unholy alliance with the NDP, will get its Motion No. 11 through, and we do not feel like it is necessary to sit here and debate this in a long, drawn-out process.

What is important is that we have committees that have been doing important work here on the ethical behaviour of the current government. We need to refer this back to the committee so that we can dig in deeper and the committee can do its work and report back to the House on those who actually held this place in contempt by refusing to appear before committee. The member for Waterloo perjured herself in committee by refusing to share information with the committee and lying about it, or misleading us. We have this opportunity to bring those people back and get down to the bottom of what actually happened in the WE scandal.

• (1615)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I like the member. He is very experienced in the House, and I get along with him well, but I do not understand the Conservatives' strategy.

The official opposition House leader, just a few hours ago, was saying that the Conservatives do not want to delay things. They said that they understood the fact that teachers and farmers are trying desperately to get access to the tax credits, which the Conservatives have held up by refusing, in any way, to allow consideration of Bill C-8.

It is also the disinformation from Conservatives that concerns me. I mean, our Standing Orders are very clear. Standing Order 66 means that the concurrence debate that the Conservatives brought up last week, as the member well knows, is subject to a debate next week. That is in the Standing Orders. It is obligatory. The fact that they are doing their summer reruns by reintroducing a motion, reintroducing the same amendment that they did last week, does not allow the House time to actually get the legislation through that teachers and farmers and so many others are looking for.

I just do not understand the Conservatives' strategy. They seem to be blocking all legislation of all types at all times, and then they introduce a rerun when they know, and the member knows, that next week all of this will be considered, because the Standing Orders require it.

Why are they taking time from the House now when they know very well that this debate will be held next week and they can reintroduce, for a third time, the same amendment?

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, I note the hypocrisy of that member. He used to stand in here and rail against the government on the WE scandal itself, because the Prime Minister and the former minister of finance, Bill Morneau, refused to recuse themselves from the decision process.

This is the member who always wanted to make sure that we did not do closure on debate, and now since he has become, I guess, deputy leader of the NDP-Liberal coalition or deputy House leader, NDP members are now standing here defending the government on moving things like closure on debate and trying to limit the ability of committees to do their work on things. He wants to kick the can down the road another week or two before we actually do it, but we have a chance to get this done today: to put it to a vote and let the committee get to work immediately on making sure that those who committed contempt on this Parliament are actually held to account.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think it is clear, from the answer to the last question, that the Conservatives have absolutely no response to the great question that the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman was just asked, because had he actually conjured up an answer to the question, he would have been able to provide some substance to the member's question.

I think it is in the best interests of Canadians that we get back to the business of this House rather than the political games that the Conservatives are continuing to play. Therefore, I move, seconded by the member for Winnipeg North:

That the House do now proceed to orders of the day.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): 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 Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

[English]

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Call in the members.

• (1700)

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

(Division No. 66)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Barron
Battiste	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Carr	Casey

Routine Proceedings

Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Garneau	Garrison
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Johns
Joly	Jones
Jowhari	Julian
Kayabaga	Kelloway
Khalid	Khera
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lattanzio
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	McDonald (Avalon)
McGuinty	McKay
McPherson	Mendès
Mendicino	Miao
Miller	Morrice
Morrissey	Murray
Naqvi	Ng
Noormohamed	O'Connell
Oliphant	O'Regan
Petitpas Taylor	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Singh	Sorbara
Spengemann	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Thompson	Trudeau
Turnbull	Valdez
Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Virani	Vuong
Weiler	Wilkinson
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zuberi— 176

Government Orders

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barrett	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Benzen
Bergen	Bergeron
Berthold	Bérubé
Bezan	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Block
Bragdon	Brassard
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chabot
Chambers	Champoux
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	Desbiens
Desilets	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay
Fortin	Gallant
Garon	Gaudreau
Généreux	Genuis
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lemire
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd	Lobb
MacKenzie	Maguire
Martel	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Mazier	McCaulley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Michaud	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Normandin
O'Toole	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Perkins	Perron
Plamondon	Poilievre
Rayes	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ruff
Savard-Tremblay	Scheer
Schmale	Seebach
Shields	Shipley
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Small	Soroka
Steinley	Ste-Marie
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Thériault
Therrien	Thomas
Tochor	Trudel
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vignola	Villemure
Vis	Wagantall

Waugh
Williams
Zimmer— 145

Webber
Williamson

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

EXTENSION OF SITTING HOURS AND CONDUCT OF EXTENDED PROCEEDINGS

The House resumed from April 28 consideration of the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: I believe when we left this last, the member for Barrie—Innisfil, the House leader for the official opposition, had two minutes remaining in his question and comment period.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question to the member is actually very straightforward. When we look at the essence of Motion No. 11, all it wants to do is allow for more debate time so members of the Conservative Party, and others, would be able to talk about legislation more.

Why does the Conservative Party oppose additional debate time?

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have said this numerous times. The government has failed miserably in dealing with its legislative agenda. It is going to make everybody around this place pay a price. Conservatives are prepared to work 24 hours a day if we have to, and we will.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, to the hon. House leader of the official opposition, I am torn about the debate. This happens to be, by the way, for everybody else who was elected May 2, 2011, our 11th anniversary. We have had a lot of late nights in June. This is the first time we have faced the prospect of staying until midnight in May and in June. We do good work that way, but it is not the best.

Does my hon. colleague from the Conservative Party agree with me that it would be far preferable if we adopted the rules we have that prohibit members from reading speeches? Then we would have fewer people prepared to keep debating forever and ever on a point—

• (1705)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to give the hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil time to answer.

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, we have already agreed to a schedule, which all of the parties agreed to last year. The last two weeks of June were proposed for extended sittings. The hon. member is quite right. This has never happened before.

Government Orders

What Canadians need to ask themselves, and certainly what the NDP members need to ask themselves, is why. Why are we doing this at the beginning of May? It is because the government has failed in its legislative agenda? The second reason is that it has the NDP in its hip pocket, so it can do whatever it wants now.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, since I do not have the endless time allotted to the official opposition and have only 20 minutes for my speech, I will read it.

I rise in the House—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Madam Speaker, I would request a modicum of decorum because I cannot hear myself speak.

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): May I ask hon. members to take their conversations outside of the chamber, please.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, as I was saying, I rise in the House feeling extremely disappointed. I am disappointed with the government's vision of parliamentary democracy. What a waste of time and energy.

Since securing the support of the NDP, the government has been acting with the arrogance of a majority government. Some will ask whether I am truly surprised. I will answer that I entered politics because, first and foremost, I refuse to be cynical.

Last Thursday, I heard the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government brazenly state that this type of motion was nothing out of the ordinary. A brief review showed me that, indeed, this happens too often in the House.

The Liberals said that it was not uncommon and that it was not a big deal, because the Conservatives did it before. Just because the Conservatives did something once, that does not mean that another party is justified in doing the same thing once in power. There is no reason to normalize parliamentary mediocrity and an inability to manage the parliamentary agenda.

The government has been lax, not to say lackadaisical, in administering its legislative agenda, especially when it comes to medical assistance in dying. There was an election, there were three sessions before the election, and a committee was created, but the committee was not recalled until late March, and its first meeting was held on April 8. That is totally unacceptable.

In my view, this motion is unworthy of a democratic Parliament. It is despicable. Either this motion is malicious, deceptive and twisted, or it is astoundingly insensitive toward people who are suffering. Today, with this motion, not only is the government limiting the powers of the opposition parties, but it is doing so for partisan reasons. This is end-of-session quibbling over matters of life and death. The government is exploiting the issue of end-of-life care and capitalizing on the suffering of people who are dying, who are experiencing intolerable suffering, who would like to have access

to support in dying with dignity and who would like the proper respect to be shown for their right to make a free, informed choice.

These people trusted us last year when we passed Bill C-7. They assumed we would spend the next year conducting a rigorous, thorough cross-party analysis and produce a credible report on the revision of the act.

In our opinion, the Liberals' strategy is the epitome of cynicism. They are preparing to trample on the powers of the opposition parties with the NDP's complicity, while in 2017, 2018 and 2019 the NDP voted against this type of motion. The Liberals are muzzling the opposition parties, something we have always voted against. They are imposing closure, but they are careful to add in the same motion what the Bloc Québécois wants, namely to extend the mandate of the joint committee until October 17. On the one hand, they are giving us less time. On the other hand, they are extending the deadline.

Fortunately, knowing that we could not divide the motion, the Speaker allowed us to divide the vote.

By tabling the motion last Thursday, however, the government placed the Bloc Québécois in a position where it had to vote against its desire to implement a rigorous and credible process to review the act respecting medical assistance in dying in order to allow the joint committee to submit a report worthy of expectations or alternatively compromise its principles of parliamentary democracy. This is the Liberals' twisted way of governing.

● (1710)

Since the last election, the government has dragged its feet when it came to reconstituting the special joint committee. It did so not in a separate motion, but—nice going—in a motion adopted under a gag order, which muzzled the opposition.

Since the beginning of the 44th Parliament, the Bloc, represented by myself and my excellent House leader, has told the government that we were short on time and that we should proceed by consensus to extend the deadline for the joint committee's report. A first compromise was made, and the deadline was extended until June 23. Unfortunately, to succeed, we would have had to sit continuously, and intensively, more than once a week, starting with the first meeting.

The way we conduct this process is important for ensuring the credibility of the findings. This part of Motion No. 11 should at least have been moved separately. Discussions could have continued with the Conservative party; so far, the Conservatives are claiming that the June 23 deadline is reasonable and sufficient.

Obviously, the schedule can be reorganized at the end of the session. Obviously, with this hybrid parliament, resources cannot be optimized to accommodate more work, even until midnight. Obviously, this limits the organization of business. Claiming that we can call witnesses and ensure—

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I ask the hon. members to please take their conversations to the lobbies.

Government Orders

The hon. member for Montcalm.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, how can someone claim to be able to call witnesses and have them submit briefs of no more than 1,000 words and talk to us for five scant minutes, when in Quebec we called experts who were given an hour for questions and answers and 15 minutes to explain their research? How can someone believe that the process would be credible with such a short deadline and a 10-page report? It is appalling.

Let us take a brief look at the main reports produced on medical assistance in dying to show why October 17 was an entirely appropriate and realistic deadline.

In 2012, in the National Assembly, the report of the Select Committee on Dying with Dignity entitled “Dying with Dignity” was 178 pages long.

In 2016, the report of the Special Joint Committee on Physician-Assisted Dying entitled “Medical Assistance in Dying: A Patient-Centred Approach,” was 60 pages long.

In December 2018, the first report of the Council of Canadian Academies’ Expert Panel on Medical Assistance in Dying entitled “The State of Knowledge on Medical Assistance in Dying for Mature Minors” was 193 pages long. The second report, entitled “The State of Knowledge on Advance Requests for Medical Assistance in Dying” was 219 pages long. The third report, entitled “The State of Knowledge on Medical Assistance in Dying Where Mental Disorder is the Sole Underlying Medical Condition”, was 247 pages long.

In 2019, Filion and Maclure’s report entitled “L’aide médicale à mourir pour les personnes en situation d’incapacité: le juste équilibre entre le droit à l’autodétermination, la compassion et la prudence”, or medical assistance in dying for incapacitated persons: balancing the right to self-determination, compassion and prudence, was 157 pages long. This report was prepared following 17 eight-hour sessions.

In December 2021, the report of the Select Committee on the Evolution of the Act respecting end-of-life care, submitted to the Quebec National Assembly, was 90 pages long. This report was prepared following 39 meetings with witnesses and 46 steering committee meetings.

However, on our side, we would have to do the same thing in eight weeks, at a pace of one meeting a week, with witnesses who are not allowed to submit reports over 1,000 words long, so we could produce a report of no more than 10 pages. That is ridiculous. They put that in a closure motion and they think we are going to be happy about it.

I have no problem with the Conservatives completely disagreeing with what I stand for on this file, but I will not go along with the work being done poorly or in a partisan manner or with a debate as important as this one being reduced to legal quibbling at the end of the session. That is how this government is behaving.

The motion we are debating today is a prime example of how the Liberals have decided to act like an arrogant majority government

with support from the NDP. The message Canadians and Quebeckers sent during the election in September has gone by the wayside once again. This minority government, emphasis on minority, can go back to strongarming and cutting debate short when it feels like it. It is deplorable.

The main purpose of today's motion, although meant to extend debate until midnight from Monday to Friday, is to muzzle the opposition parties, and I will prove it. I would like to add another consideration, which stems from a certain deference to House of Commons employees. We need to think about the repercussions that extending sittings until midnight will have on the interpreters' ability to do their work safely, both in the House of Commons and in committee.

● (1715)

During the pandemic, we saw that virtual meetings created extra work for interpreters. In light of that, the Liberals should have shown greater consideration for them. Should we be surprised that they did not? We are concerned that, with all the extra work required of the interpreters, there will be fewer time slots available for committee meetings.

Let us look at the first part of this motion, paragraph (a). It begins by stating that “on the day of the adoption of this order, the ordinary hour of daily adjournment shall be 12:00 a.m.”. That is not a problem because the Bloc Québécois wants to sit, debate and work. On the issue of medical assistance in dying, we wanted to work on it before last April 8.

Paragraph (a) continues, “that until Thursday, June 23, 2022, a minister of the Crown may, with the agreement of the House leader of another recognized party, rise from his or her seat at any time during a sitting, but no later than 6:30 p.m., and request that the ordinary hour of daily adjournment for the current sitting or a subsequent sitting be 12:00 a.m., provided that it be 10:00 p.m. on a day when a debate pursuant to Standing Order 52 or 53.1 is to take place, and that such a request shall be deemed adopted”.

To me, the words “with the agreement of the House leader of another recognized party” are clearly referring to the NDP. The government is talking about the NDP, but this is completely out of character for that party. This is not the first time a government has moved a motion like this one.

Let us think back to the period from 2015 to 2019 and the democratic position of the so-called democratic party. At that time, the Liberals had a majority government. Earlier I spoke about how the Conservatives and the Liberals pass the buck back and forth, normalizing what is happening and accusing one another of the very thing that they themselves are doing. Then, they are shocked when people no longer have faith in democracy and go protest in the streets.

On May 30, 2017, the opposition, including 34 NDP members, voted against Motion No. 14 on the extension of sitting hours and conduct of extended proceedings. On May 29, 2018, the opposition, including 30 NDP members, voted against Motion No. 22 on the extension of sitting hours and conduct of extended proceedings. On May 28, 2019, the opposition, including 30 NDP members, voted against Motion No. 30 on the extension of sitting hours and conduct of extended proceedings.

Between 2011 and 2015, the Conservatives had a majority government.

On June 11, 2012, 96 NDP members voted against Motion No. 15 on the extension of sitting hours from June 11 to 22, except on Fridays, pursuant to Standing Order 27. On May 22, 2013, the opposition, including 82 NDP members, voted against Motion No. 17 on the extension of sitting hours and the conduct of extended proceedings. On May 29, 2014, 28 NDP members voted against Motion No. 10 on the extension of sitting hours and the conduct of extended proceedings.

The last time a minority government tabled such a motion, in 2009, it was defeated by the opposition. If a minority government tries to take away parliamentarians' privileges and their ability to debate, the opposition usually votes against it, as long as the opposition members are willing to stand up and respect the people who voted for them to oppose an arrogant majority government that governs like an absolute monarch.

On June 9, 2009, the minority government was Conservative.

On June 9, 2002, 138 opposition MPs, including 27 NDP members, voted against Motion No. 5 on extending the hours in June, and 134 members voted for the motion.

We know that the Liberals and New Democrats have an agreement on Motion No. 11. The NDP always opposed such a move over the years, but this time, it decided to give in.

This means that debate hours will be extended to midnight, Monday to Friday, provided that the government leader obtains the agreement of the NDP leader and makes the announcement before 6:30 p.m. If an emergency or take-note debate is scheduled, the debate will be extended until 10:00 p.m.

• (1720)

The minority government has complete control over the evening program without allowing the opposition to have any say on what happens in the House. That is the first problem.

It is paragraph (c) that really limits the opposition's powers. The House leader of the official opposition spoke at length about this and did a brilliant job illustrating it, citing all the examples where the rights of the opposition could be flouted, so I do not need to repeat all of them.

The most abhorrent part of this motion is paragraph (e), which extends the deadline for the final report on medical assistance in dying. As I said earlier, even though the Bloc agrees, it nevertheless took an appeal to the Chair to have the vote split, which, fortunately, we obtained.

Government Orders

In closing, I implore all parties to take an approach that crosses partisan divides on this issue. I hope the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, who said at one point that he did not agree with the October 17 date, can convince his colleagues to vote in favour of that part of the motion.

That said, I would like to table an amendment to the amendment:

That the amendment be amended, in subparagraph (a)(ii), by replacing the words "two sitting days' notice" with the words "one sitting day's notice".

• (1725)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The amendment to the amendment is in order.

[*English*]

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I heard the member speak at length about his accusations that the government is unable to fulfill its responsibilities in delivering on its agenda, but I am wondering if the member has ever taken the opportunity to talk to some of the folks in the Conservative Party. They share a lobby together. Did he perhaps go to them and say that maybe they are going a little overboard with respect to the way they are trying to stall pieces of legislation, such as Bill C-8? The Conservatives have had 51 members speak to it at report stage alone.

I am wondering if the member could comment on whether or not he has taken his criticism to members of the party that he shares a lobby with to share his frustration over how slow things are moving given their tactics.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, once again, my colleague is unable of rising above partisanship.

That being said, my criticism of the government is that it introduced in a closure motion a file that it has mismanaged and has been very lax in addressing. Had it not been for the separate vote we were able to obtain concerning medical assistance in dying, we would have been forced to vote against it, when all we want is for that file to move forward.

I will stop there because the member in question is always very partisan. He thinks that, by pointing a finger at the official opposition and saying that it would have done worse than his government, his government's current actions are justified. However, it is the Liberals who are in power now.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Montcalm addressed several issues and problems he had with the various paragraphs in the motion.

I would like to hear what he thinks about subparagraph (c)(B) (iv), under which "a minister of the Crown may move, without notice, a motion to adjourn the House until Monday, September 19, 2022...and that the said motion shall be decided immediately without debate or amendment".

Government Orders

In my opinion, this looks like prorogation on demand: At any time, if things are not going well for the government, it can prorogue Parliament. However, in 2015, this government promised that it would not do that, and the NDP also promised that it would never support it.

• (1730)

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, that is a good question. My colleague is perfectly correct.

When I said that it limited the powers of the opposition parties and that it restricted debates in Parliament, this is an example of how a government can become arrogant and, with the complicity of another party, give itself the powers of a majority government. The voters elected a minority government. As such, I think that the government will have to pay a price for what it is doing now.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have been working with my colleague for several years and I respect him, but I must say that he has shown only one side of the coin.

He forgot all the times the NDP voted to move files forward. We are here to advance the cause of ordinary Canadians. My colleague knows that. Right now, the Conservatives systematically want to block everything. They do not want anything to happen in the House of Commons. Even when Quebec's farmers or teachers want us to pass bills, the Conservatives refuse. They absolutely do not want it to happen.

The NDP pushed to have the government implement a dental care program and, for the first time, an affordable housing program. My question is very simple.

Why does the Bloc simply stand by when it has seen the Conservatives' systematic obstruction in the past months?

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, if I understand the NDP House leader correctly, I have to conclude that if one day the NDP came to power, it would do the same thing the Liberals are doing now. This is a good example of what a member of Parliament worthy of the title should condemn in Parliament.

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

His speech was very powerful, and he used some very harsh words. He used words like "unworthy", "mediocre", "lax", "incapable", and I would say that he forgot to add "contemptible". Throughout his speech, I was left wondering whether my colleague was talking about the Liberals or the NDP.

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, I think that I was quite specific. I think the onus is on NDP members to tell us why they have suddenly reversed course.

I listed how they voted since 2011. How is it that they have always voted against these kinds of measures that restrict the powers of parliamentarians?

Now, they have a little deal with the government and they are drawn in by the taste and smell of power. All of a sudden, they decide that it is okay to trample on the rights of parliamentarians. That is what the NDP stands for.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member made reference to the fact that this is a minority government and it is what Canadians elected. Part of being under an elected minority government means there is an onus of responsibility on opposition parties. At times, they have to work with the governing party to get things through the House of Commons.

I understand the Conservatives. They just want to frustrate the legislative process. They do not want things to pass. The Bloc, on the other hand, seems to have bought into the Conservative Party.

As much as the Bloc and the Conservatives come together and criticize us for working with the NDP, what about the unholy alliance between the double blue, the Bloc and the Conservatives, who want to prevent things from going through the House? Is that not a reality also?

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, that is another example of just how low my colleague will go. It is more partisan thinking.

I thought my speech was very clear. I said it was despicable to include medical assistance in dying in the closure motion when we have been asking the government to give the committee more time, to recall the committee and reconstitute it as soon as possible for weeks, months even. I did so the day after the election. They dragged their feet and now, with the clock ticking, they have decided to include it in a closure motion.

It is clear now that they did not understand what I said. They did not understand the speech. Some things are just not done. If they had left that out, if they had decided to talk about it, and if the Conservatives had said "no", we could've had this same debate on one issue. Maybe the cat would be out of the bag, which is not currently the case. Some people can vote against this motion for reasons other than the ones I am talking about.

• (1735)

[English]

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to ask my hon. colleague about the part of the motion that prevents us from making quorum calls. This is not just a matter of suspending a standing rule. This is a constitutionally entrenched right. The rules of the House call for the ability of members to make a quorum call. In other words, we could have literally one or two members in the House introducing motions or bills.

I wonder if the member could comment on why the government would think this is important to do.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right.

Government Orders

In the House, it is even harder to make sure we have quorum because some people are attending virtually. I know I cannot talk about who is here. At times over the past few days, I have wanted to do a quorum call, but I was told that some people might be attending virtually.

That said, this is definitely something we need to pay attention to. At some point, we will have to stop sitting virtually because we have work to do and we have to find way to get it done without closure motions.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the excellent and eloquent member for Elmwood—Transcona.

I am truly saddened by what I just heard from the Bloc Québécois. For months, the Bloc Québécois have watched the Conservatives block everything. Instead of intervening to help the people of Quebec, who need these bills to be passed, the Bloc decided to just stay on the sidelines and let things slide. The Bloc wants to let things keep sliding for the next few months. That saddens me because the Bloc was not elected in Quebec simply to let Parliament go around in circles and to allow one party to block everything. I think the Bloc is really here to make things happens, but it decided not to. That is sad, but I am happy to hear that it will be voting in favour of some aspects of Motion No. 11. That is a positive thing.

Personally, I will be voting in favour of the motion. I will explain why I am voting in favour of the motion by recapping the history of this Parliament.

[English]

When we came out of the unnecessary election last fall that Canadians did not want, Canadians rightfully said they were going to have the same Parliament that they had in 2019. They basically adopted the same numbers, but the message that they were sending to all of us was to work together.

We had a shining moment in Parliamentary history when every single member working together unanimously adopted the ban on conversion therapy. That point is worth applauding. That was a shining moment in this Parliament. Conservatives actually proposed the adoption unanimously of that important bill, and members from all parties voted together.

We know what happened after that. The leader of the Conservatives at the time was deposed. The Conservatives broke into various factions. Subsequent to that, we have seen a rogue element within the Conservative Party decide that it was going to block every piece of legislation coming forward: every single piece. “Nothing will pass” is the motto of the Conservative Party today.

I know that there are Conservative members who are uncomfortable and in fact do not believe that this is appropriate, particularly in a time of pandemic and particularly at a time when we need to get legislation through the House, but that is not where the interim leadership has decided to go. They have decided to block absolutely everything, and that is why we have this motion before us.

Bill C-8 was put forward last year and has provisions that every single member of Parliament is aware have a profound impact on

teachers and farmers. It has an impact on how we, as Canadians, can respond to the continuing pandemic. For no other reason than this radicalization of the Conservative leadership, Bill C-8 has been blocked systematically now for months. I am saddened by this.

There are good members of Parliament in the Conservative Party who understand that this is the wrong thing to do, but the leadership that is in place in the Conservative Party wants to block everything, come hell or high water. It does not matter if teachers or farmers, or Canadians generally, are suffering as a result. Conservatives simply refuse any legislation, and that is why we have to take extraordinary measures. What the NDP has proposed and pushed the government on, and what the government has accepted, is the condition that we now increase our working time in order to get legislation through. We will be sitting until midnight when it is appropriate to do so. That is extremely important because it allows us to move legislation through the House.

● (1740)

The official opposition House leader has raised the point, and so has the House leader for the Bloc Québécois, that we need to ensure and enhance our translation services over this period. I certainly agree, and the NDP agrees. We have been pushing for more resources to be provided to translation. Our interpreters have not had the resources allocated to them that need to be allocated. I sincerely hope that we will have all parties coming together in order to achieve that.

We sit longer. We will be sitting evenings, and that is important. The question then is what the results of that are, if we can eliminate this impasse and start getting legislation through the House.

Immediately, of course, there is Bill C-8 and those provisions. I know that will make a difference to the teachers, farmers and health care professionals I have mentioned who have been waiting now for months to get a simple bill through that comes out of the fall economic update.

I know that my colleague for Elmwood—Transcona is going to speak to the issue of what many people are calling the NDP budget. The budget implementation act would put in place, for the first time in Canadian history, national dental care. It would start first for children and would move, over the course of the next year, to people with disabilities, seniors and teenagers. Canadians right across this country who have never had access to dental care would finally have access to it.

Also, there is the most significant investment in housing that we have seen in decades. The NDP has been very critical of the former Liberal government under Paul Martin that destroyed, gutted and ended the national housing program, and we have seen how housing has been in a crisis ever since. We need supply. We need to have affordable housing built, and that is co-operative housing, social housing and indigenous-led housing projects.

Government Orders

These components of what is coming forward need to be adopted swiftly, with the appropriate scrutiny, of course, and not held up, as we have seen with the legislation coming out of the fall economic statement, for months and months purely at the whim of a Conservative Party that is fractured now into so many different factions that none of them knows which way they are going. Their only reaction is: “Well, let us hold up everything”. That is simply not appropriate in a time of pandemic when so many Canadians are suffering.

We need to have these extended hours so that we can get through the important components of what the NDP, and the member for Burnaby South, our national leader, pushed the government to put into place for this budget. It is the first time under this Liberal government that I can actually see a budget that Canadians can have some hope for, with national dental care and a national housing investment that seeks to meet the gravity of the affordable housing crisis that we are seeing right across the length and breadth of this country, including in my communities of New Westminster and Burnaby.

To do the scrutiny, it means that all parties should be working together, but that has not been the case. We have seen, over the past few months, that the Conservatives have blocked everything they can at all times without explanation, and without really trying to even justify their actions. We saw it today when they presented the same motion that they presented last week, even though the Standing Orders require that discussion next week. They just wanted to hold up the House for the purpose of holding up the House.

Who suffers? It is Canadian families who suffer. It is Canadians who are waiting for those affordable housing investments that the NDP has pushed for who will suffer. It is Canadians who cannot afford dental care for their children who will suffer if we continue to allow the Conservatives to block everything in the House at all times.

What this is, is a common-sense approach when it is obviously not working, and when everything is being blocked by the Conservative opposition for internal reasons, I guess, that only they can explain. They have not really attempted to explain it either. We need to put in place extended hours, work harder and longer, but make sure that we get those tax credits in the hands of teachers and in the hands of farmers immediately. We need to make sure that we actually provide the health care professionals with those COVID supports. We need to make sure that we start to put in place that national dental program that the member for Burnaby South has been such a strong advocate for, and put in place that national housing strategy that will finally produce affordable housing from coast to coast to coast. That is why I am voting yes.

● (1745)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member spoke earlier on in his speech about Bill C-8 in particular. We know there are a lot of measures in Bill C-8 that were literally stalled on getting out to people. I can think of teachers specifically. There are various measures related to the supports that we are delivering for Canadians right now. We really want to get those out to Canadians because, quite frankly, they have been waiting long enough.

Can he comment on how important this is for constituents in his riding?

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I have had constituents raise this with me and ask why this is being blocked, in the same way that all members of Parliament have had these issues raised. Why is this being blocked? The Conservatives have never explained why it is they are systematically blocking everything.

In a minority Parliament, of course there are negotiations and discussions. We would think the Conservatives would say there was some benefit for teachers, but they want the benefit extended for somebody else. There has never been any explanation. There has never been anything in the House to justify what has been a systematic blocking of everything. We simply have to ask, when it comes to blocking everything that would help Canadians, why they would do that when we know that Canadians need those supports.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know there has been a lot of discussion on Bill C-8 and the accusations of obstruction and obfuscation of the bill.

On April 4, the government put a notice of time allocation on Bill C-8. When I asked the government House leader why he did not move that notice of time allocation, he said it was because the NDP House leader said no and that they were waiting to see what was in the budget. The budget, of course, happened April 7, and then we all went home two weeks later.

Can the NDP House leader explain to Canadians why he decided not to use time allocation, or agree with the government at the time when they wanted to use it, when they could have moved this bill much further and much faster down the line? Maybe he can explain to Canadians why he said no to the government House leader in a telephone conversation, and maybe he can explain to teachers and farmers why they delayed this bill.

● (1750)

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, it is a valid question and I appreciate the House leader of the official opposition raising it. The answer is that I have faith in this institution, as New Democrats do. We have faith in this institution. We believed in giving a last chance to the Conservatives. We believed that they would understand the importance. As the teachers contacted them and as the farmers contacted them, they would understand the dramatic impact of their refusal to adopt anything.

In faith that all members of Parliament are motivated by that higher calling, I really believed the Conservatives would come along and they have not. They have done the opposite. They have hardened their positions. They have refused passing anything that would actually help Canadians, and that is why this motion is before us today.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am going to say three things: I am a full-fledged adult, I have been here long enough, and I am not gullible.

While listening to my colleague, I asked myself who exactly was speaking. Was it the minority Liberal government or the new majority government formed by the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party? This is unbelievable. How can they repudiate everything a party should and could be, namely the NDP? How can they, through a motion, deny fundamental and democratic rights and then blame the opposition for it?

Please explain it to us, Madam Speaker.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I cannot explain it, but I will give someone else the opportunity to do so.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby for a brief response.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I would be happy to explain.

I find it unbelievable that the Bloc Québécois is not helping Quebeckers and that it refuses to say that Quebec's teachers and farmers are affected by the fact that Bill C-8 has not been passed. Dental care and affordable housing are issues that also affect Quebeckers. I find it unbelievable that the Bloc refuses to do whatever it can to get this bill adopted and ensure that these people—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Resuming debate.

The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

[*English*]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise and to have the occasion to address this motion.

I have always taken an interest, and do today, in parliamentary procedure. Whenever we are talking about the rules of debate, I think that members rightly have an interest on what exactly is going on and what those details are and there is a legitimate tension. That is why in parliaments these kinds of debates tend to happen frequently between a government that needs to get its business done, not just for its own sake, but presumably for the sake of the nation and the people who elected them, and those in opposition who have a job to do in terms of scrutinizing the government's work in trying to make it better where they can and oppose it when they can. I have often said that.

I think there are reasons for supporting the rights of the opposition within Parliament that have to do with the rights of parliamentarians. However, there are also reasons for supporting the rights of the opposition within Parliament that have to do with the time it takes for word to get out about what government intends to do, to have a civil society response and to organize around initiatives by the government that they may not like. I think one of our responsibilities as parliamentarians always is to look at the need for things to get done in the nation's capital, in Parliament and in government, as well as the obligations that we have to foster a healthy culture of opposition.

These are certainly the issues that are at stake. I think sometimes in this place it is hard to get at the particular circumstances, because we often tend to address these issues with a hyperbolic tone. Sometimes that is warranted. I have seen occasions in this House where I felt that it was warranted and have participated in that spirit. I think

Government Orders

that is especially true when we have majority governments that are not forced to negotiate with other parties in Parliament in order to advance their agenda.

When we see members of all the same party getting up and dictating the rules of debate and there has been no meaningful interplay between parties in the House, that is one thing. I do think it is another thing when the government has to negotiate with another party in order to get its business done. What we are seeing is a government that has undertaken a number of initiatives in order to get support from the NDP to move a budget forward, for instance. That is okay. That is actually how this place is supposed to work, and I think that is how it works when it is working at its best. Then the question is this. In order to be able to get some of those things done, how do we conduct the business of the chamber?

I want to use Bill C-8 as an example of a case of opposition that does bleed into obstructionism.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I am trying to both speak and listen to the conversation that is happening at the same time.

• (1755)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I remind members that they should take discussions to the lobbies when one of their colleagues is speaking.

[*English*]

The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, when we look at Bill C-8, what I will say is that it is disappointing in some regards, and I am on the record in terms of the ways in which I think it is disappointing. Despite it being disappointing, however, there are some things. For instance, there is the foreign homebuyers tax, but it has a lot of loopholes. I can say it is a step in the right direction, but it is certainly not going to solve the housing crisis that we see in Canada. We actually need to take some action on domestic investors who are helping pump up prices in the housing market. Unless we do that, a lot of the other things the government has been contemplating simply are not going to be effective. I certainly have my criticisms of the bill. I am happy to talk about those and I have talked about those in other places.

What I would say is that we have not seen a burgeoning kind of civil movement against Bill C-8. I do not think anyone is particularly animated about it outside of this place, but we would not know that by looking at the proportion of time that this place has spent on that bill. We have people calling for real climate action who are really upset at a government that has not done enough and is not doing enough and is not even planning to do enough in order to fight the climate crisis.

Government Orders

We are hearing from people about health funding and the state of health care in Canada and the need for more money to be transferred from the federal government to the provinces for health funding. We are also hearing about the absurdly high cost of prescription drugs and the ways in which a national pharmacare plan could help with that. We have heard from people who have never, in their family, been able to access dental services. They want to be able to access dental services and are excited at the prospect of finally having a mechanism to be able to go to the dentist and have that visit paid for.

These are the issues we are hearing about. However, in this place, despite none of those issues really being addressed in Bill C-8, we have spent already over 28 hours on debate on the bill. When we compare that to other bills and other business, that is a lot of time on a particular bill that does not seem to be at the centre of what Canadians are worried about and what they are thinking about. I do not get a lot of mail on Bill C-8. I get mail on many issues, but not on Bill C-8.

I do think there is a legitimate question as to why it is that certain opposition parties are spending that much time on that particular bill and that we cannot seem to find a way to move it along. Even those who do not particularly like it would say, and I would certainly say, that the issue is it just does not have the right solutions for the problems, but it is not that any of those solutions are particularly offensive.

It is true that time allocation is a tool that can be used and has been used. Many parties in this place have supported time allocation at one time or another.

People have asked why we are talking about extended sittings in May as opposed to June, as is the custom. Part of that is because we do not have a majority government that can just use time allocation on its own. We have a government that has to work with an opposition party that has said that if other opposition parties want more time to debate things, we endorse that. Therefore, let us create more opportunities to speak to bills while recognizing that we still have an obligation to pass bills in this place or, at the very least, to vote on them. Maybe they will not pass, but by literally calling the question, we will only get the answer to the question if members in this place allow us to proceed to the vote. Therefore, yes, we are supporting a motion that involves more midnight sittings than ever.

It also has a mechanism where we do not necessarily have to sit until midnight, partly to try to introduce some discretion to recognize that we normally go to midnight only in June. However, because we do not have a majority government that is just going to time allocate and time allocate, we are going to try to create more time for debate in the hopes that opposition politicians who say they want more time to debate government bills are being sincere and that it is a desire that could be satisfied. We may know in advance that the desire cannot be satisfied because opposition parties are committed in principle simply to talking out bills and creating dysfunction so that they can accuse the government of being incompetent when it comes to its legislative agenda. There may be some independent reasons for making that accusation that I am very sympathetic with, but it conflates the issue when we see opposition parties systematically trying to obstruct government business and it gets harder to tell where the blame lies.

Here we are trying to propose a path forward that allows for more opportunity for debate and discussion. That is exactly in the spirit of taking other opposition members at their word in saying that what they want is more time to debate these things, but we need to get to some decisions.

● (1800)

The situation of teachers in respect of Bill C-8 is an excellent example as to why in this place we cannot just talk and talk, but we do need to decide matters. There are teachers who have filed their tax returns and are being told that the reason those tax returns are not being processed is that there is a pending change to their tax entitlements in Bill C-8. It is a bill the CRA expected would have been decided upon one way or the other well in advance of the tax year, because Bill C-8 is the bill to implement the announcements that came in the fall economic statement some time ago, as implied by its name.

As such, here we are. We have not begun debate on the budget implementation act, which is the budget that was tabled about four weeks ago. We have done over 28 hours of debate on the act to implement the fall economic statement. We have teachers who are waiting on the CRA, which is waiting on this place to make a decision so that it knows what teachers are actually entitled to. If Bill C-8 passes, then those teachers who have spent money to buy supplies for the children in their class would get more back on their taxes than they otherwise would. We need to reach a decision.

This actually is a motion unlike other motions we have seen for June, when we have had majority governments that have unilaterally extended midnight sittings in June only and otherwise used the hammer of time allocation on its own. There is an attempt at compromise here. I think it would be more helpful to get some good-faith input from opposition parties about how we find that right balance between advancing government business and doing the proper job of an opposition party.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, we know in particular when it comes to bills like Bill C-8 that members of the Conservative Party want to talk a lot, that they have a lot to say.

Can the member possibly understand why the Conservative Party would be against this, when this would just give those members even more opportunity to speak to very important pieces of legislation? Would he not think, given the number of speeches the Conservatives have given and the interest and passion they have in debating in this place, that they would not welcome with open arms the opportunity to debate even longer?

Government Orders

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, one of the things that really impressed me when I had the opportunity to tour the Scottish Parliament was that they said they could speak any language that they want in the Scottish Parliament. It does not have to be a language of Scotland. They can speak any language from anywhere in the world in the Parliament of Scotland. Part of the reason they are able to do that is they decide as a parliament months in advance what bill they are going to be debating and on what day. They get together and the parties talk about how many people from their respective caucuses want to address a bill, and then they develop a schedule that allows members to speak to the things they want to speak to and it allows for decisions to happen.

We are so far away from a culture where we can sit down in good faith with parties that disagree on things and come up with a professional way of doing business on the floor of the House of Commons that we are going to continue to be in these kinds of debates again and again. What we need to see is a little more goodwill on all sides, so that we can develop an appropriate and professional culture of decision-making in this place.

• (1805)

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague from Winnipeg is an excellent public speaker.

I have a number of concerns with Motion No. 11. First and foremost is that this is a scandal-prone government. We have seen the WE Charity scandal and SNC, and the Aga Khan's island has re-emerged. We have also seen a government that avoids accountability. In the two and a half years since I have been elected, the Liberals prorogued Parliament and a year later they called a snap election.

My major concern with Motion No. 11 is the part that would allow the provision for a minister to move adjournment of the House until September without notice at any time. In essence, they could shut down Parliament any time there is any reason they think they should, such as to avoid a scandal or if there is another ethical lapse by the Prime Minister.

Is my hon. colleague at all concerned that in voting in favour of Motion No. 11, he would be providing the government this kind of power to avoid accountability? He said the opposition has a job to do to hold the government accountable. Is he not concerned he is giving away that power?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I think the member will know that particular provision would allow a minister to call for a vote to have an adjournment. We are in a minority Parliament, and that allows every member to weigh in on whether the House ought to adjourn, so I think the fact is that it would precipitate a vote. We do this at committee. Sometimes people call for adjournment of a committee and we proceed immediately to a vote on whether that will happen. In a minority context, on committee, I have seen proposals by the government to adjourn refused by the opposition parties together. I can imagine that happening in an instance where the government makes an egregious move to adjourn Parliament early. That is why the vote is a really important component of the motion.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, my question will be short and more of a comment. The NDP has sold its soul. It sold its soul last June when it made an agreement with the Liberals to water down the net-zero bill as much as possible. It has just sold its soul a second time to water down democracy as much as possible.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I remember back in December when the Bloc Québécois decided to support Bill C-2 and fast-track it to committee. It negotiated with the government. We could have said that the Bloc had sold its soul, but we understood that even if we did not agree with its position on Bill C-2, the Bloc had negotiated for something it felt was important.

We did the same. We negotiated for our priorities. We were unable to have all of our priorities adopted by the government because it is a negotiation, not something that we could do unilaterally. I therefore do not see how the expression “sell one's soul” applies in our case, given that the Bloc is prepared to do the same thing when the opportunity presents itself.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will start by picking up where the member for Elmwood—Transcona left off with respect to answering this question about the NDP selling its soul. I have heard this talk on a number of occasions from the Bloc and the Conservatives, as though they are jealous they were not the parties chosen to work with the government. We hear this kind of language coming from across the way repeatedly. They say the NDP has sold itself out and this is not what Canadians voted for.

We operate under the Westminster parliamentary system. The entire system is built on political parties working together. Look around the world. We can open our eyes to other Westminster parliamentary systems to see that what we see here with regard to working together with another political party is exactly what our system is designed to do. This notion that it is somehow wrong for parties to be working together only underscores, if anything, the disdain the Conservative Party, and now apparently the Bloc, have for this place and the very institution that we use to exercise our democracy.

In any event, let us talk about government Motion No. 11, because that is what we are here to talk about today. I think it is clear from the outset exactly what this motion is about. The core of this motion, at least in terms of what is being debated today, is with respect to extending sitting hours. This motion sets out our government's proposal for the proceedings of the House of Commons until June 23 of this year. It specifically will allow for extended sitting hours to debate bills into the evenings when the government and one party, which represents a majority in the House, request it.

Government Orders

What we are trying to do here is empower the House to be more democratic and give members more opportunity to speak. I heard the member for Montcalm not that long ago talk about how this motion is restricting Parliament. He should explain to me how extending sitting hours to give people more opportunity to speak is somehow restricting Parliament. It is the exact opposite. It is increasing the opportunity for members to get up and speak.

I heard what members of the Conservative Party said earlier today, which they said on Thursday as well when they raised a point of order on it specifically, about putting into this motion that no quorum calls can be made. Suddenly, this is a constitutional issue for the Conservatives. It is absolutely remarkable. We pass unanimous consent motions waiving the requirement for quorum calls routinely. Consider the number of times that I have stood up and moved unanimous consent motions to waive the requirement for quorum calls when we have evening debates. I have done it at least 15 to 20 times and everybody always votes in favour of it. It is something that has been negotiated in advance.

To somehow suggest that it is unconstitutional to move this goes against a practice of the House that is so incredibly well established and entrenched into the daily operations of this place. It is ludicrous to suggest that it is somehow unconstitutional, and the Conservatives are bringing up that point.

This makes me think: Why are the Conservatives bringing this up? Is this the best they have, saying that it is unconstitutional to waive the requirement for quorum calls? That is how it appears, because they are scraping, literally, at the bottom of the barrel by trying to suggest that this is somehow a constitutional issue.

Nonetheless, why is it so important? Let me talk about this for a second.

There are a number of very important pieces of legislation, and something has become very clear regarding the Conservatives, and now the Bloc for some reason. I am not going to lie: Ever since the member for Durham was removed as the leader of the official opposition, the Bloc Québécois has had this cozy relationship with the Conservatives, and I just cannot wrap my head around it. It is a complete change in their posture. They used to be a progressive party that fought for Quebec, primarily, pushed forward ideas and saw past the games the Conservatives played, but suddenly they have taken a completely different approach.

● (1810)

I cannot help but think it is all based on the fact that they see the cluster of activity going on in the Conservative Party right now. They see the implosion literally happening before our eyes with these far-right candidates and the progressives. They might see an opportunity to pick up a couple of members. Who knows what might happen after the leadership vote in September? Who knows—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I am hearing a lot of noise on this side. It is not time for questions and comments yet, but the members will be very happy to know that there will be 10 minutes for questions and comments. To make sure they do not forget anything, maybe they should jot things

down so that when it is time, they will be able to ask their questions.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I think I hit a nerve. The truth hurts; I know it does. I guess they can call me out on it come September, after the results of their leadership race. We will see what happens if Jean Charest wins or if the member for Carleton wins. We will see what happens.

To get back to my point, I think the Bloc is banking on it. Bloc members are hedging their bets right now on who they could pick off from the Conservatives when that time comes. That is just my hypothesis. Perhaps I can be accused of being a conspiracy theorist, but that is what I think is happening.

I will get back to the core issue here.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, they keep heckling me. I think I really hit a nerve. The member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan literally will not stop heckling me right now. I have a feeling I hit a nerve there. I understand. I think we all know which side of the Conservative spectrum he is on. In any event, I think I hit a nerve. He is clapping. He likes being part of the alt-right side. That is fine, but there are also some progressives. This is my concern—

● (1815)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan has a point of order.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I do not mind a bit of friendly teasing, but for the member to call someone whose grandmother was a Holocaust survivor a member of the alt-right is deeply offensive and insulting. He should apologize for that. He should at least know the difference between alt-right and conservative. If he does not, he should do some reading. He should apologize to the House for that comment.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the hon. parliamentary secretary wish to respond?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, no. I am going to continue with my speech.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): In hindsight, given what is going on right now, I would ask the member to continue with his speech, as opposed to always focusing on a specific party, and at this point focus on the motion before the House. It is becoming a little—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, am I not allowed to do that?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Well, I would just ask members to tone it down a bit because it is getting a bit rowdy in here. I would also again ask the official opposition to hold on to their thoughts until they can ask questions and make comments. Just be mindful of the words you are using in order to ensure that no one takes something out of context.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, if I am saying something that is unparliamentary or inappropriate, I would expect the Speaker to call me out on that and tell me to discontinue. I did not hear that in what you said. I understood that you are personally concerned about some of the things I was saying, but I do not think I did that.

Nonetheless, I think I am only feeding back what I get. This is the Conservative Party, whose members have called the Prime Minister a trust fund baby in the House. It causes me to be critical, and if they cannot take it, I am sorry, but this is the reality of the situation. They had better learn how to do that.

I will get back to the motion. This motion is about making sure that we have the proper tools in place for legislation to get through. We are talking about the budget. We are also talking about Bill C-11, the modernizing of the Broadcasting Act; Bill C-13, an update to the Official Languages Act; Bill C-14, on electoral representatives; and Bill C-18, enhancing fairness in the Canadian online news marketplace. These are the pieces of legislation this government has deemed to be the priority moving forward. What we are seeing from the other side are Conservatives not wanting to let the legislation go through.

I am sorry if my saying that is offensive to anybody, but the reality is that on Bill C-8 alone, there have been 12 days of debate since report stage was introduced. Two Green Party members have spoken to it. Two NDP members have spoken to it. Three Liberals have spoken to it, and five Bloc members have spoken to it. Does anyone know how many Conservatives have spoken to it?

It is more than four or five. Do members think it is ten? No, it is more. Do members think it is twenty, thirty, or forty? No, it is more. Fifty-one Conservatives have spoken to Bill C-8 since the report stage of that bill was introduced. They cannot tell me that this is not a political game for the Conservatives to be obstructionist. That is exactly what they are doing, and they do it day in and day out.

The NDP has finally seen beyond it. New Democrats do not want anything to do with it, and they want to actually work on behalf of Canadians. Then they get criticized for not following along with the games the Conservatives are playing. That is literally what happens.

When the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman was talking about closure being put on this motion, he said something very interesting, and I would like to read it from the blues. He said, “We [already] just voted on the closure motion to ensure that there is a vote on Motion No. 11. Motion No. 11 is going to be coming into force whether we like it or not. The government, with [their] unholy alliance with the NDP, will get its Motion No. 11 through and we do not feel like it is necessary to sit there and debate this...long, drawn-out process.” Then why are they going to put us through

Government Orders

this? They will make every single second of debate go on. They will not let this collapse.

The member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman just said himself that he knows this is going to pass and that debating it is absolutely pointless, yet he wants it to go on. Why is that? It is because he wants to push this on as long as possible, along with the rest of the Conservatives and the Bloc, so that we cannot get legislation debated and ultimately passed. That is not our job here. Our job here is to work on behalf of Canadians. The Conservatives' job is to criticize the legislation, to try to improve the legislation, not to put up roadblock after roadblock at every single opportunity they have, which is what they are doing.

I find it interesting that the Conservatives have on a number of occasions talked about how this government does not want to work. This is not a new motion. The timing of it is slightly earlier than normal, but we always have a motion like this to extend sitting hours. I would like to read some quotes.

The member for Mégantic—L'Érable said, on May 28, 2019, to a similar motion, “We are not opposed to working late every evening. We want to work and make progress on files.” In a similar debate two years earlier, on May 30, he said, “We want to work late, and we are prepared to do that and to collaborate with the government”.

• (1820)

The member for Lethbridge on May 1, 2017, said, “The Liberals would like to stop sitting in the House of Commons on Fridays. They would like to move us to a four-day workweek.... The Liberals want Fridays off. They [want to have] a four-day workweek [and that] is more than enough.”

The then leader of the opposition on May 29, 2017, said, “We know they want Fridays off and we know [that this] is a big deal to them. They do not want to be working Fridays. They do not realize that Canadians work five days a week, and many times [they work] more than five days a week.”

We are asking to work more than five days a week, which is exactly what the then leader of the opposition said in May 2017. That is the interesting part about all of this. One cannot help but wonder why, if they want to speak to all of this legislation at great length, and if they want to put up 51-plus speakers on every piece of legislation, they would not be interested in sitting into the evenings to do that. We certainly are. They accused us of not wanting to do it.

An hon. member: Are you?

• (1825)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I am being heckled by the member for Peterborough—Kawartha who is asking, “Are you?”

Of course we are, that is why we are putting the legislation forward. That is why we have this motion here. This motion is asking for members to be able to do that.

Government Orders

I find it fascinating that the same party that accuses this side of the House of not wanting to work, for their own political grand-standing purposes, is now suddenly against this motion that will give us the ability to sit and work throughout the evening when necessary so that we can get the legislation passed.

I will hand it to the members of the NDP. At least their interest is doing things on behalf of Canadians. They do not agree with us on everything. We can see from the questions they ask during question period that there are things they have an issue with. There is policy they have an issue with, and they bring it up and voice it. However, they are still able to work together with the government for the greater good. That is what the Westminster parliamentary system is about. That is what working with political parties and working together when we get here is all about.

We did just have an election six months ago, and one would think that the Conservatives had no idea that the election happened. They literally walked back into this room and picked up right where they left off, with accusatory remarks towards the government, picking at individual people, pointing at the Prime Minister and calling him names, and making everything a scandal and about corruption. They are trying to manufacture stories so they can somehow hope that they win the next election based on knocking the other guy down instead of actually trying to tell people what their policies and ideas are.

I am all in favour of working until midnight if that is what it takes to get the pieces of legislation that I mentioned through. I expect that any member who passionately cares about Canadians, and about making sure that the policies are put in place that will benefit them the most, would do the same.

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Madam Speaker, I always enjoy my colleague opposite. He is such a great orator. We just love hearing what he has to say. However, earlier I heard you, Madam Speaker, chastise him because he was getting a little out of line.

I heard the member talk about how we are trying to impede things, and that we are negative. However, if I was trying to sell a motion, I would stand up and talk about the merits of the motion. He did not say one good thing about the motion except that we are over here opposing it.

I think there are a few things on the go. There might a little bit of heat on the Prime Minister. I would ask my hon. colleague why the Liberals want the ability to shut Parliament down just like that?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I am flabbergasted. What does the member mean by “shut Parliament down”? This motion would do the complete opposite. It would keep Parliament open longer. It would give the ability for Conservatives who want to put up 51 speakers and more on each piece of legislation the ability to do that. This is the same comment that the Bloc member for Montcalm made earlier, when he talked about restricting Parliament.

This motion would do nothing to restrict Parliament. It is about giving more opportunity to discuss the issues that are clearly important to the Conservatives. That is, of course, if it really is the issues that they care about. I would argue what they care about is stopping

absolutely everything at every cost, as the member for New Westminster—Burnaby said earlier, “Nothing will pass”. That is their objective, that absolutely nothing will pass, and that is very clear from where I am sitting.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will try to elevate the debate in the House and move away from irony and accusations. I agree with some of the criticisms that my Liberal colleague has levelled against the Conservatives, but I would like to steer him towards other topics. I would like to hear his thoughts on the three points I am about to raise.

Is this motion not designed to make up for his government's lax management of the agenda?

The government prorogued the House, called an election and took months to recall the House. Medical assistance in dying is a fundamental issue. To include the MAID committee in a motion like this is unacceptable.

The government claims it wants to save time. That was just brought up. I will explain to my colleague what the possibility of a closure motion means. I will predict what will happen. When my prediction comes true, I would like my colleague to acknowledge it. At the end of the session, the government will put an end to all this, probably before June 23, by putting a bunch of legislation in a closure motion without any debate. That is not what I call democracy. Everyone wants to work for the time we spend in the House from evening until midnight. That is why we are all here. Moreover, I think that we are not moving quickly most of the time, and we are taking up committee resources. Just today, a committee meeting was cancelled.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, he asked about the government not being able to bring forward the important pieces of legislation. Why can we not bring them forward? It is because we have been debating Bill C-8 for 12 days. Fifty-one Conservatives have spoken to it, along with five Bloc members, two Greens, two NDP members and three Liberals. The Conservatives are clearly stopping at nothing to make sure that legislation cannot get through. That is why this is important.

I would encourage that member, who shares an opposition lobby with the Conservatives, to walk over to his colleagues and ask why those guys are holding up the fall economic statement. It is May of 2022, and this is the economic statement that was to provide support for Canadians from the fall of last year.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have to say that nobody does indignance in the House quite like the hon. member who just gave his speech. I appreciate him for that because I share some of it.

Quite frankly, at committee there have been lots of opportunities where the opposition parties have worked hard to hold the government to account, yet it seems that every time we are in this House, the political impotence of the Conservatives and the Bloc, who have been missing in action, quite frankly, for the last three years, rears its ugly head, and they try to grind this process to a halt.

Could the hon. member please elaborate and expand upon just what is at stake in these upcoming weeks for Canadians and Quebecers, in order for us to deliver it to them during this time of a COVID recovery?

• (1830)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, at stake immediately in Bill C-8 are the teachers, who have supports in the bill that should have been passed months ago so they could realize those supports. They cannot because the Conservatives are literally holding up this piece of legislation as long as they possibly can. They will go on and on.

What is at stake are some of the other pieces of legislation that we need to move forward on, such as modernizing the criminal justice system to remove mandatory minimums. I realize that is something the Conservatives are against, but the point is that this government has an interest in debating that. They will have their time to do that. Other pieces would be on modernizing the Broadcasting Act and the Official Languages Act. These are all very important pieces of legislation that we know we want to discuss and get passed in some form or another by the end of this session in June.

Now we are just saying that this is fine. If the Conservatives want to talk endlessly, we will give them more opportunity to do that. That is what this is all about.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, in this motion, section (e) talks about the final report for the special committee on MAID. I was curious if the parliamentary secretary would share some of his thinking on why this extension is required.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I do not know why the extension is required. I assume the committee would have a better understanding of that, but I do not know exactly why the extension is required. I do not want to give the member an answer without being able to properly consult on that.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I really enjoyed the member for Kingston and the Islands' speech because he highlighted a lot of the hypocrisy that we have seen in this House. My question to him is about the fact that the Conservatives claim they want more time. They complain about closure motions. They say they want more time to speak, yet we are debating a motion that would allow them to have as many speakers as they need to have on any given issue.

Perhaps the member for Kingston and the Islands could comment about the fact that this motion provides more opportunities in this place for democratic debate to happen and why he thinks the Conservatives are so afraid of that.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, this gives me a good opportunity to bring up a couple more quotes. On March 28, I asked the member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock when he thought the Conservatives would finally let us vote on this important piece of legislation to provide Canadians supports. His response was, "This is our job. We are legislators. We are supposed to be criticizing. We are supposed to be talking about how we can improve pieces of legislation."

Government Orders

To answer the member's question, that is exactly what this motion is about. It is about giving the member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock and other members more time so they can debate and discuss the motions and pieces of legislation, just as he indicated they want to do.

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Madam Speaker, there is not another member in the House who loves healthy debate more than my hon. colleague. He is on his feet every chance he gets. He absolutely relishes it.

I ask my hon. colleague this. Does he want to take healthy debate out of democracy?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I am going to use the first quote the member made in my next householder just so the folks back in my riding know that the Conservatives appreciate how much I love debating. In all seriousness, I appreciate the comment. That last bit was in jest.

Of course we do not want to restrict or prevent debate. That is what this is about. I do not understand where the member is getting this notion from, because the previous question he asked me was very similar to this: it was about restricting debate or somehow preventing debate from happening. Somebody has to explain to me where the Conservatives are getting this notion. This motion is about extending the opportunity by working later into the evening, giving more opportunity to speak so more people can get up and more people can ask questions. I do not understand where the member is getting this from.

I appreciate his comment about my love for healthy debate. I certainly do enjoy it. I also enjoy hearing what members from across the way say. That is what this entire process is about. I enjoy being a part of it.

To the member's question specifically, I do not think this is limiting debate. I think it is providing more.

• (1835)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes rising on a point of order?

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of personal privilege. I wanted to draw the attention of all members in the House to the fourth anniversary of the passing of my predecessor and hon. member of this place, the late Gord Brown, who served as the MP for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes from November 2004 to 2018.

He was the husband of Claudine, the father of Chance and Tristan. He was a friend to all members of this place.

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to mark his passing four years ago today.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Red Deer—Lacombe.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Madam Speaker, may Gord rest in peace. We miss him here.

I will be splitting my time with my colleague for Battle River—Crowfoot.

Government Orders

I rise to oppose government Motion No. 11. It is not because we do not want to have more debate here; it is just that my colleague, who just spoke across the way, does not understand what the contents of his own motion are. He could not even answer a simple question from the Green Party MP about why there was an extension for the medical assistance in dying committee. He does not understand his own motion here, either.

Conservatives are ready to debate, but the issue before us is the wording of the motion in several places. One of the most egregious things that is in the motion is the ability for the government, a minister or the Prime Minister, at any point in time after Motion No. 11 is passed, if it is passed unamended, to simply adjourn the House. That is something that is reserved for the Speaker only, as we saw on that one day when the Speaker adjourned the House during the convoy when the police had moved in. There was supposed to be a debate on the Emergencies Act that day, but the House was adjourned so we had a reason why the Speaker took that particular prerogative.

Normally, when a prime minister wants to adjourn the House, he or she has to go through the process of prorogation to reset the political agenda. That would be the only reason. We have already agreed, as political parties here, what days we are going to sit. We have the parliamentary sitting calendar, so it is simply not true that Conservatives do not want to have a debate. We already have the parliamentary calendar set up. What is actually true is that the government, which is blaming Conservatives for being obstructionist when we are simply doing our job debating legislation, has already been able to pass eight of the 18 bills that it has introduced in this particular Parliament. Yes, Bill C-8 is taking some time, but it is billions of dollars in spending. Here is what the Liberals are not saying about Bill C-8.

First of all, the Prime Minister called an unnecessary election in August of last year, which used all of the sitting days that would have been available in September and October all the way up to November 22, which by my calculation is at least seven sitting weeks. That is 35 days of Parliament that we otherwise would have sat and we could have debated and discussed this legislation. Even more cynically, the Liberals tabled Bill C-8 on the very last day of the fall sitting, which was December 16, which means that they basically had not one day. They tabled the bill one day before the House adjourned in the fall. That means that the fall economic statement had zero days of debate in the fall.

If we fast forward, after weeks of Parliament being adjourned over the Christmas break, the Liberals' mismanagement, and the name-calling of Canadian citizens that resulted in a protest that sidetracked this place, here we find ourselves. Lo and behold, the Conservatives have only been speaking to Bill C-8 for a handful of days, and the bill has gone through committee and passed at second reading. It is now at report stage and is moving its way through third reading. All the Liberals had to do was simply ask their coalition dance partners in the NDP if they wanted to move this along.

We have legitimate concerns about the legislation. There are some things we may agree with on this side of the House, but there are also some things in there that we disagree with. It is our job to bring those matters to debate before the House of Commons. As I said, they have a supply and confidence motion, otherwise known

as a coalition with the NDP. They simply had to ask their dance partners for approval to do this. For whatever reason they did not get it, so I do not know how much confidence the Liberals could have in what the NDP is supplying them, but I will leave that for the dance partners to talk about.

My point is that the mismanagement of the time of the House by the Liberals is what is actually the problem. They have been able to get bills passed, but we have a right and a constitutional responsibility to oppose legislation that we do not agree with. Even if we agree with bits and pieces of it, our job is to challenge the legislation that is before the House. The whole notion of how a democracy is supposed to work is through the cut and thrust of debate, the to and fro of debate. It is to have the best ideas from all sides of the House and all sides of the chamber, and all the people who voted in the last election have their ideas come together and bubble to the top.

The problem with the motion is the tone of the motion. This is what the Liberal and NDP members are trying to do. If a citizen is at home watching this and wondering what is actually going on, let me spell it out for them.

● (1840)

In a normal sitting of the House, there is this thing called “quorum”. The House must have at least 20 MPs here. Normally, the governing party, the party that is responsible for the legislation that is being discussed, has to be present to carry the debate. That would require, in addition to the Speaker, at least 19 Liberal members of Parliament, or Liberal-NDP members of Parliament if they are working in cahoots together, to be present for the debate.

In Motion No. 11, there is a clause that says the government will remove any ability to call quorum or to move a dilatory motion. People at home might wonder what a dilatory motion is. That is a motion to adjourn the House and end the debate. It ends what we are talking about or stops what we are doing at a particular point in time. It adjourns a meeting of the House of Commons.

It is the quorum part that matters. As Conservatives, we are willing to be here and debate. That is not a problem. On behalf of the millions of people who voted for us, we would expect that at least 20 Liberals would be in the House to listen. With the motion worded the way it is, the government is basically saying, to Conservatives and Bloc Québécois MPs, “Talk to the hand.” The government is going to pass an autopilot motion in the House of Commons that is normally reserved for debates, such as take-note debates or emergency debates, where there is no question, no vote, at the end of those debates.

Government Orders

At the end of Bill C-8, and at the end of Motion No. 11, there is going to be a vote. That is different. To put the House in that type of scenario is completely unacceptable. For those who are watching at home, this is the part that the Liberals and the NDP are not telling people. They are not telling Canadians that they are getting rid of the actual processes and procedures in the House of Commons: the Standing Orders that we normally operate by. They are getting rid of those things because they do not necessarily want to be here.

I am pretty sure the member for Kingston and the Islands will be here and my friend for Winnipeg North, who is always here in the House, will probably be here. There will be one if not two of them. I might see some of the other MPs from the Liberal Party, but I do not expect to hear from them because, frankly, I never do.

Notwithstanding any of that, for people who are watching at home, it is not just Conservatives who are opposed to this: it is members of the Bloc as well. I am pretty sure there are some members in the NDP who are very uncomfortable with what is happening: people who used to stand up for the working-class Canadians in this country, and people who used to actually stand up for transparency and accountability in this country, are looking at this and wondering what is going on as well.

To Canadians who are watching at home and listening to the talking points from the Liberal MPs who are speaking, this is the part that is egregious. They would simply take away the ability for the Prime Minister or the government of the day to just adjourn the House, so that when things get a little hot around here, if the Prime Minister was under another investigation, they would just shut down the House but they would not have to go through the embarrassment of calling a prorogation to do it. That is the first thing.

The second is quorum. "Talk to the hand," is basically what they are saying to Conservative members of Parliament and the Bloc Québécois. The government just wants us to talk. We could just have a joint caucus meeting with the Bloc, according to the motion. We do not actually need to be here. There is no point in us sitting here debating if the government is not interested in listening.

If the government is not interested in listening, why not? Does the government not care about the millions of Canadians who did not vote for its members in the last election? Are there no good ideas from the official opposition? Is there no role for the official opposition? Is there no role for the people who voted for the Bloc Québécois to bring up the issues that are important to them?

Where are we in this democracy? This is the problem. To Canadians who are watching, this is the problem. This is why Conservatives are so adamant that Motion No. 11 is fundamentally flawed. We are okay to come to work. We want to come to work. I have been here for 16 years, and the last two weeks in June is the time when extended sitting hours are automatically in the calendar. If MPs in the governing caucus want to have extended hours, they do it. I have done it. As a matter of fact, I was a member of the Harper caucus when Harper was the prime minister. We had motions like this, but we would never dream of putting in an autopilot motion on government legislation.

It is egregious. It is an abuse of the powers of the House. What is shocking to me is that the NDP is going along with this. Where is the party of Tommy Douglas and Jack Layton?

• (1845)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member tries to appeal to those who might be following the debate in terms of what is taking place. It is a very simple motion. The intent of the motion is to enable opposition members and other members the opportunity to speak after 6:30 p.m. It would be from 6:30 p.m. to midnight. The Conservatives might want to try to confuse the issue. Everything else is based on votes, so it is not like the government on its own can ram things through. It is all based on votes.

It is an issue of should we be having more debate between 6:30 p.m. and midnight. If we were to canvass Canadians, we will find there are hundreds of thousands of Canadians who work past 6:30 in the evening. There is nothing wrong with having more opportunities to debate.

The member is wrong. He is wrong on the quorums. Opposition parties have equal responsibility in the issue of quorum. On the issue of quorum, there are many occasions when we see no quorum or dilatory motions. That is nothing new.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Madam Speaker, my colleague across the way, as much as I try to have respect for what he has to say, is actually completely wrong. He is not only misleading Canadians who are watching this, but this has never been done. This type of motion, the removal of quorum and the autopilot on government legislation has never happened in the 16 years I have been an MP.

As I said in my speech, these kinds of things happen on motions before this House that do not have a question being put, like an emergency debate, a take-note debate or autopilot on other procedures where there is no vote, no money being spent and no bills being passed.

The difference now is that the government is so afraid of not only dealing with and debating with the Conservatives, but obviously it is afraid of its own backbench if it is not even sure it can muster quorum and keep 20 people here to listen to what Canadians have to say.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, earlier in his remarks, the hon. member made reference to the power of prorogation when talking about the adjournment provision in this motion.

I was reminded of the procedure and House affairs committee in the last Parliament where we did a study of the Prime Minister's latest prorogation. I wanted the committee to recommend that the Prime Minister should not be allowed to prorogue the House without a vote in the House of Commons, the same kind of vote that is actually in the adjournment provision of this motion.

Government Orders

That recommendation did not appear because Liberals and Conservatives alike want to preserve that power of prorogation. For all the song and dance and foot stomping they do in this place, at the end of the day when the Conservatives had a real opportunity to just recommend constraining the power of the Prime Minister, they chose not to.

I find it hard to believe the outrage of the member here today.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Madam Speaker, I am pretty sure I am appearing calm and poised. I am not sure what the outrage is all about.

The member has his opinions about prorogation and that is fine if that is what the procedure and House affairs committee wanted to talk about, but the reality is if the member believes so strongly in what he said, the NDP may be the worst negotiators in the world because the NDP just negotiated a supply and confidence agreement with the Liberals. If he truly believes in what he is saying, why did his party not negotiate this as part of that agreement? Those members are either the worst negotiators ever or they do not mean what they say.

• (1850)

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Madam Speaker, one of the things I would like to ask my colleague about is this issue of dilatory motions. The motion prevents all members from entertaining or bringing forward dilatory motions, except for one class of members, which is a minister of the Crown, for example, the Prime Minister. A minister can bring forward a dilatory motion, a motion to adjourn the House without debate and the vote must be called immediately. That is the definition of a dilatory motion.

Could my colleague comment on the fact that this seems to be an inequity in the motion in that it does not apply equally to all members?

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Madam Speaker, for the Canadians who are watching this at home, I will say this. What would one call a government that is able to do whatever it wants, whenever it wants and to whomever it wants without any consequences or seeking the permission of the House? I will let the folks at home come up with that answer. I have my own thoughts on that and my guess is the people who are watching at home would think the same thing.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, as always, it is an honour to be able to rise in this place and stand up for the people who sent me here.

Before I get into the substance of my speech, I take very seriously the fact that when I stand in this place, I am representing about 110,000 people spread out over approximately 53,000 square kilometres in east central Alberta. I am representing them here in this place. Whenever I stand, whenever I am engaged in committee, I make sure it is their best interests that are at heart.

As we debate Motion No. 11, the tragic irony is the fact that the government, supported by its coalition partners in the NDP, moved closure on a motion that would limit debate and limit the ability for MPs to fulfill their parliamentary, constitutional and societal duties.

There is tragedy after tragedy, but Motion No. 11 represents what I believe, and from what I have heard already from my constituents and many Canadians, is a terrible demonstration of democracy in decline in Canada. I do not say that lightly, because when it comes to the institutions of Parliament, of our country, we are seeing decline. We are seeing damage that is being done. I believe it is incumbent upon each and every one of us to ensure that we stand for the rights and freedoms, for the democratic values that built this country.

I first read Motion No. 11 shortly after it was put on the Order Paper last week. It is in typical Liberal strategic fashion. They are bringing something forward that, if it passes tonight, will contribute to further democratic decline in this country.

I am proud to be able to stand in this place to fight against that not just for the sake of Conservatives. It is a misnomer to suggest that the Conservatives are only fighting for themselves. No, the reality is that when one fights for democracy, one stands to fight for all voices. One stands to fight for all political opinions, all who have the honour, the privilege and the ability in this country, not just elected MPs, but all in this country who have the privilege to vote during an election, to be engaged in democratic discourse each and every day. It goes all the way up to our having the responsibility of representing Canadians in this place.

I want to systematically go through some of the significant challenges in Motion No. 11. The Liberals are quick to say that many of us in this place do not want to work. They throw around those allegations, but that is a very small part of what Motion No. 11 really is about.

Let us look at paragraph (b), which is the details related to paragraph (a) of Motion No. 11. The first part would allow there to be late-night sittings. Few Canadians would debate the fact that they expect their politicians to work. The problem is that the Liberals want control. It is clear that they themselves do not want to work, and this motion confirms that, but they also want control over exactly how Parliament functions. The opposition House leader has used a phrase that I think explains very well the attitude of this government when it comes to how it wants Canada to work. The government does not want an opposition. It simply wants an audience.

I find it really interesting that whenever the Liberals fail, they often say that it is in the name of being team Canada, that it is for team Canada's sake that we need to simply move forward, or skip due process or whatever the excuse of the day is. It is shameful that time and time again they have repeated those sorts of failures.

On the first part of Motion No. 11, many Canadians would look at it and say that for politicians to be able to work late to get things done is okay. However, I certainly hear from constituents, and the Liberals do not want to hear this, that they want us to actually debate bills. They want us to be engaged in this place in democratic discourse.

Government Orders

• (1855)

It goes on. In the next three parts of (b), items (ii), (iii) and (iv), it is truly an attack on democracy. It goes on further. It comes to (c), regarding changing some of the rules. We have heard a lot of discussion about quorum calls and how, again, the Liberals do not want further debate. They want to simply be able to control the debate to meet their ends.

There is no better example of that than Bill C-8. We hear many Liberals, especially, and New Democrats who are now complaining about the fact that it is still in Parliament. It is the government's job to manage its legislative agenda. Like so many things in Canada, the Liberals have done that poorly. However, I would point to the fact that the Liberals only introduced Bill C-8 just before Parliament rose for Christmas. They talked about it. We all knew it was coming. There was no surprise that it was coming, but they introduced it only a day or two before Parliament recessed for six weeks. Then Parliament came back and they had the audacity to suggest that somehow, when Conservatives want to fulsomely debate that bill, we are being obstructionist or whatever their key line of the day is. It is an absolute shame. Again, it is an attack on democracy. We are seeing a decline in democracy.

Of course, there is the ability for the Prime Minister or any minister of the Crown to prorogue Parliament, basically. It is a bit different because it would require a vote. However, this speaks to the fact that when the Prime Minister flip-flopped on his prorogation promise in order to cover up another one of his litany of scandals over the course of his time of being leader of this country, he suffered in the polls for it. Now the Liberals are using their partners in the NDP to avoid the shame and the political punishment that come with the fact that they break their promises. Now they are giving the chance for any minister of the Crown, as early as tomorrow or the next day, to be able to stand up. Worse, I would suggest, is to hold that over the heads of parliamentarians, knowing that they would be quick to use the entire infrastructure of government, which does not stop when Parliament adjourns, to keep repeating their same old tired talking points.

There is much to say in this debate in the fact that the government did limit debate on the motion that would limit debate. There is the tragic irony of that. I see how these Liberals, in their litany of scandals, want to see as little discussion and opposition on any aspect of their agenda as possible. We see that represented throughout Motion No. 11.

I would simply suggest something which is quite straightforward. I have in front of me a document that was put together by a constituent whose name is Neil. I thank Neil for this. There are 15 different scandals, promises that were made and broken. They were clear misrepresentations to Canadians that the government made over the course of leading up to the election that the Prime Minister promised he would not call but did anyway. Canadians know what that is. There are 15 very clear, different issues that speak to how the government cannot be trusted with power of any kind, let alone the ability to unilaterally control Parliament.

A Liberal majority government was bad. Hundreds of thousands of Albertans were pushed out of work by the Liberals' ideological

games. There was the fact that we saw an agenda that diminished Canada's presence on the world stage, and on and on it goes.

What is worse, which I certainly have heard from many constituents, is a Liberal minority government with a bought-off majority by a socialist NDP, or "NP" maybe because the democratic part maybe is not as relevant. It is worse than a Liberal majority government because the New Democrats have been able to buy off the Liberals and then, of course, with a threat of a confidence motion within whatever their quasi-caucus circumstances might be.

I conclude by saying that Canadians are tired of having a government simply repeat for itself the same tired, in many cases, misrepresentations of the truth time and time again, claiming it is real when Canadians know better. Canadians did not vote for the circumstances we are debating here today. Certainly Conservatives are going to stand up for Canadians of all political affiliations to make sure that their rights can be respected within Canada's Parliament.

• (1900)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, when the member talks about the political games that are played, what he does not make reference to is the number of days that Bill C-8, the fall economic statement, has been debated, and the number of times the government has attempted to bring it forward only to be frustrated because the opposition wants a concurrence motion on this or that. There is no doubt that there are important issues, but this is always done on government business days. When the Conservatives attempt to adjourn debate or stop the House for the day, it is for issues the opposition initiates in order to frustrate and prevent the government from passing legislation. Then they criticize the government for not being able to pass legislation. That is just plain stupid.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I believe you should seek the advice of the table. I am not sure that "stupid" is within the realm of parliamentary language.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member was not referring to an individual specifically.

The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I will certainly note that when I call the Liberals corrupt, because I think that is a fair representation of not an individual but an attitude.

It is interesting. Here we have the Liberals again misrepresenting to Canadians the reality of what happens in this place. The member, in his remarks, suggested there are important issues to discuss. I do not see government members standing up to concur on supply days. They could, but they do not because they want to play politics.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Government Orders

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, now they are somehow suggesting we want to play games. That is the problem. The Liberals will do everything they can to assert their dominance within our parliamentary institutions, leading to a democratic decline.

The Conservatives will continue to come to Ottawa to stand up for the issues and things that our constituents expect of us, regardless of what the Liberals try to do to shut us down.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members that when someone else has the floor and they already had an opportunity to ask a question, they should hold off on any other questions and comments they may have.

The hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I was first elected 11 years ago, and I was here for the 41st Parliament when the Harper majority government used time allocation 92 times to move business through the House, so when the Conservatives talk about how this violates democracy, I would ask them to look back on their own majority government.

As to my question for the member for Battle River—Crowfoot, when he says the NDP is bought off, what is he actually trying to imply? We are co-operating with the Liberals in order to get things done for Canadians, such as dental care, the restoration of employment insurance and other benefits that are about to run out under the emergency benefits plan. If I am being bought off by doing things for Canadians, then I am happy to be bought.

• (1905)

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, as my father has suggested often, there is a problem that ends up happening in this country after the Liberals have had a chance to govern: They demonstrate that they are not interested in fulfilling their promises. My advice to the member is to be careful, because the Liberals are good at politics but are not so good at governing. They are willing to throw anybody, whether they are in their own party or the signatories to a confidence and supply agreement, under the bus to benefit themselves politically.

I heard from a constituent a number of weeks ago, shortly after this confidence and supply agreement was signed, and this constituent said they had never voted for me and they were a regular NDP voter. They did not agree with me on most things, but they will never vote for the NDP again because it was bought off by the Liberals.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I am showing up here tonight, as I usually do, trying to understand how this place can best function to get things done in the interests of folks in Kitchener Centre and across the country.

I hear the member for Battle River—Crowfoot is quite upset with Motion No. 11, and I wonder if he could share with me specifically what in Motion No. 11 he feels is particularly anti-democratic. What about this motion is he most concerned with?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I note that the hon. member from the Green Party has a great deal of care for democracy and our institutions.

I did outline a number of the specific challenges I had when the motion was in front of me, but the most egregious of them, I would suggest, is the fact that the Prime Minister or any minister of the Crown could, on a whim, decide to shut down this place. That could be tomorrow, although I hope that is not the case. I hope the NDP would have the spine to vote against this. No Prime Minister should be given that *carte-blanche* authority, which I believe is a serious threat to democracy within our country.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is great to be here this evening as we enter week two of the four weeks in this part of our sittings. I am thankful for the opportunity to speak today to the government's proposal to extend the proceedings in the House of Commons for the remainder of the session.

I will be splitting my time with the member for Lac-Saint-Louis.

This Parliament was elected to get things done. As we have seen over the previous months, our government has an ambitious legislative agenda and we have a lot to accomplish in the weeks ahead.

In the last election, the wonderful residents of Vaughan—Woodbridge elected me for the third time because I ran on a platform that promised to grow the economy, fight climate change, make housing more affordable and protect our country's most vulnerable. Now that we are here today, Canadians expect their parliamentarians to deliver on those promises. This means the House of Commons needs to find a way to continue its important work and drive legislation in a timely and judicious manner. That is what the proposal we are discussing today sets out to do.

Over the last few months, we have seen an ambitious legislative agenda put forward by our government, but we have also seen a concerted effort by the Conservatives to obstruct the work of other MPs in the House of Commons. The Conservatives have shown a pattern of obstruction of legislation, including on Bill C-8. They have debated it for 10 days in the House of Commons and continue to block it, denying Canadians the support they need as our economy continues to recover as we exit the COVID pandemic and as we continue to fight to create good middle-class jobs from coast to coast to coast, which we are doing. We need to get Bill C-8 across the finish line and get it done.

Bill C-8 implements critical components of the fall economic and fiscal update tabled by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance on December 14, 2021. The bill includes critical supports for workers and businesses needed to help tackle COVID-19, and support for territorial and provincial health care systems on vaccines, ventilation in schools and rapid tests. It also implements several tax measures, including tax credits for businesses purchasing ventilation supplies and for teachers who purchase school supplies to assist with virtual learning.

Since the start of the pandemic, our government has put in place unprecedented measures to support people and businesses across the country, to support our friends, our neighbours and our family members. Since day one, our government has had the backs of Canadians.

In Bill C-8, our government has outlined our plan to procure millions of rapid tests free to provinces, territories and indigenous communities. Bill C-8 includes support for workers and businesses, with changes to CEBA and EI. We have proposed to create a host of tax credits, which would benefit Canadians, including a ventilation improvement tax credit for small businesses, tax deductions for residents of northern Canada, supporting our rural communities from coast to coast to coast, and support for farmers by returning fuel charges in involuntary backstop jurisdictions. Bill C-8 also proposes to implement a national tax on the value of non-resident, non-Canadian-owned residential real estate in Canada that is considered to be vacant or underutilized.

Here is the thing: Our plan is working. We have now surpassed our target of creating a million jobs. By delivering significant fiscal support to the economy and avoiding the harmful Conservative austerity policies that followed 2008, our Liberal government has supported a rapid and resilient recovery. We know that there are challenges ahead and the future remains uncertain, but we also know that we need to reinforce the importance of passing this legislation so that we can focus our attention on the future.

As we finish the fight against COVID-19, we will turn our resolve toward fighting climate change, addressing housing affordability, advancing reconciliation with indigenous people and building an economy that is stronger, fairer, more competitive and more prosperous for all Canadians. If the Conservatives are opposed to those measures to support Canadians, that is their prerogative; that is their choice. However, one party should not get to obstruct the work of other MPs in the House of Commons.

That is not the only bill that I would like to see moved forward before the end of the session. We know that the budget implementation act will be debated soon. On April 7, 2022, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance introduced “Budget 2022: A Plan to Grow Our Economy and Make Life More Affordable”. It is a plan that invests in Canadians and a plan that will help build a Canada where no one is left behind. The BIA will put those priorities into action.

● (1910)

Budget 2022 invests in three main things: people, economic growth and a clean future for everyone. Through targeted and responsible investments, our government will help make life more affordable, create jobs and prosperity today, and build a stronger economic future for all Canadians tomorrow.

We know from the budget that we are making it easier for Canadians to buy a home. We are moving forward on dental care. We are investing to help businesses scale up and grow. In the budget, we are making wealthy corporations pay their fair share. We are investing in a clean future and helping Canada become a world leader in producing electric vehicles. I know that everyone in the House and all Canadians are very happy to see the \$3.6-billion investment that was made by Stellantis, in partnership and collaboration with the

Government Orders

federal government and the provincial government. It means, here in Ontario, thousands of direct jobs and tens of thousands of jobs indirectly. It is a great day for the auto sector, a great day for this province and a great day for hard-working middle-class Canadians.

We have all seen the recent statistics. Canada has the strongest jobs recovery in the G7, having recouped 112%, and I think up to 150%, of jobs lost since the peak of the pandemic. Our unemployment rate is down to just 5.5%, close to the 5.4% low in 2019, the lowest rate on record for five decades. Also, throughout the pandemic, we maintained a strong fiscal anchor and fiscal footprint, with the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio relative to our G7 peers.

Now, as we emerge from the pandemic, our government is focused on the priorities that Canadians expect us to deliver on: making life more affordable, creating jobs, growing the economy and ensuring a clean future for everyone. We need a healthy environment.

We will also need to move forward with Bill C-11, on online streaming. For decades, our system has guaranteed the creation of Canadian movies, TV shows and music that make us proud to be Canadian. Today, streaming platforms benefit from access to the Canadian market but have zero responsibility toward Canadian artists and creators. With our online streaming bill, we are asking online streamers to showcase and contribute to the creation of Canadian culture. Canadian broadcasters play by one set of rules and streaming platforms play by another. There should be one set of rules for everyone. We have been clear since the beginning: Those who benefit from the system should contribute to it. That is exactly what we need to see, so we need Bill C-11 to move forward.

To come back to our discussion about the motion for a moment, the motion would allow for extended time to debate bills, which is a good thing. We have heard from members of the opposition that they want more time to debate significant legislation. This motion allows for that to happen in the evenings when the government and one other party, which represent a majority in the House, request it. We believe that it is important for MPs to have the opportunity to debate legislation, and the motion facilitates this.

Let us think of the other pieces of legislation that could benefit from the additional time for debate.

Government Orders

I think of, for example, Bill C-18. We all know that a free and independent press is essential to Canadian democracy, and the work of our journalists has value. That is why we introduced Bill C-18, the online news act. It would require the tech giants to fairly compensate publishers and journalists for the content shared on their platforms. We are creating a framework to ensure that Canadian publishers, big and small, can negotiate fair deals on more equal terms with the tech giants, the most powerful companies in the world. The Europeans are doing it. We are going to do it as well. We will always support quality, fact-based and local Canadian journalism in a fair digital marketplace. I think all members of the House would agree with that, and that is why we should see this bill passed.

We also have Bill C-5, which deals with mandatory minimum sentences. A justice system that jails too many indigenous people, Black people and marginalized Canadians is not effective. That does not keep us safe and it must be changed.

With Bill C-5, we are turning the page on the failed policies of the Harper Conservatives. We are removing mandatory minimum penalties that target lower-risk and first-time offenders that have been shown to increase the over-incarceration of racialized and marginalized groups. We will also provide police and prosecutors with the tools and guidance they need to treat addiction and simple drug possession as a health issue, not a criminal justice issue. My brother is a first responder in the police force so I know he appreciates this.

Bill C-5 represents an important step forward. These changes will ensure that our criminal justice system is fair and effective and will keep Canadians from all communities safe.

To finish, these extended sittings will allow us to debate these bills and will provide more time for MPs to share their thoughts with constituents back home, be their strong local voice here in Ottawa and represent their constituents' views.

● (1915)

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from Vaughan—Woodbridge for his thoughts. I would just counter by saying that I believe there is a bit more to this motion than the government is letting on. Obviously, it has been making the argument that having longer sittings, more sittings and more time to debate legislation is good. I would certainly agree with that, but this motion allows for the House to not meet quorum and not have an adequate number of members present for those debates, potentially opening the door for members of the government or other parties not to attend and take part in that important discussion.

I wonder if the member could speak to that contradiction in the motion and why that would be the case.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I count on the hon. member for Kenora as a friend here in the House of Commons.

My understanding of this motion is that all members will be able to participate in debate if they wish to do so. Obviously, they must speak to their representative House leaders as to the determination of when they would like to have a speaking spot. That is my understanding. If I misunderstood, I will correct it, but that is my understanding.

Extended sitting hours do allow for extra debate on bills and for people to put their thoughts out. I enjoy coming to the House and presenting my thoughts on various bills and matters, which I know matter considerably to the residents of Vaughan—Woodbridge, back home in my beautiful riding.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, from time to time at committee, particularly when travelling but sometimes here in Ottawa, the committee will waive its quorum requirement and provide that no substantive motions can be moved or debated, in order to hear from witnesses. The committee sees value in hearing points of view and getting them on the record, but recognizes that it may not be an appropriate time to address issues that come out of left field, so to speak. That is kind of similar to what is being proposed for evening sittings in the House of Commons when we have these extended meetings.

I just wonder if the member has some experience with a committee that has conducted its business this way and if democracy ended when the committee decided to conduct its business that way.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I have sat at committees for the almost seven years that I have been here. I have been on a number of committees, three in the last session. We do debate vigorously many bills that are put forward. We debate motions that are put forward. It is always great to have a robust discussion and hear different viewpoints from the members who have the privilege of sitting on those committees.

I do not think this type of motion has in any way impaired the ability of democracy to function. That is exactly what happens on committees.

● (1920)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I wonder if my friend and colleague could just provide his thoughts in regard to how important it is, when a government works with the opposition as a House, to try to work co-operatively in order to pass a legislative agenda that is there not only for government but also for all members, especially when reflecting on private members' bills.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I like to use words like “reasonable leadership”. Being in government and being elected, we need to demonstrate responsible leadership and collaborate with other parties in the House, which we have been able to do. I know some of the official opposition members put forward ideas that ended up in a government bill relating to extended sick leave benefits. I think that is what it was, by one of the members from York region.

It is very important that we get the work done that our constituents need us to do without facing obstructions. It is very important that we collaborate with other parties in the House, which we are doing, to get the work done that Canadians want us to do. As we exit the pandemic, as we are in one of the most unique times in history, we need to collaborate, work together and get things done that are important for our constituents so that we can move forward in building an even more prosperous and brighter future for all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to participate in this debate, which I have been following carefully for the past few hours.

Human memory is a curious thing. I am not a psychologist, but I have noticed that humans have a tendency to forget the most painful memories, the difficult and distressing moments of the past, and this can sometimes condemn us to repeat the same mistakes. I think others would agree with me.

At a certain point, people often decide to focus on the positive and forget the negative. When I say “the negative”, I am talking about the crisis we just went through, and are still going through, but it was worse in 2020-21. Life has been completely turned upside down since March 2020, including our personal, family and work lives, and our work in this Parliament, in the House of Commons.

If we go back a bit, we will recall that the House of Commons did not sit for weeks. At the very beginning of the pandemic, it was extremely important to practise social distancing. There were perhaps a few hours once every two weeks where a handful of MPs could come to the House of Commons to adopt measures for Canadians and businesses. Apart from that, we lost a tremendous amount of time before setting up the hybrid Parliament.

Some may say that it is true that we lost time, but they will also accuse us of calling an election and losing even more time. Those who say that are not providing the full picture of what happens in a Parliament with a minority government, which has a very specific dynamic.

If we look at the history of minority governments in Canada, they do not last much more than 18 months. After that, the opposition likes to spin a narrative that the government is not working very well, and it repeats that story out loud day after day during question period. The government then starts to drag its feet for real. The opposition points the finger at the government, claiming that it is not accomplishing anything, that it is getting nowhere and that a new government is needed. That is how it plays out; that is how it has always played out.

I have been an MP under several minority governments, more so than under majority governments. This is the dynamic that usually takes hold, especially after an opposition party elects a new leader and a minority government has been in place for 18 to 24 months. People start thinking about triggering an election.

Our government was operating in a crisis, and it had to go back to voters for a reset, if you will, and a renewed mandate. When the government was elected in 2019, there was no crisis. Later on, it

Government Orders

had to implement health measures, and strengthening and extending those measures required a mandate from Canadians. We lost time because of the pandemic, and we were unable to move forward on certain files.

● (1925)

The House has spent a very long time on Bill C-8, a major bill that is crucial to helping Canada recover from the pandemic crisis. The bill is supposed to implement the fall economic update, but we have not yet passed it, and summer is just around the corner.

Why is it important?

Bill C-8 provides essential support to workers and businesses to fight COVID-19 and will continue to support the provincial and territorial health care systems with supplies of vaccines and rapid tests. The more information Canadians have about their health, the easier it will be for them to make decisions that enable them to keep the most vulnerable people—such as seniors and immunocompromised people—healthy, to keep themselves healthy and to keep others safe in the face of this pandemic. Canadians need assurances that they will not get sick when they go to work and that they will not make their loved ones sick with COVID-19.

Bill C-8 will also protect children by ensuring that schools have adequate ventilation. We must do everything in our power to prevent outbreaks in schools. This bill would implement a number of tax measures, such as tax credits for businesses that purchase ventilation equipment and for teachers who buy school supplies to facilitate virtual learning.

The safe return to class fund originally provided \$2 billion to the provinces and territories to help cover a variety of investments to protect students and staff. The addition of \$100 million to the fund is intended to support projects with the primary objective of increasing outdoor air intake or increasing air cleaning to help reduce transmission of COVID-19.

I would also like to take the time to recognize the great work being done by teachers across the country. They are doing the most important job: taking care of our next generation.

Bill C-8 is very important for recovering from the pandemic and avoiding a setback. We do not need any setbacks at this point. Things are hard enough, and we are already facing enough challenges, so this is an important bill in that sense. However, it is also a bill that is dragging on. What the opposition does from time to time is drag its feet in an attempt to show that the government does not have the competence to achieve its objectives.

Government Orders

There are other very important bills to be passed as well. I am referring in particular to Bill C-13, which deals with official languages. I represent a community that is predominantly made up of a linguistic minority in Canada, and Bill C-13 will help better support this linguistic minority. It will enshrine the court challenges program in law, in a way. This program helps official language minority groups defend themselves in court when they are faced with actions such as the Harris government's move to close the Montfort Hospital, or the Harper government's move to cancel the court challenges program. This is therefore a very important bill for the anglophone minority in Quebec, but also for the francophone minority outside Quebec, as well as for promoting the French language and francophone culture in Quebec and across the country.

Bill C-11 is just as vital to promoting Canadian culture, including Quebec culture and French-Canadian culture. Let us take a look back and think about Bill C-10 in the previous Parliament. That was another bill on which the opposition was dragging its feet and filibustering in committee and in the House. They seemed to support the bill initially, but once the Conservatives saw the winds changing, especially among certain segments of the voting public, they changed their tune. This example illustrates how the official opposition decided to drag its feet and create obstacles. Let us get rid of those obstacles and move forward.

• (1930)

[*English*]

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Madam Speaker, one aspect of this motion is that the government can extend the sittings with the agreement of one other party, and we have heard from multiple speakers on the government side that the justification for that is, of course, that it would represent a majority of Parliament. However, as I understand the motion, should a situation arise where all three opposition parties, including the NDP, were to want to push for extended sittings, they would not have that power.

Why does the government believe in the will of Parliament only when it is the will of its party?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, to do anything in this House, such as to extend hours, we need motions, and these motions need to be supported by a majority of MPs in the House. This idea that somehow this motion does away with that principle of democracy, which is majority rule, is a bit misleading, but I know that it is the opposition's role to sow doubt, and it is fair game.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened to my colleague's speech, and I must say that four words caught my attention, specifically “francophone minority in Quebec”.

I wonder whether my colleague said that deliberately or unconsciously. Sometimes people say one thing when they actually mean the opposite. I wanted to confirm that, because it would be quite hurtful if he said that deliberately. Even if he did not mean to say that, it still raises some questions. Often what comes out unwittingly actually, in some way, reflects what we really feel.

I wonder if my colleague wants French to become a minority language in Quebec.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Come on, Madam Speaker.

That is an absurd accusation. I was talking about minority languages, about official language minority communities in Canada. There is a francophone linguistic minority outside of Quebec and an anglophone linguistic minority in Quebec.

What I was saying is that Bill C-13 is designed to strengthen the French fact across Canada. That is one of the objectives of the bill.

The member seems to have misunderstood, because that is clearly not what I was saying.

• (1935)

[*English*]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I wonder if the member for Lac-Saint-Louis finds it as strange as I do that the Conservatives argue there is no deliberate delay here, yet we are still debating the fall economic statement and we are now in May. When they say there is no urgency to get moving with things, we have things like the tax credit for teachers that are being held up by Revenue Canada as it waits for legislation to pass.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Again, Madam Speaker, I have lived through a number of minority governments and I have observed the sort of dynamic that characterizes these minority governments. One of the things that the opposition likes to do is to delay and delay to make it look like the government is not accomplishing what it wants to accomplish and in order to give the message to people that the government is not working, not functioning.

Yes, it is a problem that we are discussing Bill C-8 as we enter the summer, when there are important measures in Bill C-8 to help farmers and people who live in the north and have to travel to the south for medical reasons and so on. I do not understand what is so complicated about this bill that we have to have 51 speakers at report stage. I just do not get it. It is very straightforward. It is to help people in the middle of a pandemic.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am glad to be joining the debate on Motion No. 11. Ahead of time, I am going to inform you that I am going to be sharing my time with the member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley. I have to look at him just to remember his riding name, so I recognize it is difficult to memorize all of the members' riding names here.

Government Orders

I want to start by saying something for constituents back home who are wondering why we are debating this motion. It is actually not government legislation; it is a motion that would structure how we use the time of Parliament on a go-forward basis from now until the end of June. I want to highlight some of the parts in the motion I am most concerned about. It directly affects my ability to represent my constituents back home in the riding of Calgary Shepard. They have honoured me with the ability to represent them for a third term in Parliament, and I want to recognize that fact.

We had a member from the Liberal caucus who said earlier that they could not understand why over 50 members of Parliament wanted to speak on a piece of legislation. It is just that simple. This place exists to debate legislation. This place exists to debate. That is the whole point of Parliament. The government has all of the powers necessary, if it chooses to use them. It is always a choice. It can choose to use them to limit debate and to also program debate. For example, it can do time allocation. It can say there will be five more days of debate on a particular piece of legislation. It can have evening sittings if it chooses to, as it is choosing to do in Motion No. 11.

The problem with Motion No. 11 is that it has also larded on all of these extra measures, like prorogation on demand. Section (c) (iv) states, “a minister of the Crown may move, without notice, a motion to adjourn the House until Monday, September 19, 2022, provided that the House shall be adjourned pursuant to Standing Order 28 and that the said motion shall be decided immediately without debate or amendment”.

That is the type of thing that side, the government's side, the Liberal caucus, in 2015, promised it would never do; it would never prorogue Parliament. That was not the Conservatives making a promise. That was the Liberal Party of Canada. The Liberal government made the promise that it would not do such a thing. It has already prorogued Parliament once in the past six and a half years that I have been here.

The Liberals have now also inserted into this motion prorogation on demand. At any moment of the day, a minister of the Crown can decide that is it. We are done. It is too much. The heat is on. We need to flee for the summer, before the rest of the parties and the public realize what is going on in the House of Commons. It is wrong, and they should not be doing such things.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I hear them heckling me and chirping away. I appreciate they do not like it when I bring up these facts, but I want to make sure that my constituents back home understand what we are debating here and what we are going to be called to vote upon. I look forward to questions from their side.

“He that cannot pay, let him pray.” I love Yiddish proverbs. I know there are members of the lobby on the opposite side who appreciate my Yiddish proverbs. I spend time looking for them to make sure I find a good one. The Liberals are paying for having a government House leader who is incapable of running the calendar. This is not the first time this has happened. I remember the very first Parliament I was here, every single May and June they found

themselves in exactly the same situation. They had to impose evening sittings early on in order to be able to pass legislation.

The difference here is that the Liberals are inserting these extra provisions that they do not need to sit here if they do not want to. In fact, none of them will have to rise in their place to debate, because they will have programmed the evenings away. As a parliamentarian, I am happy to work until midnight. During the Emergencies Act debate, the record will show I was here every single day, actively debating into the late hours of the day, and I was happy to do so on behalf of my constituents.

I recognize that they sent me here. I cannot complain about the hours I have to put in. That is the expectation when one comes to this place. We have to go to committees. We have to meet with stakeholders. We have to meet with constituents. We have to manage our own time. There are lots of people waiting all across the country to take any one of our jobs. I think we can all recognize that. Anybody would love the opportunity to represent a riding in this country. That is why so many people run as candidates for various political parties.

This is a unique opportunity for 337 members. I recognize that as Speaker you cannot speak on behalf of your constituents. You have given up that right in order to make sure we follow all the rules of this place. It is a unique privilege that we have to speak on behalf of our constituents.

● (1940)

The government is saying, “Yes, you can speak for them, but it is all for naught because you are speaking only to a mostly empty House that will not be listening to your words to perhaps sway them in the votes they are about to take, because of the programming motions that have been inserted into Motion No. 11.”

There are very few notice permissions provided. Ministers of the Crown will have very little time within which they can provide notice to extend hours into the evening. Other members, including the opposition House leader of the Conservative caucus, have mentioned the fact that this would put a huge strain on the resources of the House of Commons administration.

I am a former chair of the Conservative caucus, and I remember how difficult it was to manage the resources of the House just so we could have our own meetings over Zoom and have them interpreted in both official languages, with the technical staff present. Then we moved to a hybrid format and it made it even more complex and more difficult.

Government Orders

We all have political staff who work long hours with us to ensure that we can do all of the work that we have here. It is on all sides of the House. Many of them are willing to put in the extra time. They are usually younger Canadians who see an opportunity to serve their country in these political offices and make a contribution as a duty of citizenship. I recognize that, but what we are asking people to do is to come in, on the whim of a minister at the very last moment, to sit evenings. It takes a huge number of staff to make Parliament work, both the House of Commons and the Senate. That recognition is not in the motion.

The government is saying it is fine for our interpreters, of whom, at one point during the pandemic, something like 70% had work-related injuries. There were committees being cancelled. It was calculated that up to eight committees of the House could be cancelled on a weekly basis because there would not be enough resources to do the work. We refer a lot of work from the House of Commons to a smaller group of parliamentarians, to hear from witnesses and then consider the matter in more detail. That is what we ask the House of Commons committees to do.

No one on the Conservative side is saying that we do not want to put in the time or the work. We are more than happy to do so. What we are saying is, first, remove some of the provisions that are obviously there, such as prorogation on demand, as I said, in subsection (c)(iv), which would make it a lot easier for the government to flee if they do not like where the debate is heading or if they may lose a potential vote.

The second part is provide the notices. We are asking for 48 hours' notice. It is the typical standing committee notice period that is used. I have sat on several committees of the House. That is a pretty standard way of ensuring that every single member at the committee has an opportunity to both read the content that is sent around and prepare for the committee that they are members of, or that they are substituting on if they have a particular issue they are chasing down on behalf of their constituents.

I think that is perfectly reasonable. A Yiddish proverb says, "He that cannot pay, let him pray." This a prayer, and it has been answered by the NDP. The NDP has answered the prayer of the government House leader. Its members are willing to throw away all their values. They are going to throw away the principles that the New Democrats stood for. I know and have worked with some of the fine members of that New Democratic caucus. I have a hard time believing they would be willing to simply give in to the government House leader because of his complete incapacity and inability to manage the House calendar. If legislation is being held up, the Liberals can move time allocation. They can negotiate in good faith as well.

I have sat through some of the House leaders meetings, and I do not believe there are negotiations in good faith going on. I used to work in human resources. The member for Edmonton West, I am sure, will chuckle at that. I remember what fair negotiations were like, what is fair at a labour negotiation table and what is considered fair bargaining. I do not see that here. All I see is ultimatums and "do it our way or no way". That is what I see in Motion No. 11.

To constituents back home, this is what is going on. The government is going to program and instruct the entire business of the

House of Commons until the end of June, and if the Liberals do not like what is going on, they will yank it, prorogue Parliament and resume some time in September, when they feel more comfortable. They can say whatever they want about what is actually going on. They can put whatever talking points they want forward, but that is essentially what will happen to this place. The rest of the business of the House will be programmed. Our votes will not matter, because it will all be prejudged and preordained through Motion No. 11.

It is wrong. We should not be doing this. I would have gone into the quorum matter, which is deeply unconstitutional; however, I will leave it at that and I will take questions from House members.

• (1945)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, the member is wrong. A minister cannot suddenly just end the parliamentary session. Of course, the member would not want to give the House the full facts, because that would take away from the narrative. The reality is that a minister can move a motion, and then the entire chamber has to vote on it, including that member. A minister cannot just arbitrarily end the session. It is something that comes forward through a motion, and then it is voted on. Why is the member intentionally trying to mislead Canadians and mislead—

An hon. member: The member cannot say that.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Yes, I can—

The Deputy Speaker: It is the "intentional" misleading.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, why is the member misleading Canadians by suggesting that this is the case and that ministers can arbitrarily prorogue Parliament when they cannot? They need the support of a majority of the members in this House.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, apart from correcting the member on the rules of the House, where we cannot impugn another member for intentionally misleading the House, which is against the rules in the Standing Orders, I will remind the member that it is his own government's motion that says the following: "that the said motion shall be decided immediately without debate or amendment". It can only be moved by a minister of the Crown.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Let us ask the question and let us answer the question as best we can, without others having to talk at the same time.

The hon. member for Calgary Shepard.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, to finish what I was saying before the heckling drowned me out, only a minister of the Crown can move it. Only a cabinet minister can move said motion.

Government Orders

These Liberal members have ensured themselves the vote of the NDP. They bought the vote. Therefore, it is a guarantee that this will happen. They will have a majority, so it is a guarantee that they can shut down the House at any moment.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, I hear the member for Kingston and the Islands heckling me again. I am happy to take another question from him.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I do indeed appreciate the hon. member's use of proverbs. In fact, if his words were a stick, one could not lean on it.

It was 92 times under the Harper government, and Peter Van Loan, that they used the same type of tricks in this House.

My question for the very hon. member is this: Why this change of heart now? Why is it good for the Conservatives when they do it to move forward with what they call good government, but it is not good in a minority situation for the opposition to actually work with government and finally get something done for Canadians?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, let me quibble first with the number. Obviously, when a time allocation motion is moved, there is a difference between having a 24-hour notice that debate will be shut down versus having two weeks to debate the matter.

I know the member for Hamilton Centre is heckling and would perhaps like to jump in and correct what I am trying to say, but again, there is a huge difference between informing members ahead of time that they will have a week's worth of debate on a particular piece of legislation versus having the ability to completely shut down the House or impose evening sittings when they do not even have to participate in the debate, because Parliament cannot even be shut down.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, I hear the member heckling me again.

• (1950)

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, being over in the corner here, I have to make dramatic hand gestures to get your attention. Thank you for noticing me.

I, too, want to correct the member for Calgary Shepard. He stated boldly, but I think incorrectly, that it is the Liberal government House leader who is at fault for this. I notice that there have been a number of government House leaders over the past six or seven years, and there is always this problem. I posit the alternative hypothesis that this might be a problem with the Prime Minister and the people he chooses as House leader. I would ask the member what he thinks about that possibility.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, I will always be happy to be corrected by the chair of our caucus and one of the longest-serving members on the Conservative side in the House of Commons.

He is right. The end person, the person who decides who is the government House leader and who is supposed to be responsible for the government's agenda and making sure it goes through the House if not smoothly at least assuredly, with an end deadline so

the government can pass the agenda that it was supposed to be elected to do, is in fact the Prime Minister.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, to my hon. colleague from Calgary Shepard, this comes from having the memory of this. We have had a lot of people back and forth in the House saying, "Well, this did not happen when the Conservatives were in power." I just want to make it clear that there is a problem, and I think it is reflected in the culture of Parliament and the change that has happened over decades.

I worked as a staffer to the minister of the environment in the 1980s. We did not have the sense then that the opposition existed to obstruct. That has been a growing sense, and certainly during my first time in Parliament, which started 11 years ago today, May 2, the Harper Conservatives, in majority, moved us to sitting every day of the week until midnight to catch up with the agenda. No one said they were to blame for not managing themselves properly.

We need to work together far better, which requires setting partisanship aside after an election.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, I will agree with the member's concerns about the culture of this place. That is probably unusual for a Conservative, to agree with the former leader of the Green Party, but I have sat at many prayer breakfast tables with her, so I know her heart is in the right place.

However, the culture of this place has gone in the wrong direction over perhaps the last 40 to 45 years, and I do not think that is particularly the fault of any individual party in this area here. I think it is a combination of technology, mass media and also the fact that there are now 338 members in the House of Commons, which makes it far more difficult to get to know each other across the way. That includes the pandemic, which has made it extremely difficult to get to know other members and build that relationship of trust.

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, from the outset I want to say that it would warm my late Baba Gertie's Yiddish heart to hear my colleagues use Yiddish proverbs. In fact, I think she would be *schlepping nachas* right now if she were watching this wonderful debate.

Most Canadians take for granted that politicians always seem to be at each other's throats over something or other. I often get asked why our party is so critical of the government, why we are always opposed to everything the government does. My response is usually something like that it is actually the job of the official opposition to oppose the government and to hold the government to account. It is an extremely important role in a parliamentary democracy.

Government Orders

We see, time and time again, that countries without a strong political opposition often take a dark path. We see this happening right now before our eyes as Vladimir Putin wields the full military might of Russia against the freedom-loving democratic state of Ukraine. Mr. Putin has no real political opposition to hold him to account, and we know what happens if somebody actively speaks in opposition to his government: He punishes them.

We are lucky to live in a country where we are free to speak our minds and where the official opposition operates as a check and balance in a system designed to hold the Prime Minister and his or her government responsible for the decisions they make. The Prime Minister in our system has tremendous power, and our job as the official opposition is to keep the government in check. In fact, Michael Ignatieff, the former Liberal leader of the official opposition, said, “The opposition performs an adversarial function critical to democracy itself.”

This is why we are concerned about this motion, as it limits the ability of Her Majesty's loyal opposition to keep the government in check. Here is why. Motion No. 11 says, among other things, “after 6:30 p.m. the Speaker shall not receive any quorum calls”. Quorum is vital to a properly functioning government. Taking it to its extreme, let us imagine that only one MP is in this House. In the absence of a quorum requirement, that one member could have unlimited power to introduce motions and laws, literally in the middle of the night, without proper parliamentary oversight.

Under the Constitution Act, a quorum of 20 members is legally required “to constitute a Meeting of the House for the Exercise of its Powers”. Any member has the constitutionally entrenched right to make a quorum call and to bring this to the attention of the Chair, except after 6:30 in the evening if the NDP-Liberal coalition passes this motion. This is unprecedented. This is unconstitutional. Quorum rules exist to ensure that a small number cannot take matters into their own hands.

Another thing about quorum is that it can be used by democratically elected opposition members to make a point. Quorum busting is a tactic that prevents a legislative body from attaining a quorum and can be used by opposition members seeking to block the adoption of some measure they oppose. For instance, Abraham Lincoln, during his time back in the Illinois legislature, actually leapt out of a first-storey window, in a failed attempt to prevent a quorum from being present, as the doors of the capitol had been locked to prevent legislators from fleeing.

I want to be very clear so that government members do not ask me if I am endorsing this. I am not endorsing this. Please, no one go and jump out of a window to avoid a quorum. However, we do have the right. We are maybe more civilized as to how we approach quorum busting, but we have a right to call out lack of quorum. One of my hon. colleagues from the Bloc made the point earlier that it is very difficult right now with the hybrid Parliament to know whether we have a quorum, and that is another issue that we need to settle here at some point. We do have lack of quorum as a legitimate tool of accountability. Motion No. 11 would take this away.

Regarding dilatory motions, Bosc and Gagnon state that dilatory motions do not require notice, are not debatable or amendable and,

if in order, are to be put to a vote by the Chair immediately. Motion No. 11 says the Speaker shall not receive any dilatory motions. In fact, the motion says, “a minister of the Crown may move, without notice, a motion to adjourn the House until Monday, September 19, 2022” and, ironically, that motion can be “decided immediately without debate or amendment”. That sounds to me an awful lot like a dilatory motion. On the one hand, we have the motion saying no dilatory motions, and then we have the motion saying that here is a dilatory motion and that is okay.

The motion gives a procedural right to a minister of the Crown that is unavailable to any other members to avail themselves of. This seems inherently unfair to me, and I would go so far as to say that a matter of privilege could be considered as to whether it is in order.

● (1955)

Motion No. 11 seeks to tie the hands of the official opposition while expanding government authority. It is clear that the government wants to give itself an escape hatch: the ability to prorogue. I know hon. members across have argued that this is not prorogation. They say they will put the motion and there has to be another House leader and it is going to be put to a vote, but the reality is that in this place we cannot do indirectly what we cannot do directly. That is the effect of this motion: the ability to avoid the scrutiny of the opposition, which, as Mr. Ignatieff said, is “critical to democracy itself”.

To be clear, the government wants to give itself the power to stop opposition motions, to prorogue whenever it wants, to avoid accountability, to stop important committee work in its tracks and to govern without a quorum. That is what this motion would do. What this motion would also do is neuter Parliament, plain and simple. It is a brazen power grab.

About working until midnight, I hear government members, particularly the member for Winnipeg North, my colleague from Winnipeg, claiming that members of the Conservative Party have a problem working late. With respect, I believe all members in this House have always worked hard. In fact, we cannot get here without working hard. I am happy to work as long and as late as it takes, as are my colleagues. Therefore, let us show a little respect and stop inferring that somehow some hon. members do not want to work. That is just not true at all.

The problem is not working late; the problem is the last-minute nature of the decision. The motion would allow the government and the NDP House leader to decide at 6:29 p.m. to sit until midnight. I know the NDP claims to care about workers. There are hundreds of staff members who run this place: the clerks, the cleaning staff, security, kitchen staff, the interpreters, the good folks who drive the shuttles we rely upon to get around the Hill, and our young pages. How is it fair to them to say at 6:29 p.m., after working since 9 a.m., that they will have to stay until midnight? Perhaps their unions will take this up. If not, I think they should.

Government Orders

I am looking forward to seeing the Liberal-NDP coalition members in the House with us as we all work late into the night for the betterment of Canadians. I take them at their word that they will be here. If they unilaterally choose to extend hours and do not show up for debate, perhaps we need to rethink the standing rules that currently prevent us from commenting on the presence or absence of a member.

The goal of this motion is to limit the opposition parties' ability to hold the government to account, plain and simple. The motion erodes our ability to hold the government to account and erodes the trust that Canadians have in our institutions. How can a government that claims to want to work across the aisle ever be taken seriously when it pulls stunts like this? The Prime Minister is giving himself the power to shut down Parliament until September, as well as the power to disrupt the work of parliamentary committees. We should not be surprised, though. It is part of a pattern of behaviour where the Prime Minister runs from accountability and transparency.

Last week, the Liberal and NDP members on the foreign affairs committee voted against the member for Wellington—Halton Hills' reasonable motion for the production of the Winnipeg lab documents. Ironically, this is the same motion the NDP voted for in the last Parliament. In addition, the Prime Minister is withholding documents related to the invocation of the Emergencies Act. He may be the subject of an RCMP criminal investigation. The list goes on and on.

I will close by saying that this motion is an affront to our democracy and, if I have not made it clear so far, I am voting against it. In the meantime, Canadians can rest assured that Conservatives will fulfill our constitutional obligations and continue to hold the government to account.

• (2000)

The Deputy Speaker: It being 8:02 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of government business No. 11 now before the House.

Pursuant to the Speaker's ruling earlier today, the first question is on the amendment to the amendment, paragraphs (a) to (d) of government business No. 11.

Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of amendment to the amendment to House]

• (2005)

[Translation]

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

[English]

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Her Majesty's official opposition, I ask for a recorded division.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

• (2040)

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the amendment to the amendment.

• (2055)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 67)

YEAS

Members

Aboultarif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benzen	Bergen
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Carrie
Chabot	Chambers
Champoux	Chong
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
Desbiens	Desilets
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Fortin
Gallant	Garon
Gaudreau	Généreux
Genuis	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Larouche	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lemire
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	MacKenzie
Maguire	Martel
May (Saarich—Gulf Islands)	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
Melillo	Michaud
Moore	Morantz
Morrice	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Normandin
O'Toole	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Paupé

Government Orders

Perkins	Perron
Plamondon	Poilievre
Rayes	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ruff
Savard-Tremblay	Scheer
Schmale	Seeback
Shields	Shipley
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Small	Soroka
Steinley	Ste-Marie
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Thériault
Therrien	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Trudel	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Vien
Viersen	Vignola
Villemure	Vis
Vuong	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williams
Williamson	Zimmer— 152

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Barron
Battiste	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Carr	Casey
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Garneau	Garrison
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gould	Green
Hajdu	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jowhari	Julian

Kayabaga	Kelloway
Khalid	Khera
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Kwan	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	McDonald (Avalon)
McGuinty	McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod
McPherson	Mendès
Mencicino	Miao
Miller	Morrissey
Murray	Naqvi
Ng	Noormohamed
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski	Qualtrough
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schieffe	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Singh
Sorbara	Spengemann
St-Onge	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Thompson	Trudeau
Turnbull	Valdez
Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Virani	Weiler
Wilkinson	Yip
Zahid	Zarrillo
Zuberi— 177	

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the amendment to the amendment lost.

[*English*]

The next question is on the amendment for government business No. 11. May I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of amendment to House*]

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

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, it is such a wonderful amendment that we need a recorded vote.

● (2110)

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

(Division No. 68)

YEAS

Members

Abouttaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benzen	Bergen
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Carrie
Chabot	Chambers
Champoux	Chong
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
Desbiens	Desilets
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Fortin
Gallant	Garon
Gaudreau	Généreux
Genuis	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kitchen	Kmicic
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Larouche	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
MacKenzie	Maguire
Martel	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
Melillo	Michaud
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Motz
Muys	Nater
Normandin	O'Toole
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Perkins
Perron	Plamondon
Poillievre	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ruff	Savard-Tremblay
Schmale	Seeback
Shields	Shiple
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Small	Soroka
Steinley	Ste-Marie
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Thériault
Therrien	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Trudel	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Vien

Viersen
 Villemure
 Vuong
 Warkentin
 Webber
 Williamson

Government Orders

Vignola
 Vis
 Wagantall
 Waugh
 Williams
 Zimmer— 148

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Barron
Battiste	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Carr	Casey
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Garneau	Garrison
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Johns
Joly	Jones
Jowhari	Julian
Kayabaga	Kelloway
Khalid	Khera
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Kwan	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod	McPherson

Government Orders

Mendès	Mendicino	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Miao	Miller	Cormier	Coteau
Morrice	Morrissey	Dabrusin	Damoff
Murray	Naqvi	Davies	Desjarlais
Ng	Noormohamed	Dhaliwal	Dhillon
O'Connell	Oliphant	Diab	Dong
O'Regan	Petitpas Taylor	Drouin	Dubourg
Powlowski	Qualtrough	Duclos	Duguid
Robillard	Rodriguez	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Rogers	Romanado	Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Sahota	Sajjan	Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Saks	Samson	Fillmore	Fisher
Sarai	Scarpaleggia	Fonseca	Fortier
Schiefke	Serré	Fragiskatos	Freeland
Sgro	Shanahan	Fry	Gaheer
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Garneau	Garrison
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Singh	Gazan	Gerretsen
Sorbara	Spengemann	Gould	Green
St-Onge	Sudds	Guilbeault	Hajdu
Tassi	Taylor Roy	Hanley	Hardie
Thompson	Trudeau	Hepfner	Housefather
Turnbull	Valdez	Hughes	Hussen
Van Bynen	van Koeverden	Hutchings	Iacono
Vandal	Vandenbeld	Idlout	Ien
Virani	Weiler	Jaczek	Johns
Wilkinson	Yip	Joly	Jones
Zahid	Zarrillo	Jowhari	Julian
Zuberi — 181		Kayabaga	Kelloway
		Khalid	Khera
		Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
		Kwan	Lalonde
		Lambropoulos	Lametti
		Lamoureux	Lapointe
		Lattanzio	Lauzon
		LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
		Lightbound	Long
		Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
		MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
		MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
		Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
		Masse	Mathysen
		May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
		McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
		McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
		McLeod	McPherson
		Mendès	Mendicino
		Miao	Miller
		Morrice	Morrissey
		Murray	Naqvi
		Ng	Noormohamed
		O'Connell	Oliphant
		O'Regan	Petitpas Taylor
		Powlowski	Qualtrough
		Robillard	Rodriguez
		Rogers	Romanado
		Sahota	Sajjan
		Saks	Samson
		Sarai	Scarpaleggia
		Schiefke	Serré
		Sgro	Shanahan
		Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
		Sidhu (Brampton South)	Singh
		Sorbara	Spengemann
		St-Onge	Sudds
		Tassi	Taylor Roy
		Thompson	Trudeau
		Turnbull	Valdez
		Van Bynen	van Koeverden
		Vandal	Vandenbeld
		Virani	Vuong
		Weiler	Wilkinson
		Yip	Zahid
		Zarrillo	Zuberi — 182

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.

Pursuant to the Speaker's ruling earlier today, the next question is on part I, paragraphs (a) to (d), of government business No. 11.

If a member of a recognized party 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. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say sorry to my colleague, the House leader, but yes, we would like to request a recorded division.

• (2125)

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

(Division No. 69)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Barron
Battiste	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Carr	Casey
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Chatel
Chen	Chiang

NAYS

Members

Abouttaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benzen	Bergen
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Carrie
Chabot	Chambers
Champoux	Chong
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
Desbiens	Desilets
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeschen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Fortin
Gallant	Garon
Gaudreau	Généreux
Genius	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Larouche	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lemire
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	MacKenzie
Maguire	Martel
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Michaud	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Normandin
O'Toole	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Perkins	Perron
Plamondon	Poilievre
Rayes	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ruff
Savard-Tremblay	Scheer
Schmale	Seeback
Shields	Shiplely
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Small	Soroka
Steinley	Ste-Marie
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Thériault
Therrien	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Trudel	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Vien
Viersen	Vignola

Government Orders

Villemure	Vis
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Williams	Williamson
Zimmer — 149	

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare part I of the motion carried.

Pursuant to the Speaker's ruling earlier today, the next question is on part II, paragraph (e), of government business No. 11.

May I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

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

The hon. House leader of the official opposition.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, we would like a recorded vote.

● (2135)

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

(*Division No. 70*)

YEAS

Members

Abouttaif	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Alghabra	Ali
Allison	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Benzen	Bergen
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Block
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Bragdon	Brassard
Brière	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Carr
Carrie	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Chahal	Chambers
Champagne	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Chong
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)

Government Orders

Cooper	Cormier	Mendicino	Miao
Coteau	Dabrusin	Michaud	Miller
Dalton	Damoff	Moore	Morantz
Dancho	Davidson	Morrice	Morrison
Davies	DeBellefeuille	Morrissey	Motz
Deltell	Desbiens	Murray	Muys
Desilets	Desjarlais	Naqvi	Nater
Dhaliwal	Dhillon	Ng	Noormohamed
Diab	Doherty	Normandin	O'Connell
Dong	Dowdall	Oliphant	O'Regan
Dreeshen	Drouin	O'Toole	Patzer
Dubourg	Duclos	Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Duguid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Perkins	Perron
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz	Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Ehsassi	El-Khoury	Poilievre	Powlowski
Ellis	Epp	Qualtrough	Rayes
Erskine-Smith	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Redekopp	Reid
Falk (Provencher)	Fast	Rempel Garner	Richards
Fergus	Ferreri	Roberts	Robillard
Fillmore	Findlay	Rodriguez	Rogers
Fisher	Fonseca	Romanado	Rood
Fortier	Fortin	Ruff	Sahota
Fragiskatos	Freeland	Sajjan	Saks
Fry	Gaheer	Samson	Sarai
Gallant	Garneau	Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Garon	Garrison	Scheer	Schiefke
Gaudreau	Gazan	Schmale	Seeback
Généreux	Genuis	Serré	Sgro
Gerretsen	Gill	Shanahan	Sheehan
Gladu	Godin	Shields	Shipley
Goodridge	Gould	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Gourde	Gray	Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Green	Guilbeault	Singh	Small
Hajdu	Hanley	Sorbara	Soroka
Hardie	Hepfner	Spengemann	Steinley
Hoback	Housefather	Ste-Marie	Stewart
Hughes	Hussen	St-Onge	Strahl
Hutchings	Iacomo	Stubbs	Sudds
Idlout	Ien	Tassi	Taylor Roy
Jaczek	Jeneroux	Thériault	Therrien
Johns	Joly	Thomas	Thompson
Jones	Jowhari	Tochor	Tolmie
Julian	Kayabaga	Trudeau	Trudel
Kelloway	Kelly	Turnbull	Uppal
Khalid	Khera	Valdez	Van Bynen
Kitchen	Kmiec	van Koeverden	Van Popta
Koutrakis	Kram	Vandal	Vandenbeld
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek	Vecchio	Vidal
Kusie	Kusmierczyk	Vien	Viersen
Kwan	Lake	Vignola	Villemure
Lalonde	Lametti	Virani	Vis
Lamoureux	Lantsman	Vuong	Wagantall
Lapointe	Larouche	Warkentin	Waugh
Lattanzio	Lauzon	Webber	Weiler
Lawrence	LeBlanc	Wilkinson	Williams
Lebouthillier	Lehoux	Williamson	Yip
Lemire	Lewis (Essex)	Zahid	Zarrillo
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert	Zimmer	Zuberi — 330
Lightbound	Lloyd		
Lobb	Long		
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)		
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)	Nil	
MacGregor	MacKenzie		
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire		
Maloney	Martel		
Martinez Ferrada	Masse	Nil	
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)		
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Mazier		
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McDonald (Avalon)		
McGuinty	McKay		
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLean		
McLeod	McPherson		
Melillo	Mendès		

NAYS

PAIRED

The Deputy Speaker: I declare part II of the motion carried.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to the Speaker's ruling made earlier today, the next question is on the last paragraph of Motion No. 11 under government business.

[English]

Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of part III of motion to House]

The Deputy Speaker: 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. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I am sure we can see this one through in favour on division.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, I disagree. I think in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, we should show the House's unanimity, hopefully, on this.

● (2150)

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

(Division No. 71)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison	Dreeshen	Drouin
Albas	Aldag	Dubourg	Duclos
Alghabra	Ali	Duguid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Allison	Anandasangaree	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Angus	Arnold	Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Arseneault	Arya	Ellis	Epp
Atwin	Bachrach	Erskine-Smith	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Badawey	Bains	Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Baker	Baldinelli	Fergus	Ferreri
Barlow	Barrett	Fillmore	Findlay
Barron	Barsalou-Duval	Fisher	Fonseca
Battiste	Beaulieu	Fortier	Fortin
Beech	Bendayan	Fragiskatos	Freeland
Bennett	Benzen	Fry	Gaheer
Bergen	Bergeron	Gallant	Garneau
Berthold	Bérubé	Garon	Garrison
Bezan	Bibeau	Gaudreau	Gazan
Bittle	Blaikie	Généreux	Genuis
Blair	Blanchet	Gerretsen	Gill
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney	Gladu	Godin
Block	Blois	Goodridge	Gould
Boissonnault	Boulerice	Gourde	Gray
Bradford	Bragdon	Green	Guilbeault
Brassard	Brière	Hajdu	Hanley
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe	Hardie	Hepfner
Calkins	Caputo	Hoback	Housefather
Carr	Carrie	Hughes	Hussen
Casey	Chabot	Hutchings	Iacono
Chagger	Chahal	Idlout	Ien
Chambers	Champagne	Jaczek	Jeneroux
Champoux	Chatel	Johns	Joly
Chen	Chiang	Jones	Jowhari
Chong	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Julian	Kayabaga
Collins (Victoria)	Cooper	Kelloway	Kelly
Cormier	Coteau	Khalid	Khera
Dabrusin	Dalton	Kitchen	Kmiec
Damoff	Dancho	Koutrakis	Kram
Davidson	Davies	Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
DeBellefeuille	Deltell	Kusie	Kusmierczyk
Desbiens	Desilets	Kwan	Lake
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal	Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Dhillon	Diab	Lametti	Lamoureux
Doherty	Dowdall	Lantsman	Lapointe
		Larouche	Lattanzio
		Lauzon	Lawrence
		LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
		Lehoux	Lemire
		Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
		Liepert	Lightbound
		Lloyd	Lobb
		Long	Longfield
		Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
		MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
		MacKenzie	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
		Maguire	Maloney
		Martel	Martinez Ferrada
		Masse	Mathysen
		May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
		Mazier	McCaughey (Edmonton West)
		McDonald (Avalon)	McGuilty
		McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
		McLean	McLeod
		McPherson	Melillo
		Mendès	Mendicino
		Miao	Michaud
		Miller	Moore
		Morantz	Morrice
		Morrison	Morrissey
		Motz	Murray
		Muys	Naqvi
		Nater	Ng
		Noormohamed	Normandin
		O'Connell	Oliphant

Government Orders

Government Orders

O'Regan	O'Toole
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Perkins
Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Plamondon	Poilievre
Powlowski	Qualtrough
Rayes	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Roberts
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Rood	Ruff
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sarai	Savard-Tremblay
Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Schiefke	Schmale
Seeback	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Shields
Shipley	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Sinclair-Desgagné	Singh
Small	Sorbara
Soroka	Spengemann
Steinley	Ste-Marie
Stewart	St-Onge
Strahl	Stubbs
Sudds	Tassi
Taylor Roy	Thériault
Therrien	Thomas
Thompson	Tochor
Tolmie	Trudeau
Trudel	Turnbull
Uppal	Valdez
Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Van Popta	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vecchio
Vidal	Vien
Viersen	Vignola
Villemure	Virani
Vis	Vuong
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Weiler	Wilkinson
Williams	Williamson
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zimmer
Zuberi — 329	

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare part III of the motion carried.

* * *

**ECONOMIC AND FISCAL UPDATE IMPLEMENTATION
ACT, 2021**

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (for the Minister of Finance) moved that Bill C-8, An Act to implement certain provisions of the economic and fiscal update tabled in Parliament on December 14, 2021 and other measures, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is happening this evening is an interesting process.

We just finished having a vote that is allowing us to have more debate time.

The Conservative Party of Canada voted against that. It is hard to believe that the Conservatives do not want to work late, but I am glad a good number of them will hopefully be engaged in this debate. I find it is a very important bill that we are debating. We are talking about the fall economic update.

As my colleague has pointed out, it is an important thing to raise. We are not talking about this fall. We are talking about the fall of 2021. Just the other day, we passed budget 2022-23. Today, we are finally in a position where we are within a day or two of actually seeing Bill C-8, the fall economic update legislation, pass through the House of Commons. A Conservative member across the way is asking whose fault it is.

There is absolutely no doubt that it is the fault of the Conservative Party of Canada. It has been truly amazing to witness what I have seen over the past number of months as the Conservatives have protested what is a good, sound piece of legislation. It is legislation that is there to support Canadians from coast to coast to coast, yet the Conservative Party of Canada is stalling it. Conservatives do not want to see it pass. In fact, they got upset that we did not bring in time allocation earlier. It is hard to believe, but that is the truth.

The truth of the matter is that the Conservative Party has gone out of its way to prevent Bill C-8 from passing. I mentioned that it has been 12 days of debate so far. The Conservatives have said we should have tried harder. We introduced the legislation, and they played Conservative games such as moving a motion for concurrence, not once or twice but even more on government legislation. One thing that I really liked was that they got so tired that they did not even want to be debating bills, even though they say they do, that they adjourn debate of the House of Commons, not debate, they will adjourn—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to interrupt the hon. parliamentary secretary for a point of order.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I am just wondering if any other Liberal member has permission to speak in this place.

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

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the truth hurts. When Conservatives hear the truth, it is somewhat of a humbling experience, I hope.

The more—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. Members should actually listen to what is happening.

Mr. Mike Morrice: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. It is super late. Some folks in this place like to give this particular member more vocal opposition, but I wonder if it might be a chance to listen to the member for Winnipeg North.

Government Orders

• (2155)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have just asked for temperatures to be lowered.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I know this is hard stuff to believe, but it is actually true. During the fall economic statement from last year, we had the Conservative filibuster and the games they play. I am giving a couple of examples of the games they play. One day, the government said it wanted to bring in Bill C-8 once again for debate. The Conservatives' reaction was to bring in a concurrence motion to prevent that debate from occurring.

I remember one day we wanted to debate the bill. What did the Conservative Party do? It moved to adjourn debate and the actual day. The Conservatives did not want to work for the rest of the day. They came in, they had question period, they did a few things after question period and then they were done for the day. Is there any member who is really surprised with the reaction we get from the Conservative Party?

We have a Conservative official opposition that sees good legislation. I am going to go through a number of the points in terms of the silliness we see from the Conservative Party, the type of legislation this is and how Canadians can benefit from it. There are a number of initiatives that are here.

The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance first started talking about the legislation and the need for a fiscal update in October of last year. In December the legislation was brought in, then there was an attempt for the government to get it passed through in January and February because we could not build a consensus in December.

There is stuff within this legislation that really matters. We heard some of those examples, in particular, raised by New Democratic members of the House earlier today. They are things I would have thought the Conservative Party would have been sympathetic to. I will give the example of a new tax credit that is being established for farmers. It would ultimately see farmers receive a credit. Why would the Conservative Party deny farmers where I am from, the Prairies, the opportunity to realize that particular benefit?

What about the whole idea of the tax breaks that were being provided for education supplies, for teachers and others? It is a substantial difference in the tax break that is being provided. Again, we can factor in the pandemic and going back into classrooms. Because of the Conservative Party's stalling tactics, it still has not passed the House of Commons.

Those are the types of initiatives that really affected individuals, not to mention businesses. Businesses want to be able to improve the quality of air through their ventilation systems in terms of using those tax breaks for those entrepreneurs or those businesses. The Conservative Party will say it supports farmers and it supports teachers. I am not sure of that, but it often will claim that. It says it supports small businesses, but again, it continues to stall Bill C-8: our fall 2021 update incorporated in this legislation.

It provides the government with the opportunity to deal with one issue that we hear a lot about. Housing is a big concern. This is the

first time we have seen a national government in Canada deal with the issue of housing over the years. Not that long ago under this administration, we brought in the national housing strategy. We put in historic amounts of real dollars to support things such as non-profit housing units, emergency shelters and so much more.

Within this legislation, there is a special annual tax on underutilized residential properties from foreign investors. Part of the purpose of bringing in that tax is to recognize the impact that these investments from foreigners are having on our housing industry. I am happy to say there are even further measures taken in the more recent budget that we just passed last week.

• (2200)

The Conservatives on the one hand will talk about the importance of housing, but in reality there is only one party, with the support of another, that is ultimately recognizing the need to see action, and Bill C-8 does that, too. It does not answer all of the problems around the issue of housing, but at least it shows that the national government is prepared to provide leadership on the issue. We recognize that, in dealing with the housing crisis in Canada today, all levels of government and other stakeholders need to come up. We are demonstrating that very clearly, going back to Bill C-8, the fall economic statement, and the last federal election, when we made a commitment to deal with the issue of housing. Bill C-8 is a part of that.

What about the \$1.7 billion allocated for rapid tests? We can flash back to last December. We had provinces such as Quebec that, at the beginning of January, instituted a curfew. Other provinces were going into lockdowns again. It was because they needed and recognized the need for rapid tests for the next wave of the coronavirus that came around. We ensured that we would have the supplies that were necessary to distribute to our provinces and territories and others.

I recall, back in December, Ottawa still had a stockpile of rapid tests. It was not until December of last year that the demand for and usage of them increased dramatically. In Bill C-8, we had to ensure that the federal government had the access to spend the money that was going to be necessary in order to acquire those millions of tests. In that very short window, through the fine efforts of our departments, ministries and others, we were able to acquire literally a hundred million-plus new rapid tests as a direct result of the need here in Canada. It required \$1.7 billion, and that was even before we started to get into mid-January. This is something that was incorporated in Bill C-8, yet the Conservative Party still did not believe that it was worthy to pass.

We had other things in regard to the proof of vaccination initiative. Many provinces looked to Ottawa to support those vaccination initiatives. Not all provinces have actually cancelled the use of those vaccination initiatives. In fact, provinces including my home province were asking Ottawa to assist in financial support for those programs, and that is exactly what Bill C-8 would do.

Government Orders

The pandemic, in the minds of many Conservatives, is ancient history and it virtually evaporated in December of last year. However, for the rest of Canadians and provincial jurisdictions, including some Progressive Conservative provincial jurisdictions, which are quite different from the Conservatives we see inside the chamber here, I will give members that much, still recognized the need for things like proof of vaccination cards.

• (2205)

They were utilized extensively. It took an effort to create them and they needed to be supported. For many of the initiatives to take on the pandemic, about 80% of new money spent came from Ottawa, as it was very important that Ottawa, working with Canadians and the many different stakeholders, took initiative to minimize the negative impacts of the coronavirus. That is why a number of programs were developed to support Canadians.

Bill C-8 is just one piece of legislation. There were other pieces of legislation that were introduced to ensure that we could minimize the negative impacts of COVID-19 on Canadians and our economy. As the Conservative Party was focused on all sorts of things that were not necessarily related to COVID, the coronavirus or any other important public policy issue, we continued to be focused on legislative and budgetary measures that would improve Canada's positioning going out of the pandemic.

That is one of the reasons why, when we compare Canada's performance with that of other nations around the world, we have done exceptionally well. We can talk about the overall vaccination rates. Canada has virtually led the world, in good part, in getting people vaccinated. Look at our federal civil service, which is at 99%. We have seen strong leadership in many different ways on the vaccination front. I believe that is what has put Canada well ahead of so many other countries. It is because of the success of getting vaccinations and delivering them to the provinces and territories. We saw a high sense of co-operation with their distribution, and ultimately we got shots in the arms. That is one of the measures that was taken that put Canada in the great position that we have found ourselves in today.

We also have exceptionally low unemployment rates. We have seen well over 115% of the jobs come back that were lost during the pandemic, which is far greater than our neighbour from the south, the United States. Even in the area of inflation, Canada's inflation rate remains substantially less than that of the United States and many countries in the European Union, and is less than the average of the G20.

We have implemented programs of support for small businesses, whether through Bill C-8 or other initiatives, such as the rent subsidy, the wage subsidy and the wage loss subsidy. These types of programs have made a real and tangible difference for our small businesses in Canada. As a direct result, Canada was in a far greater position than many other countries to get and keep jobs.

Programs such as the CERB enabled us to ensure that people had money in their pockets. However, we recognized that, as much as CERB was a fantastic program that served nine million Canadians, the pandemic was not over. Bill C-8, the fall economic update, also introduced the need to make other modifications, such as to the

Employment Insurance Act, given the importance of seasonal workers.

• (2210)

With all of the initiatives that I have just referenced, my question and challenge for the Conservative Party is to tell me what aspect of this legislation is so upsetting that it justifies the type of filibuster we have witnessed by the Conservative Party on this legislation. What aspect within this legislation justifies this behaviour on Bill C-8?

I am afraid to say that if it were not for the motion we have today before us, there would still be at least another couple of days of debate on this motion. The Conservative Party has made it very clear that it wants to frustrate the government's legislative agenda as much as possible to stop legislation, no matter what it is, from passing so that it can criticize us for not passing enough legislation. There seems to be a bit of hypocrisy, possibly. That is what comes to mind. It is almost like extending a hand to help someone up and then sticking out a leg to trip them after they are on their feet. That seems to be the type of game the Conservative Party is playing. Let us pass Bill C-8.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I do appreciate the whimsical musings of my friend from Winnipeg Centre, and all of the really interesting aspects he has noted regarding what has gone on in the chamber today and throughout the last couple of months. For example, there are some of the stats he gave. He said Canada has the lowest unemployment. That is because three million people cannot go to work because of your mandates.

Because of the—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That is not my fault, sir.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I am sorry. Sometimes it is frustrating, because some of the stats that my friend across the aisle quotes are really just made up by him in his dreams. He really does not know what is going on with people around this country. It is actually a bit embarrassing for him, I would say, when he stands up and spouts off rhetoric about things that do not really affect people's everyday lives.

I would ask my hon. colleague what he has to say to the three million people who cannot go to work because of mandates. What does he say to them when they cannot actually pay their bills, cannot pay their mortgages and cannot support their families?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, what I would say to the member is that he needs to maybe shy away from the Conservative notes that are provided to the caucus. At the very least, if he wants to share the notes with me, I will make the modifications and corrections, because I do not know—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Regina—Lewvan has a point of order.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I know the member did not try to mislead the Canadian public. Obviously, members can tell that I did not have any notes to ask that question. It came from constituents. I would ask him to apologize.

Government Orders

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member is correct.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I am saying that many of the Conservative members have the notes memorized. Those are the lines.

I realize the member does not have a pad and paper and is not reading from anything. I recognize that, but he is listening to the Conservative people in the back room, and those numbers they are giving are garbage. To say that there are three million—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I ask the hon. members to try to keep the debate at a level that honours what we are trying to do here.

The hon. member had a point. He did not read any notes and he was asking for that to be recognized.

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

• (2215)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Madam Speaker, while listening to my colleagues, I thought that a song might help soothe their nerves. Do not worry, I am not going to start singing. Instead, I will ask my colleague from the governing party a question.

I am a little concerned. In the fiscal update we are studying and in the government's recent statements, we sense that it is once more trying to interfere in one of Quebec's and the provinces' jurisdictions by meddling in Quebec's property taxes, even though the real cause of the crisis is the scarcity of affordable housing.

I would like some reassurance from my colleague in that regard. I am a little concerned by the fact that more attention is being paid to meddling with property taxes and the provinces' and Quebec's jurisdictions than to addressing the real problem, which is a lack of social housing.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the 1% annual tax the member is referencing in her question has been, generally speaking, very well received by Canadians in all regions of our country because they understand and appreciate the impact it is having on housing speculation. At the end of the day, if it were up to the Bloc, all Ottawa would be is an ATM machine, and I believe Canadians expect more of their federal government than being an ATM machine.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have heard many of the member's speeches in the House and am always impressed by his dedication to speak. I always encourage other people in the party to join that team.

One thing that really concerns me about this bill is the fact that it does not address key issues around climate change. We are in a climate crisis, and I think scientists are fairly firm on that. There

needs more relevant action, but we are not seeing it from the government.

Specifically, one of the things we need to look at is how we are going to deal with emissions, especially from our homes. We know that right now a lot of people are struggling to make ends meet. One of the ways we could support low-income families is by encouraging them to do things that would make their heating bills go down and look at some of those key things. However, there is absolutely nothing that addresses this and makes sure that low-income families can access these kinds of opportunities.

I am wondering if the member could talk about when the government is going to take climate change seriously and actually take steps and actions that are going to help not only the environment, but those of us who are suffering the most economically.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, Bill C-8 is meant as an implementation bill for the fall update. There are many things that I personally would have loved to see incorporated into the legislation, but I recognized, even back then, that a budget would be introduced, and it was. It has been very well received. We have had very few questions on it from the opposition and I see that as a positive thing. We have a very proactive and progressive Minister of Environment who will not accept anything but a budget that reflects a lot of green. The Prime Minister has very much indicated his desire for green budgets.

The only thing that comes to my mind in Bill C-8 is the incentives for air ventilation or better quality air. They might help, albeit indirectly, with some of the renovations that would take place as a direct result of the bill. However, there is probably a list of things, if I could wave a wand, that I would have liked to see in a bill such as this.

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a few things on my mind about Bill C-8. Businesses had to meet the 40% or 50% thresholds for October, November and December sales, and I would like to know why the government caved to the hoteliers when they lobbied. It did not listen to the CFIB or CRA, and businesses that are down between 10% and 40% do not qualify for anything. That is thousands and thousands of small businesses in Canada, and I know because they come to me. They are friends of mine.

Does the member opposite know why that program was set up the way it was, with such inequities in it?

• (2220)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: First of all, Madam Speaker, I am not hearing from the Conservatives or the New Democrats, although I can understand the Bloc, what they oppose in the legislation, and I see that as a good thing. The member referenced why there are no extended benefits. From the best I can tell, they go against what many of his Conservative colleagues are talking about. They are saying that we are investing too much in tax dollars in some of the program supports we are providing to small businesses. From day one, we have been supporting small businesses. Has it been absolutely perfect in all ways? I suspect not, and there has been a need to make modifications.

Government Orders

As to the question the member put forward, I do not necessarily know the details. If he wants me to get a more detailed answer, maybe he can come across the way and we can talk to the Minister of Finance or the Minister of Small Business to see if we can get a more detailed answer for him.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, to the question earlier from the member for North Island—Powell River, I would offer that it is not just about being green. It is important to follow the science on the climate crisis.

However, I want to ask a question for the member for Winnipeg North on a subject we do agree on, which is addressing the cost of housing. He mentioned the vacancy tax that is in the bill, specifically that this is an opportunity to ensure homes are for people to live in and not commodities for investors to trade.

As the member knows, there are other jurisdictions where vacancy taxes have been proposed at a higher amount. In Kitchener, for example, there was a 35% increase in the cost of housing last year alone. This is a 1% tax. Could he offer his reflection on the possibility of increasing that, if not in this bill, than in future bills, so we could move the vacancy tax towards one that could influence the speculation in our housing markets?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question. I believe that the government needs to work with the different stakeholders, in particular, our municipalities and others. I very much want to deal with the housing crisis in Canada today, and I believe that there are certain areas in which Ottawa must and has to play a leadership role.

In order for us to overcome the housing situation, not only do we have to start thinking about things such as housing co-ops and other forms of non-profits, how we can directly and indirectly support people on the issue of affordability to first-time homebuyers and so forth, but it is also critical that city governments in particular start looking at how we can increase the housing supply and minimize the speculation that takes place.

• (2225)

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will start by saying that I am seeking unanimous consent to share my time with the hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have received notice from all recognized parties that they are in agreement with this request.

All those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay. It is agreed.

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

It is agreed. The hon. member may proceed.

Hon. Ed Fast: Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to chime in on this debate again. Bill C-8 is actually a piece of implementing legislation that arises out of the biggest spending budget in Canadian history, namely budget 2021, which was tabled well over a year ago. That budget set a record because the Liberal government had not tabled a budget for well over two years, which is

something that has almost never happened in Canadian history. Budgets are intended to be tabled every single year to give Canadians a picture of what their finances look like and a picture of what the government wants to spend their hard earned tax dollars on and how much the government is going to borrow to try to deliver the services Canadians receive.

Bill C-8 is coming out of the biggest budget ever seen in Canada. It has over half a trillion dollars' worth of spending in one year, and members can think about that. It ended up doubling Canada's national debt. That is how big this budget was, so members can understand why it was critical that the official opposition, which is the Conservative Party, and other opposition parties in this House had an opportunity to exercise oversight over this huge budget.

Of course, a budget in itself is not legislation. It is simply the government's statement of what it intends to do the following year. The government brought forward this budget document, then over the subsequent months of 2021, it began to roll out enabling legislation. First it was the budget implementation act, then different pieces of legislation after that. Along the way the government also tabled in the House something called a fall economic statement, which gives Canadians a six-month update on where the finances of the nation are and what the government still plans to do arising out of the budget.

Out of that process has come this bill, Bill C-8. Again, it is a bill that spends well over \$50 billion of taxpayers' money, much of it borrowed, by the way. Members can understand why we are reluctant to force this through the House of Commons. Members will understand why we are reluctant to ram this thing through without proper oversight and accountability, yet it is the Liberal government that, every step along the way, has tried to do exactly that. It has tried to push this along faster than it should be. In fact, the Liberals have accused us of delaying this bill, when all we have done is exercise proper oversight, which is something the Liberal government really hates.

I look back at the mandate letter the finance minister received from the Prime Minister just over a year ago, and that mandate letter actually had a specific provision in it that said that the government was seeking to be transparent and accountable in everything it did, including when it came to budgetary matters. In fact, that was the direction to the finance minister. It was for her to be as transparent as possible with the finances of this nation, yet we see here the Liberal government doing everything it can to push through legislation that requires proper oversight.

Let me place this in a larger context. I have already mentioned the fact that the government has embarked upon the largest spending spree in Canadian history. In fact, over the last year or so it has doubled the national debt, if members can imagine that, and since it was elected in 2015, the government has increased spending by some 53%.

• (2230)

Since 2019, which was before COVID, the government has increased spending by 25%. For most household budgets in the country, if they tried to increase their spending like that, they would have to go to their local insolvency specialist and say, “Hey, listen. We cannot meet our payments anymore. Please help.”

However, with this government, it is spend, spend, spend. It is a Liberal tax and spend problem that this country has gained since our former Conservative Party lost the election in 2015.

Do members know what makes this worse? A year ago, when that 2021 budget was tabled, there were already warning signs. The economy was starting to recover and our Parliamentary Budget Officer had warned the government that inflationary pressures were building and that this extra 100 billion dollars' worth of stimulus that the finance minister had set aside to stimulate the economy might not be necessary. In fact, it might be overkill.

We know now that the government has spent somewhere in the order of \$176 billion of spending that is not COVID-related. In other words, it was in the nature of stimulus, which it pumped into the economy, and then Canadians are surprised, and the Liberals are surprised, that we suddenly have rampant inflation.

Today we know that the inflation rate is 6.7% and continues to go up. In fact, economists are incredibly worried right now about the rate of inflation in this country. They are concerned because now the Bank of Canada, our central bank, has had to step up. It is starting to increase interest rates, which, of course, impacts mortgage holders across Canada and loan holders across Canada. Typically, those are businesses and small businesses, and typically those are households that are highly indebted and are very vulnerable to high rate increases. That is what we are seeing happening around us right now.

We have the twin scourges of inflation on one side and increasing interest rates on the other, which are going to severely pinch Canadians and are going to make life even more difficult at a time when we have an affordability crisis in the country.

It is in that context that the government is still proposing to spend, spend, spend. How do I know that? Bill C-8 actually comes out of the previous year's budget. One would have assumed that the government would have learned from its mistakes, and that its next budget, budget 2022, would taper off spending, would control and discipline spending.

In fact, what happened in the 2022 budget? It is just as bad. There is \$56 billion of new spending, much of it permanent spending that will bind future generations to these programs the government is creating.

The bottom line is this: These Liberals have been pounding their desks saying, “Hey, we have to get this passed, quickly, quickly, quickly”, and we have resisted. We said that we were going to take our time to review this legislation because there are things in this legislation that we support, such as tax credits for teachers and for farmers. We support those things. From time to time, we have asked the government to pull those things out of this legislation so that we can vote on them separately. Of course, the government

Government Orders

says no. They want us to vote against the whole of Bill C-8, so they can blame us for voting against things that we actually support.

We are not going to be bullied. We are not going to be pushed. We are going to take our time and do this job properly.

We have no choice but to vote no against Bill C-8 because it is perpetrating an incredible expense and massive debt on future generations of Canadians, and I just do not want to allow that to happen.

• (2235)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I hope we caught what just happened there toward the end of his speech. On the one side, the member is saying that we need proper oversight, and we need to properly go over this in the details. Fifty-one Conservatives have spoken since report stage to this, compared to five Bloc members, two NDP, two Green and three Liberal, but what is even more remarkable is that he concluded his speech by saying they are going to vote against it.

Which is it? Are we going to debate this endlessly because we really want to have that proper oversight? Is that what they want, or do they already know they are going to vote against it, which the member just revealed at the end of his speech?

He is trying to have it both ways. He is trying to say, “We want to have proper oversight”, but he has also given away the fact that he already plans to vote against it.

Hon. Ed Fast: Madam Speaker, I again remind the member for Kingston and the Islands, which is the home to one of my cousins actually, of what I said in my speech, which is that this is the largest budget in Canadian history that this bill is reflecting. The bill is legislation for implementing that budget.

In a budget of \$500 billion, over half a trillion dollars, does the member not think we are going to find things that we would support? Of course we are. However, will the Liberal government actually allow us to vote separately on those items, those worthy programs that we believe are necessary to sustain a strong economy to allow families to flourish? What we will not countenance is bullying from the Liberal government trying to push through legislation without the proper oversight.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened closely to my hon. colleague.

One thing that was left out of the economic update, Bill C-8, is obviously the health transfer increase that Quebec, the provinces and the territories have been calling for unanimously. Everyone wants health transfers to be increased to 35%.

I think that the Conservatives agree with us that the health transfers need to be increased. The only thing we have not yet heard a Conservative MP say is by how much the transfers should be increased.

Government Orders

Is the hon. member prepared to say right now in the House that if the Conservative Party formed the government, health transfers would be increased to 35%?

[English]

Hon. Ed Fast: Madam Speaker, that is a trick question, as he would have concluded.

I can say that we as Conservatives believe in co-operative federalism, where we work with the provinces and territories to come up with solutions to problems, including the huge problems we have within the health care system in Canada. We know that the provinces need help not only with surgical wait-lists but we know they also need help with mental health care. However, the way these problems are solved is to sit down around a table and discuss what those specific needs are and talk about what each one costs and prioritize them.

That is how a Conservative government would act. It is not how the Liberal government acts, but it is how we would act. We are respectful of the provinces and territories and what they bring to the table. We would like to have the government respect us as well. That is how to craft a proper health care policy for Canada.

• (2240)

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.*

I was struck by the member for Abbotsford mentioning the banks stepping up by increasing interest rates. I want to ask him about the banks having increased their profits, nearly \$58 billion in 2021. The Royal Bank alone made \$16 billion. It just seems to me that they are not necessarily stepping up when they are continuing to see great increases in their profits.

I want to ask why the Conservatives are protecting the interests of the rich rather than trying to make sure we are doing better for the working people in Canada.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Abbotsford, in 10 seconds.

Hon. Ed Fast: Madam Speaker, I cannot answer that in 10 seconds, but I will say that we are not here in any way promoting the interests of the rich and the wealthy, as the member may have suggested. We are not even in government. We do believe that the wealthy should pay their fair share.

The government has come forward with what they call a recovery dividend on banks, a one-time charge of 15% and then an ongoing charge of 1.5% every year in terms of new taxes on the banks.

We believe what is really required is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That is well over 10 seconds.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the good people of Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

I have to warn members that this is not the first time I have participated in debating the bill. In fact, the bill was first introduced

back in December. Now, much has changed in our world since that time, and much of it, sadly, has not been for the better.

Recently, I reviewed my previous comments on Bill C-8. Those comments were before the atrocities had begun in Ukraine. Indeed, our worst nightmares have now come true as we are witnessing the horrors of Putin's war on Ukraine as innocent civilians are murdered. These disturbing events are changing the face of our world. When I last spoke to Bill C-8, I raised a serious concern that I will repeat here today. I said that a significant portion of Canada's fiscal capacity has been spent. It is gone, and we must recognize that, because in the event we run into any type of future emergency situation, we will have less fiscal room to respond. Well, today, here we are.

I know that every member in this place stands with the Ukrainian people. We stand with the government in supporting Ukraine, while at the same time doing everything we can to try and stop Putin. On these points, I hope we are all united.

Recent world events, I would argue, have made this spending bill, Bill C-8, woefully out of date. Let us not forget that it is our very own Parliamentary Budget Officer who has scrutinized the fiscal numbers proposed in the bill. The PBO, as we have, has come out and said that stimulus spending is not needed. That was before the world crisis that we see today.

Let us talk about one of the very real problems coming before us. In this place we are all united that we need to prioritize welcoming Ukrainians who are fleeing the tyranny and aggression of Putin, but as they arrive, they will face the same challenge that everyday Canadians in every city and in many rural areas are currently facing: housing affordability. It simply does not exist anymore. Housing is completely out of control in many Canadian cities. Recently, the Toronto Star reported that the average selling price of a detached home in Toronto pushes the \$2-million mark. Make no mistake, the situation of rental housing is no better.

In Bill C-8, there is the proposed underused housing tax act. We have criticized this act because, again, when the Liberals bring forward what they say are solutions, many people note, "Oh, we have unused housing that will stimulate things so that more people can have housing." Well, let us just look at the City of Vancouver in my province of British Columbia, which has recently revised its own version of the underused housing act that this government is drawing on.

The city found two things. One is that 1% was not drawing enough. Our Green member of Parliament who was debating with us had raised the suggestion, but it does not seem to work. Housing affordability in Vancouver has not done well under this tax on underutilized properties imposed by the City of Vancouver, and so it raised it to 5% in 2023. My question to the government would be this: Does it plan on raising it to 5%? The good people of Vancouver would probably say that they have seen housing affordability go out the window. They have seen housing prices go up, and guess who is collecting more and more revenue. It is the City of Vancouver. Guess who is going to be multiplying that by five. That is a huge amount.

Again, this government started at 1%. We said that 1% was not going to have an effect. The only effect it would have would be to put more money in the government's pocket. Let us not forget that situation in Ukraine that I talked about. That is creating windfall revenues for the government.

On inflation, the member for Abbotsford is a tough act to follow. I am trying to keep up with him. The government is gaining more and more money all the time. When it added an escalator, the link to the CPI on things like beer, wine and spirits, that was not just it. The former member for Malpeque, Wayne Easter, was very critical on this point in committee. He said that adding a CPI to user fees for the whole of the Government of Canada, national parks, sport fees, all of them, are subject to inflation. What we have is a government that keeps adding more to its revenue. It is receiving more money than it ever has, and yet it is spending faster and faster.

● (2245)

At the same time, I talk about not being able to provide appropriate housing for Ukrainians, if they can come to this country, because rentals are difficult to find. Homes are very difficult to come by. I want to take this moment to zoom into my own riding. Once again I have to raise the subject for the good people in Princeton and Merritt, B.C. These communities were devastated by flooding in November of last year. At the time, and I gave full credit to the Prime Minister, he said to those communities that he would have their back and that he would be there for them.

Six months later, the bills are past due and only now is funding once again promised to arrive. Will it this time? I have asked this question in this place many times. I have raised multiple questions and there is literally never any response from any minister on that side of the House. These people are still out of their homes. Why? It is not because of underutilized houses. It is because they have no home to return to.

Some of those homes are being looted. Imagine spending six months, half a year of their lives, in a motel room because they cannot go home. Their homes are being looted by thieves. This is not a developing country. This is happening here in Canada. How does rural Canada survive when the federal government cannot deliver promised supports in a reasonable period of time? We should ask ourselves that question. I say to members in this place, what if it was a community in their riding that was devastated by flooding? Do they think six months, half a year, is reasonable?

Here in Ottawa there was a three-week blockade and there was a \$10-million fund on the table in no time flat. That money is al-

Government Orders

ready going out the door. Loblaws got \$10 million, and got that \$10 million much faster, just to buy new refrigerators. No one was homeless. It was for new refrigerators. The people in my riding are taxpayers. They need help, critical help. When the Prime Minister says he will be there for them, that he will have their backs, he is not there. I cannot think of a greater failure for a country, and that failure is on all of us.

I have talked a lot about this particular bill, Bill C-8. I have talked a little about the underutilized housing. One thing I just have to say is the government continues to rely on parts 4 and 5. We may argue about vaccination passport initiatives that are in part 5 or ventilation and all those things, but what I have to really object to is the manner in which the government is actually injecting, literally, things into its bills. Instead of going through the estimates process and putting them into the regular fiscal framework, it is putting it in legislation. That makes it tougher for members of Parliament and senators to be able to follow. That means the job of all of us members of Parliament is made more difficult.

I have to say about Bill C-8, that is not a good thing here. Perhaps I could make this a little better. Before I close, I would like to propose an amendment to Bill C-8.

I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following:

Bill C-8, An Act to implement certain provisions of the economic and fiscal update tabled in Parliament on December 14, 2021, and other measures, be not now read a third time, but be referred back to the Standing Committee on Finance for the purpose of reconsidering clauses 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 with a view to remove the income tax provisions of the Bill.

I do appreciate the House's attention and look forward to questions and comments.

● (2250)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
The amendment is in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):
Madam Speaker, now we see that after 51 Conservatives have already spoken to this at report stage, the Conservatives have decided that it would now be in the best interests of the bill to be sent back to committee, believe it or not.

Government Orders

Here we have a member who has given his thoughts and comments on some concerns that he has in the bill. I am curious if he could inform the House as to the degree to which the Conservative members on the committee brought up these issues, how that was reflected upon, whether or not we have been going through the democratic process to get to where we are right now, and how he sees that process unfolding differently if this were going to return to committee?

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, I was placed on the finance committee and later elected as vice-chair very late in the process of Bill C-8, so unfortunately I only got to see the tail end of it. As I said, and this is something the member for Abbotsford was very strident on, the reason we were elected to this place is to make sure that we are producing legislation that fits the times. Unfortunately, this particular piece of legislation was written where it is not taking those things into account. I talked about the underused housing act as being woefully insufficient, and how many of the things the government is not even putting in the fiscal framework but is using legislation to pass. I just do not think the committee or this place is served to see that bill go forward without further review.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, some of the income tax provisions, as I understand it, in Bill C-8 include creating a refundable tax credit for SMEs to improve air quality in their places of work, expanding the travel component of the northern residents deduction, enhancing the refundable tax credit for teachers, creating a refundable tax credit for agricultural businesses so that farmers are able to get more money back under climate action incentives, and creating a tax on underused housing that the member had featured prominently in his remarks.

Have I missed anything from the list? These are all things that he wants the committee to re-examine, if I understood his proposal correctly.

• (2255)

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's interventions at committee and also here. Yes.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague from British Columbia talked a little about housing and the importance of the issue for his riding and all across the country. I would like him to provide us with a few more sentences to elaborate on that further, if he would like.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate the member's efforts here in the House to make sure that these points are being raised. If we have refugees coming from other countries who are experiencing difficulties, I know the Anglican Church of Canada has publicly raised the fact that there is too much paperwork in the government's process. Even if they get through that paperwork, other charitable groups are asking where we house people because rental situations, in the government's mind, have to fit certain criteria.

A local radio host talked about simply putting out one of his family's properties for rent. He had all sorts of offers. People were saying they would pay double the damage deposit and they would help with chores. We are finding that it is so difficult for people to get housing that they are getting desperate.

People come from desperate situations, whether they are refugees from Ukraine or from other places in the world, or whether they are our own people in places like Merritt and Princeton where people do not have homes to go to and are stuck in motels with their emergency supports being capped.

This is the problem the government has. It is not stepping up to the plate. It is not working with provinces and it is not delivering the help that Liberals keep saying, hand on heart, to millennials: "We are going to make housing affordable." I do not expect the Minister of Finance or the Prime Minister to scratch every itch, but I do suggest that they start keeping their promises, whether to refugees or to Canadians who need our help.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to seek the unanimous consent of the House to share my time with the valiant member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): All those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay.

Okay.

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

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Speaker, given what time it is, I will try to keep it interesting because I can see that many of my colleagues are nodding off. That is rather ironic, considering that one of the topics covered in Bill C-8 deals with giving people a place to lay their head.

It is no secret that I like to remind myself regularly who I work for. The answer will not surprise anyone. I work for the people in my riding, the people of Lac-Saint-Jean. I have the privilege of representing their hopes, interests and fears, and I try to be as thorough as possible in that endeavour. I work until late in the evening, as is the case once again tonight.

I will use much of my time to make a plea for our young people who are struggling to find housing. The housing situation for the people we represent is very serious. I was speaking with one of my constituents just before I began my speech, to confirm that this is what he is experiencing. He is in his 20s and recently moved in with his girlfriend. He told me that his rental is costing him more than the mortgage he had taken out on his house. Everything is backwards. What is worse, they are lucky because they do not live in the city. Most young couples rarely have this choice.

These days, the only certainty for anyone looking for a place to rent or buy is that it will be a complicated, tiring and stressful task. What is happening in the housing market is so serious that many people are working just to keep a roof over their heads. In Quebec alone, 450,000 renters spend more than 30% of their income on housing. That is unsustainable. We would need 50,000 new units of social, community and affordable housing to address this crisis. Instead, we are being offered a tax. There is no vision other than creating 6,000 housing units a year for all of Canada.

Government Orders

According to estimates, Canada would need 1.8 million housing units just to catch up to other G7 countries. Let us not give up hope: We should get there in 300 years. The Liberals are presenting their national housing strategy as a revolutionary measure. The reality is that their objectives are just as unremarkable as their results.

As was the case for health transfers, the government does not accept responsibility for its withdrawal. Today in question period, the House leader of the Bloc Québécois stated that, just like Pontius Pilate, the Liberals washed its hands of the situation.

Everyone is saying that there is a housing shortage, and in particular social and community housing. There is a very simple reason for this and it is connected to what I was saying earlier. It is completely backwards for it to cost as much or more to rent than to buy. Vulnerable people do not have the financial leverage to buy and end up trapped between an unattainable real estate market and a shortage of rentals that are already too expensive. This is a prime example of supply and demand.

The Liberals are focusing on a series of programs and initiatives that hit all of the variables affecting the housing market: more supply, more housing. The 1% tax on vacant properties set out in Bill C-8 is all well and good, but we do not need a 1% tax on the value of vacant buildings. What we need is more housing supply.

It will come as a surprise to nobody if I say that the Bloc Québécois wants the federal government to work with the Government of Quebec because housing is exclusively under provincial jurisdiction. The Bloc's only amendment called for the property tax measures to apply in a given province only if that province agreed to it. The Liberals dismissed that amendment, which is a real shame.

It will also come as no surprise to anyone if I say that it is of utmost importance to the Bloc that Bill C-8 not intrude on Quebec's jurisdiction. Unfortunately, the tax envisioned by this bill constitutes a clear intrusion in the area of property tax. Even if the government is setting out solely to penalize non-resident, non-Canadian owners of second homes, it is intrusion.

If the government wants to introduce a tax to regulate a sector that is clearly within the jurisdiction of the governments of Quebec and the provinces, which is what Bill C-8 would do, it should, at the very least, ask them what they think. Without that, I do not see how I can vote in favour of this bill. I am actually a little disappointed in my colleagues who could not be bothered to listen to us.

Now I would like to comment on federal health transfers. Here again, the Liberal government is seizing an opportunity to disappoint Quebeckers.

• (2300)

Part 6 of Bill C-8 authorizes the Minister of Health to make payments of up to \$1.72 billion out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund in relation to COVID-19 tests, but that is not what we are asking for. That is not what we need.

If our demands are not clear enough, then it may be time for the government to get its head out of the clouds and go spend even an hour visiting a hospital. It is all well and good for the government to provide special funding during COVID to meet the need for sup-

plies specifically intended to combat the virus, but the past two years have wreaked serious havoc on our hospitals. Now more than ever, Quebec and the provinces need a lifeline. A measly 3% transfer a year until 2027 is not going to earn the federal government forgiveness for decades of withdrawal from its responsibilities.

If the government wants to talk about billions of dollars in federal aid, then it should listen to us. I will repeat the request slowly. It is not hard to understand. I hope that everyone will take note, especially those on the other side of the House.

Quebec and the provinces are unanimously calling for an immediate payment of \$28 billion with an annual 6% transfer.

That is not too much to ask, as it represents just 35% of our health care system costs. When the legislation first came into force, costs were shared 50-50. At least this way, the proportion would be increasing to 35%. Instead, the Minister of Finance opted for the easy route by copying and pasting numbers from previous years.

Canada is already behind Switzerland, France, Germany, the United Kingdom and Australia. As far as health care access and outcomes are concerned, these amounts are really nothing to celebrate.

What is more, the Prime Minister had the nerve to say that the problems with our health care systems are not just a matter of money. What are Quebeckers to make of that? As the classic tune by the Colocs goes, pass me the puck and I will score the goals. In this case, however, we do not even have enough money to buy a hockey stick, so we are far from being able to score goals.

I will close by talking about the part of Bill C-8 that provides for a six-year limitation period for the recovery of amounts owing with respect to a loan provided under the Canada emergency business account, or CEBA. I want to note that it is important to listen to the opposition and not dismiss our suggestions out of hand.

In 2020, the program was designed to provide SMEs with interest-free loans that included the possibility of partial loan forgiveness. The purpose was to help businesses cover expenses that could be avoided or deferred while they dealt with the COVID-19 shutdowns. At first, the terms stated that if the balance of the loan was paid off by December 31, 2023, a third of the loan would be forgiven.

Ever since the program was launched, the Bloc Québécois has been asking for it be improved to better respond to businesses' needs. For example, we asked for more flexible eligibility criteria for CEBA. That resulted in a better program overall. The issue of businesses' debt levels was not even raised.

We are on the same side when it comes to helping. Since I have some time left, I will offer my hon. colleagues some more suggestions for improving the situation for SMEs.

Government Orders

In e-commerce, it is a real David and Goliath story for small players that have to compete with major chains. High shipping costs and less effective digital marketing are stifling business maintenance and growth.

Canada Post's Solutions for Small Business program has some interesting measures. We propose harmonizing these measures and applying the international shipping discount to domestic shipping too. I think that is something that would not cost very much, but would go a long way.

We also suggested a single rate of \$2 per book for book deliveries in order to encourage independent book stores. These are Bloc proposals. We are not here to oppose for the sake of opposing. We are here to propose things.

I introduced a bill on credit card transaction fees. The government should at least have the power to take action by sitting down with card issuers to negotiate lower fees for online transactions. That is another Bloc Québécois proposal that might help. We are here to help people.

In conclusion, I come back to my original plea. We as parliamentarians must address the problems facing our constituents and businesses with a strong sense of duty, setting partisanship aside.

• (2305)

[English]

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Madam Speaker, regarding the government's budgetary policy, one of the big challenges this country faces right now is inflation, which is driving up the cost of everything. I would love to hear the member's thoughts on that and on the government's role in that, and what he thinks can be done to help ease the cost of living for Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Speaker, I am not an economist, but I am pretty sure that we will not fix the inflation problem by extolling the virtues of cryptocurrency. There is one thing I do know, which is that seniors are always the first to suffer as a result of inflation.

Their purchasing power has not increased, although groceries, gas, prescription drugs and housing costs have all gone up. Everything has gone up. The only thing that has not increased is their old age pension, because the government is incapable of being there for seniors.

The government has created two classes of seniors: those aged 75 and over, who got something, and those aged 74 and under, who got nothing. Does inflation affect those under 74 any less? I do not think so.

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague and friend for his speech and his commitment to workers, small businesses and his constituents.

My question is simple. Does he support teachers and farmers and our plan to give them this tax refund? Does he support Bill C-8?

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Speaker, I would first like to congratulate my colleague on how much his French has im-

proved. It is obvious that he is working on it, and it is coming along.

I support everyone in Lac-Saint-Jean. With what we have seen of Bill C-8, unfortunately, I cannot imagine how we could vote in favour of it.

• (2310)

[English]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, just to follow up, my Conservative colleague talked about inflation that is impacting not just Canada, but countries globally.

One thing we do not talk enough about is the skyrocketing concentration of wealth and the rampant inequality that is growing in our country. We see that we have the lowest corporate tax rate in the G7. We have tax havens that are designed to protect the super wealthy.

Does my colleague agree that we have a big issue when it comes to the concentration of wealth at the top and that the super wealthy could afford to contribute more so that we could build affordable housing, so that we could make sure that people have pharmacare and so that we could tackle the toxic drug supply and the overdose crisis? I appreciate my colleague for always speaking and trying to find solutions.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Speaker, my colleague from Joliette has been working on this issue for years and making suggestions to the government about tax havens. It is appalling that the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer in a G7 country.

The wealth gap is getting wider and wider. The kind of situation we are in today is bound to happen when Bay Street has so much power and influence within the government. This is unfortunately where we find ourselves.

Instead of tackling tax havens, the government is giving more tax credits and subsidies to the banks and oil companies. At some point, a decision will have to be made, but that will take political will. This political will would free the government from Bay Street so that we can work on behalf of the people who voted for us, the people who are actually working to build a better life for themselves.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean, who gave an excellent speech on Bill C-8. I thank him for sharing his time with me. It was wonderful to listen to him, and I might have been very happy just to continue listening to him.

Government Orders

I do have a few things to say about Bill C-8. One of the first things we can talk about is how this bill was presented. When the government provides an economic update, it is often referred to as a mini-budget, and everyone has expectations and wants to see what is in it.

When we saw Bill C-8, the economic update implementation bill, there was not much to it. Let us say that we were not impressed, but that does not really matter.

We expect better from a government. We expect a government to do important things and make important announcements. We expect the government to do serious work, since it has public servants and staff. There are all kinds of people making requests, sharing ideas and wanting to change society. Bloc Québécois has all kinds of good ideas. The members across the way do not often take these good ideas, but they do from time to time.

Today we are debating Bill C-8, which contains different elements divided into seven parts, and I am going to focus on one of them. The Bloc Québécois had some questions about the other parts and was prepared to send them to be studied in committee, which is what happened.

We had serious concerns about part two of the bill regarding the tax on underused or vacant housing belonging to non-residents or non-Canadians. The government wants to impose a 1% tax on vacant housing to help address the housing crisis. Will that make a difference? I am not sure. Could the idea of a 1% tax on vacant housing curb speculation to some extent or prevent these properties from being left vacant? It is possible.

However, the most important question here is whether it is the federal government's role to implement this tax. Normally, when we think about housing and property taxes, we do not think "federal government". In fact, if we take a step back, it becomes increasingly clear that this tax is nothing more than a federal intrusion into an area that is not under its jurisdiction, specifically municipal affairs and the property value of buildings. This was also pointed out by witnesses in committee, particularly the constitutional expert Patrick Taillon.

Generally speaking, we expect that everything municipal will be handled by the municipalities, which are under provincial jurisdiction, not federal jurisdiction. If there were a tax to be imposed, perhaps Quebec should do it, but certainly not the federal government.

I think we can discuss whether this is a good measure. There may be interesting ideas that warrant discussion in the context of such a measure. When we see who is behind it and wonder how it would be implemented, however, it no longer works, and that is the problem.

This means that, unfortunately, we may have to vote against Bill C-8. There is not much in the bill to begin with, but it does contain something that is just unacceptable.

In general, federal intrusion in one of Quebec's jurisdictions is often done through the government's spending power. This, however, is a different case, because this is not how the federal government usually interferes in Quebec's jurisdictions.

For those who do not know it—which I do not believe is the case for the members on other side, who are very familiar with this strategy, as they often use it—the federal government's spending power lets it do indirectly what cannot be done directly under the Constitution.

• (2315)

Essentially, the government will send a cheque, which it is not supposed to do, but people are going to take it because they need the money. There will be many strings attached. In the end, even though it is our jurisdiction and we should be making the decisions, the feds will be the ones deciding, because with all the conditions attached we are going to lose any possibility of truly controlling our levers and jurisdictions.

Quebec's jurisdictions include our education and health care systems. Year after year we ask for more funding, but it seems that we hit a wall in Ottawa. We are told that we are being given more funding. The government will increase funding by 3% a year, but system costs are increasing by 6% a year. They are making fun of us. We continue to hear the same nonsense from them.

The last budget was even worse. They basically added another layer, stating that "Any conversation between the federal government and the provinces and territories will focus on delivering better health care outcomes". When they say "any conversation", that is not about funding, it is about telling us how to manage our health care system. That is basically what they are saying. It is somewhat insulting to be told that. It is indicative of the direction that this government is taking, always encroaching on Quebec's jurisdiction. The health care system is a good example, but there are many, many more.

We could take, for example, the infamous fight over pensions in the 1960s. I am too young, as my father was not even born in the early 1960s. When the war over pensions was being waged, some will remember that the Quebec government wanted to set up a system where people would contribute a portion of their money to a shared fund that would one day pay out a pension when they retired. It would be a big pool of money that would generate returns. That is what gave rise to the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec.

Government Orders

The federal government did not like that. It wondered how Quebec managed to plan for such a big pot of money so it could have more control over its own destiny, which is why the federal level tried to bring in another regime that would compete or at least move faster. In the end, that did not work. The federal government ended up having to recognize the Quebec system because Quebec had been quicker. The federal level wanted to impose its own system to prevent Quebec from controlling the money. Perhaps the federal government wanted to provide better conditions for seniors, but we all know that, in the end, the aim of that battle was to determine who would manage the pot of money. Would those funds be invested to serve Ottawa's interests or Quebec's interests? That was the big question.

Thank goodness that big issue was dealt with, because now we have problems again. Take the finance issue, for example. Who remembers the Canada-wide securities commission? How many courts ruled that that was under Quebec's jurisdiction? It is not up to the federal government to create a national securities commission, but they did it anyway, both the Conservatives and the Liberals, they really pushed it. Fortunately, after multiple attempts and a lot of hard work, the Bloc Québécois succeeded in sending the commission packing. Its funding was axed. That feels good. It gave Quebec's financial system some relief.

What I just cannot fathom is the federal government's constant desire to get bigger. It is like a kind of spiderweb always out to suffocate the provinces, bit by bit. That is what it has done yet again with Bill C-8. The federal government is going to take up all the space until there is none left for us.

The Meech Lake and Charlottetown accords sought to restore the balance. That was the original objective. Every time the federal government reviewed areas of jurisdiction, it would say that it could not give this or that to Quebec, and there was ultimately almost nothing left. Quebecers voted against these two accords because the offers were ridiculous, it has to be said. The federal government never seems to want to make concessions but is always trying to get more.

We are seeing the same thing with Quebec's Bill 96. Ottawa, with its Official Languages Act, is finding ways to try to undermine this legislation and restrict it from applying to federally regulated businesses.

I vehemently disagree with this and with the proposed centralizing measures they want to impose with their pharmacare and dental care programs. These may be good measures, but the problem is that they are not well intentioned.

• (2320)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech on this important topic.

For weeks now, teachers and farmers in my riding have been impatiently waiting for their tax returns, which this bill supports. It is a bill for workers. The Bloc Québécois used to be a party for the working class.

Will my colleague support workers or will he hide behind the issue of jurisdiction?

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on his French. He is working on improving his French, which is very laudable. I like practising my English, but outside the House, of course.

I did not quite understand the premise of his question. He spoke about workers. I can assure him that we support workers 100% and that this is a fundamental value of ours. We have a bias towards workers and we stand behind it.

[*English*]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I always enjoy my colleague's interventions.

We have talked a lot in the House about the housing crisis in this country. We keep hearing about incentives for developers and different programs for new buyers. We went from 10% non-market housing in the 1970s and 1980s, before the Liberals pulled out of the national housing program, to what we are today at 3%. Europe is at 30%, and Vienna is at 60%. We know the Conservatives' priorities and Liberals' priorities are to get developers to build housing. We are glad to see some co-op housing. We are glad to see some movement on that in this recent budget.

Does my colleague agree that we need to rapidly scale up non-market housing and co-op housing to solve the housing crisis for workers and for people who are homeless, and look at models that are going to make sure people have housing security? We need to take a new approach in how we look at housing and see it not as an investment, but in making sure people have safe, secure and affordable housing.

• (2325)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, my colleague's proposals are quite interesting.

In my opinion, not enough has been done on the housing file. However, we cannot forget that the federal government should not be getting involved at all. Much like the infamous tax that was discussed earlier, this is coming, but it makes no sense. If the federal government is going to hand out money for housing, we will take it because we need it, but it has to happen according to Quebec's conditions and wishes. The problem is that Ottawa always imposes a million conditions and messes everything up. Ultimately, nothing moves forward.

We need new federal approaches, but they cannot be layered on top of Quebec's; otherwise, we will suffocate.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères for his speech.

Government Orders

In his speech, he did not have time to share his thoughts on climate change in connection with Bill C-8. I am curious about his views on how the government could use Bill C-8 if it were serious about climate change.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, that is a very good question from my colleague opposite.

Correct me if I am wrong, but I did not see much about climate change in Bill C-8. In fact, I do not think those words are even in it. I might have missed a page or skipped a sentence somewhere, but climate change does not seem to matter much to the government. It clearly is not focusing on it.

What could the government have done to fight climate change? Some of the actions we saw explained things that had been done previously, such as approving drilling in Bay du Nord or buying a pipeline.

The government is clearly not focusing on climate change. Unfortunately, Canada is missing the boat.

One good example of that—and I was talking about this in committee yesterday or today—was the government's move to force the hand of automakers and dealers to get electric vehicles in people's driveways. That makes no sense.

[*English*]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am going to request unanimous consent to split my time with the member for Courtenay—Alberni.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have received notice from all recognized parties that they are in agreement with this request.

All those opposed to the hon. member's request will please say nay.

Hearing none, it is agreed.

The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise at third reading to contribute to the debate on Bill C-8.

Two of the themes I have heard so far this evening that are emerging from the debate have to do, first, with inflation and, second, and relatedly, with the incredible increases in housing prices that Canadians have been facing that have made it very difficult for Canadians to afford a home. As we are hearing more often, it is causing many younger Canadian adults to give up altogether on the dream of ever owning their own home to be sure, and in many cases even just to find a home to rent. More and more people are having to stay with mom and dad a lot longer than they planned, if they have the good fortune of having parents who have a home that can accommodate them.

What I want to offer that I do not think has been said enough when we talk about inflation is to point to a couple of studies that have come out in the last several weeks by Canadians for Tax Fairness and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, which have said that up to a quarter of the inflationary pressure that Canadians are currently experiencing can be attributed to price markups by companies for their products that go above and beyond their in-

creased costs. Companies in the grocery business, the oil and gas business now as prices spike, banks obviously, insurance companies and big box stores have seen incredible increases or a growth in profit that is higher and faster than the growth of their costs. That is not to say businesses are not facing increased costs, but some of the largest businesses appear to be using that as an opportunity to gouge Canadians, whether it is at the pumps, the store or wherever they sell their wares. This is contributing as much as 25% of the increase in costs that Canadians are currently experiencing.

We could listen to the Conservatives talk about the problem of inflation all day. They would have us believe that it is only government spending that has contributed to inflationary pressures. They do not want to talk about international supply chains. We do not hear them talk about that. We just hear them talk about the government borrowing during the pandemic. They could be talking about the extraordinary increase in profits that far exceed the increase in costs that many of the largest companies in Canada are experiencing, but they do not. They only want to talk about where they see government as the problem.

The problem for Canadians, when they are looking for people to elect to provide some real solutions, is if they elect people who can only appreciate one kind of problem, it is like a tradesperson who only knows how to operate one kind of tool. The fact is tradespeople need to know how to use all of the tools in the tool box because they are confronted with novel problems and not all problems are the same and not all solutions are the same.

Cutting government spending sometimes is the solution to certain kinds of problems, but it is not the solution to all problems. Indeed, fixing some of the problems that we are facing right now requires government investment, but when we talk about the extraordinary price increases and profit increases that we have seen in certain industries that are really hurting Canadians in the pocketbook, the answer is to take those folks on. The answer is some regulation and legislation that will hold them to an appropriate standard and make sure Canadians are not getting fleeced by the private sector. As I said, there is some real evidence that that is going on, and it is not a big enough part of the conversation. If it is 25% of the problem for the budgets of Canadians, it certainly does not make up 25% of the conversation here, not even close, let alone 25% of the solutions that are being proffered by the government.

How do we know this is in part the case? We can look at not only some of the company profits I was talking about, but we can also look at some longer-term trends and the way they have accelerated during the pandemic. We have seen it with Canadian billionaires. There are not a lot of them, but man, do they ever have a lot of money, and man, have they ever managed to grow their net worth astronomically over the last two years of the pandemic. That is some serious evidence.

Government Orders

• (2330)

If we go back just to last fall, the Parliamentary Budget Officer issued a report that said that 1% of all Canadians have 25% of the wealth produced in the country, while 40% of Canadians are trying to get by sharing only 1% of that wealth. That was not always the case in Canada.

These are some of the important themes that are based in economic data that the government and the official opposition have to start taking seriously because we are missing the mark in the conversation about inflation by only talking about the extent to which government spending has contributed to that. In fact, we are in a time when, if we listen to most economists, we are in an inflationary period that is driven far more by supply constraint issues than we are in an inflationary period driven by excessive demand or money in the market.

It is true that, in some cases, there is an overheated market and housing, which is the second theme that I want to touch on. It is that par excellence. We have seen that. We have seen extraordinary price increases in the market. There are folks in the Conservative Party who have talked a lot about this here in the House. They would have us believe that this is simply attributable to some of the liquidity that the government injected into the market at the outset of the pandemic. They will talk about the Bank of Canada printing money. They want Canadians to believe that this is the whole story, that this is the only reason we have seen massive price increases in the market.

In fact, housing prices have been doubling about every five years or so for the last 20 years at least. I will speak to that, just because that is about as long as I have been paying attention to the housing market. This is not a new trend. It is a trend that has been accelerated, but it speaks to something that has been going on for quite a long time.

The particular financial measures that the government happened to adopt, most of which, incidentally, was money that was shared directly with Canadian households through the wage subsidy program and through the CERB program. There was a direct transfer of wealth from the government to individual households on an unprecedented level. If we look at the percentage of government spending that went to those direct transfers of wealth to individual households, while the pandemic was happening and while people were out of work, it is quite impressive.

These were not people who were then taking CERB money and buying multiple properties. Let us not kid ourselves. Two thousand dollars a month is not very much. There is nobody with an income of \$2,000 a month who is going to the bank and saying that they wanted to buy the house down the street and having their bank sign off on that. Give me a break.

It is just absurd that people here would be out, say, on leadership campaign tours pretending that, somehow, the billions of dollars of government money that went to people who had lost their job during an unprecedented health crisis and were not making more than \$2,000 a month are pouring gasoline on the fire of housing speculation and house prices.

What is a lot more likely is that these people, these 1% of people who have 25% of the wealth, for all sorts of reasons, including Liberal and Conservative governments, successive governments in this century, lowering the corporate tax rate from 28% in the year 2000 down to 15% today, were looking around and wondering, how are they going to make more money with their money, because that is what they do. They have whole companies, banks and advisors. There are whole industries predicated upon people with tons of money figuring out how to make tons more.

The fact of the matter is that anyone who has the job of figuring out how to make more money on money has been looking at the Canadian real estate market, not just in the last two years but in the last 20 years, and drooling all over the place, because it has been an excellent place to grow one's money for no effort.

Unless the government is going to get serious about taxing back some of that extraordinary wealth so that it can be invested by democratically elected governments in priorities like indigenous housing, reducing our emissions, and making prescription drugs more affordable and dental care accessible, we are not going to solve the housing problem. This is because part of the problem is that too much private money is trying to multiply itself in the economy and that it is free to do that. We have seen that with those tax breaks.

With regard to the 1% of people in Canada who share 25% of the wealth, they do not know what to do with all their money, so they are bidding up the price of houses and owning that because they like the idea of further growing their wealth by renting out houses and apartments at extraordinary rates to Canadians, and that is a huge part of the story of what is driving the extraordinary growth in housing prices, which is putting housing out of the reach of too many Canadians.

Here we are. If we just listened to the official opposition, all we would hear about is the role of government, and we would be missing the mark. That is why, if we listen to what they are saying, they do not have any good solutions.

• (2335)

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member had a lot of comments on the failures of the government.

There are certainly things I would agree with and some I would not. He did have a lot of complaints about the government. I will note, though, that the NDP is, on this and other things, supporting the government and keeping it in power. I know he would probably stand up and say the NDP is getting all these promises and could extract all these things that the government is going to do. However, we all know, and he knows as well as I do, that the government is not very good at keeping its promises. I do not know why he would have any faith that it would keep its promises this time. I wonder why he would be supporting the government if he feels that way.

While I have the floor, I note that we do not have the quorum required under Standing Order 29(1). I would ask that we call for that.

Government Orders

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): There has been a ruling made by the Speaker earlier today that there are no quorum calls during late sittings.

The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, surely the member knows, as he said as much and I agree with him, that this is a government that has had a lot of issues keeping its promises.

I want to assure him that the negotiations that happened between the NDP and the government were not done from a place of naïveté. We are here to work. We are here to fight for the things that we told the people who elected us we would fight for. We are sincere in wanting to get those things. We are in the second minority Parliament that has largely the same character, in terms of seat distribution between the parties. We think a lot of Canadians wanted to see more political stability after the unnecessary election of last fall, and we were willing to negotiate with the government.

Part of the way we are trying to ensure that the government does follow through on those central commitments was to release the terms of the agreement and be very public about how it is meant to work. There are obvious milestones, which happen at budget time and in respect of implementing legislation, and dates for certain initiatives within that agreement that anyone is welcome to see online. We think that is part of how to create a culture of accountability. There is a bit of an experiment in democracy here, in terms of trying to hold a government that has not been very good at following through on its own commitments, to following through on these particular ones, because we think they are important.

We invite Canadians to pay close attention, to read those documents, to watch how we behave in the House of Commons and around the Hill, and to offer their critique of how they think it is going, what they think is working and what they think is not. That is how we are going to get things done here for people.

● (2340)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened intently to the member's speech, especially about rising margins in some sectors. I read a little about that in relation to the food sector, the supermarket sector.

What does the member think the cause of rising margins is? Is it price fixing in the grocery sector? Is the grocery sector too big? Do grocery chains need to be split up so there is more competition? What is giving rise to these inflated margins in the grocery sector?

In the oil sector, I understand it. If the international price goes up, oil producers are going to make a windfall. The marketing companies that do not have their own oil reserves, I do not think their margins are going up. However, in terms of the food sector, the retail food sector, what does the member think the problem is and how would he solve it?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, this is something I am hoping we are going to have an opportunity to get into at the finance committee in our study of inflation. I have been advocating to try to get some representatives from the grocery industry there.

I think it is a notoriously opaque industry, and in this time, when we step back and see the extraordinary growth of profit that ex-

ceeds the increase in cost, as it must, because otherwise we would not see an increase in profit, it is time to shine a little more light on industries like grocery. I would add telecommunications, for instance, where Canadians are known to pay extraordinarily high prices compared to other places in the world. We tend to have an oligopoly structure to some of these key industries. We should be applying more public scrutiny to those industries.

One of the quicker fixes that we have proposed as a party, and we saw the Liberals adopt it with respect to banks and insurance companies, is to have what we have called an excess profit tax or a pandemic profit tax, where we tax the extraordinary profits in the pandemic period at a higher rate.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is a huge honour to rise tonight to speak to the fall economic update.

Today, the families and friends of 20 Canadians will get the life-changing news that their loved one has died because of a toxic drug poisoning. Tomorrow, the families and friends of another 20 Canadians will get the same news, and again the next day and the next day.

The expert task force on substance use established by Health Canada accurately described what we are facing when it said:

The war on drugs has led to what ends up looking like a war on people who use drugs. People are dying every day, and the situation in Canada, already particularly deadly, is getting worse, not better. Canada has the fastest growing rate of overdose mortality in the world.

This is from the government's own expert task force.

The pandemic has accelerated the toxic drug supply crisis and there is no end in sight. The Public Health Agency of Canada, in its most recent modelling, predicted that opioid-related deaths will remain high until June and may even increase, yet the government has refused to take the urgent actions needed to stop the losses, including making investments, at the scale that this crisis requires, in addressing the root causes of problematic substance use, education and prevention, harm reduction and safer supply, and treatment on demand and recovery services.

The fall economic update failed to even acknowledge the public health emergency that has been devastating communities for years, and the 2022 budget added a mere \$100 million over three years to be spread across the country. That is 10 provinces and three territories. The stigma is not just in policy, nor just in the laws in this country. It is in the amount of money the government spends to tackle this crisis.

Government Orders

The toxic drug supply crisis, which has arisen as a direct result of the failed war on drugs, is not just costing lives; it is costing significant amounts of money to all levels of government. Members have heard me say repeatedly in the House that this is a health and human rights issue, but this is also an economic issue.

The expert task force wrote about the financial burden of the criminalized approach to drugs on the health and criminal justice system. Its report said:

Criminalization leads to higher drug-related health costs because it keeps people who use drugs away from prevention and early treatment health services due to fear of being arrested, labelled, or outed.

“Criminalization drives people underground and means that people are less likely to seek assistance, or have difficulties if they try to obtain assistance.”

Because criminalization pushes people who use drugs to rely on an illegal, often contaminated drug supply, it is also responsible for high hospitalization costs.

“23,240 opioid-related and 10,518 stimulant-related poisoning hospitalizations occurred from January 2016 to September 2020 in Canada (excluding Quebec).”

In its second report, the expert task force put it bluntly, saying, “Current policies are currently costing Canada huge amounts. In—”

• (2345)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères on a point of order.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, my colleague's speech is really interesting, really passionate and deals with a very important subject, but I am not sure it relates to the content of Bill C-8.

Have I misunderstood my colleague's speech and remarks?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): As I understand it, the member is raising a point of order on relevance.

[*English*]

I presume the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni will get there in his speech.

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, this is again the problem in the House. We have four official political parties and a fifth party, the Green Party, and what parties do not recognize is that when 27,000 people die in this country in six years, this issue should be addressed in the fall economic statement. In B.C. it has killed more people than COVID-19, yet COVID-19 responses are in this budget. Absolutely, this is a fall budget issue and it is missing in this document. It is missing in the funding and it is missing in the response from the government. I am disappointed to hear my colleague think that this issue should not be responded to in the fall economic update.

I am going to go back to my speech, if I can.

The second report says:

Current policies are currently costing Canada huge amounts. In 2017, the estimate of healthcare costs in Canada related to the use of opioids and other depressants and cocaine and other stimulants was one billion dollars, and the cost of policing and legal proceedings related to drug possession exceeded six billion dollars.

These are 2017 numbers. Yes, this is relevant to the fall economic statement.

The task force recommended providing sufficient and ongoing funding to address the issue and stated, “Although a significant initial investment will be required to reshape the system and address the drug toxicity crisis, costs can be expected to decrease over time as the impact of new, more effective policies is felt.”

That there are societal costs to problematic substance use is not news. In 2014, a report of the blue ribbon panel on crime reduction was prepared for the British Columbia provincial government. It states:

Clearly, substance abuse is an expensive societal issue. Drug treatment is also an expensive enterprise. This raises the immediate question as to whether treatment is worth the cost. According to the US National Institute on Drug Abuse, “every dollar invested in addiction treatment programs yields a return of between \$4 and \$7 in reduced drug-related crime, criminal justice costs, and theft. When savings related to healthcare are included, total savings can exceed costs by a ratio of 12 to 1.”

This is an economic issue. This was an opportunity missed in the fall economic update. The report recommended that quality mental health and addiction services be made more accessible, finding that evidence suggests such investments would lead to significant future savings. It is an economic issue and should have been addressed in the fall economic statement.

Beyond these health and justice system costs, there are less visible costs to communities from the war on drugs. These costs are something I have heard a great deal about, as I have travelled the country to learn about the toxic drug supply crisis and speak about my private member's bill. I have been on a “stop the harm” tour, listening to people in Victoria, Duncan, Nanaimo, Edmonton last week, Saskatoon and Toronto. I was in Montreal today, in my colleague's home province, listening to frontline people. I hope he does the same, because they will tell him it is an economic issue as well as a human rights and health issue. In Halifax I hear the same thing.

I was talking to Jean-Francois Mary at Cactus Montreal today. He said that for someone who gets HIV, it costs \$35,000 a year to get medicine. For someone with hepatitis C, it costs about \$75,000. He says he gets \$250,000 in funding from the province but does not get any federal funding. He is here to stop the spread of HIV and stop hepatitis C, so this is an economic issue.

I also heard this from Kayla DeMong at Prairie Harm Reduction. She said it does not make any economic sense that we are not investing in harm reduction. She just got her funding pulled from the Province of Saskatchewan. They need federal funding.

I could go on, but I will go right to the fact that we need empathy right now. We need to listen to the people. We need to open our hearts on this issue. It is an economic issue and it is a human issue as well.

I listened to Isabelle Fortier this morning, from Moms Stop the Harm. When I was at Dopamine in Montreal, she talked about her daughter Sara-Jane, who was studying law at the University of Ottawa. She got into a depression and started using substances to cope with it. She died 600 metres from a hospital from a preventable overdose. She wanted to volunteer at Amnesty International, Greenpeace and the Red Cross. She lost her dreams.

• (2350)

One thing I have seen from coast to coast to coast in the eyes of the people who are struggling the most with this crisis is that they have fear in common. They are scared. They are scared about where they are going to sleep. They are scared for what they are going to eat. They are scared that they are going to die of drug poisoning. They are scared that they are never going to be whole again, or be with their families, friends and loved ones. They are scared that their dreams are gone.

I am calling on all of us to have empathy. Gandhi said that, “The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members.” I am calling on us to be leaders and to show that we have courage, that we care about the most vulnerable, that we do not fail them and that we unlock their dreams. It is good for the GDP. We have an opportunity. We can look to Portugal, which took a health approach instead of a criminal approach. It is proud of taking on a complex issue with a complex solution. It had courage; it did not have fear, and it was good for the country's economy.

This is a fall economic update issue. It has been a fall economic update issue for six years. It has been a budget update issue for six years, with failed opportunities. I encourage us all to have the love, compassion and courage to make this issue a priority. All of us can dream to open up and unlock the dreams of the people who are dying right now by supporting them, by investing in them and by prioritizing them. We can do this, and I hope we will all do it and stop letting people die unnecessarily.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I must say that I really appreciate the passion that this member has displayed today. I would agree with him that this is an extremely important issue. I really hope that we can see better funding come forward and better action taken towards dealing with this serious crisis that we have.

The member talked about the tour that he has been on in support of his private member's bill. I wonder if he can relay to the House what he has been hearing. What are some of the real-life experiences and stories that he has been hearing from people as he has been touring around the country? What are they saying, and what does he think they would want the House to know?

• (2355)

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, I think that they want us to listen to the experts, and listen to the evidence and the science. Health Canada has created a task force on substance use. It makes

Government Orders

clear recommendations that are reflected in my Bill C-216, the health-based approach to the substance use act. They want to see us actually move forward, to look to other models around the world, to have courage and not put votes ahead of people's lives. That is what they want us to hear.

I encourage everybody in the House to talk to Moms Stop The Harm. It is Mental Health Week, which is built around empathy. I ask members to please listen to the moms, the experts and our chief medical health officer, and to talk to law enforcement. They will tell us that by criminalizing people we are just further harming them, and it does not work. It has not worked.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from the NDP for his very passionate speech and his commitment to those suffering with addictions.

As the member mentioned, the theme of Mental Health Week, which is this week, is empathy. I think it has been said many times that the shortest distance between two people is in fact empathy, and that we can actually start to bridge some of the divides and heal our communities.

Can the member expand on some of the things he has been hearing in his consultations across the country on treatment and helping people get off some of their addictions?

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, there are a couple of things in there.

First, the member talked about mental health. We heard a commitment from this government of \$4.5 billion over five years in transfers around mental health. We did not see it in the fall economic statement. In fact, we did not see it in the budget, but we are eagerly anticipating it, given post-COVID or coming out of COVID when we have a serious mental health crisis as never before. We absolutely need to make sure that people get access to those supports.

When it comes to treatment, we need to make sure that it is on demand. Certain provinces do not want to do a safe supply: They do not want to decriminalize and they believe just in treatment as a model, but they are not delivering it. They should go to Edmonton and go to Saskatoon. I was just there. A gentleman I met had dreams and wanted treatment, but he said that it was going to take weeks or months to get treatment. We need to invest. It saves money, and I talked about some of that. We need to invest.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech, which was indeed very passionate. It is obvious that he cares deeply about that issue. I do not think that this is the first time he has talked about this problem in the House.

Government Orders

Was my colleague surprised that the government asked him questions about what should be done? The government has been in power for six years, but it clearly has not done anything to improve the situation.

[English]

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, it is hugely disappointing. I appreciate the member's question. In fact, his father's name came up today. I was meeting with an addictions doctor who was really proud of her relationship with the member's father, because he was a champion for harms reduction when the first safe consumption site came to Montreal. I appreciate his work and advocacy on that.

There has been talk about the need for real investments, action and a national strategy to tackle this issue. The government has talked about that for six years.

My bill comes up for a vote on June 1. I hope this member will do the right thing and support a bill that reflects the government's

own expert task force on substance use. If he meets the doctors that I met today, they are going to be asking him to support it. They are going to be asking all members to support it because they know it is going to save lives.

We have to be strong. We have to have courage. We have to put saving peoples' lives, and expert, evidence-based decision-making, ahead of politics. We have to. It is our duty.

• (2400)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It being midnight, pursuant to order made on Monday, May 2, 2022, this House stands adjourned until later this day at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12 a.m.)

CONTENTS

Monday, May 2, 2022

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Hindu Heritage Month

Mr. Arya	4569
Motion	4569
Mr. Aboultaif	4571
Ms. Gaudreau	4571
Ms. Mathysen	4571
Mr. Duguid	4571
Mr. Aboultaif	4571
Mr. Champoux	4572
Mr. Desjarlais	4574
Mr. Lamoureux	4575
Mr. Genuis	4576

Points of Order

Motion No. 11—Speaker's Ruling	
The Deputy Speaker	4577

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Extension of Sitting Hours and Conduct of Extended Proceedings

Motion That Debate Be Not Further Adjourned	
Mr. Lametti	4578
Motion	4578
Mr. Brassard	4578
Mr. Therrien	4578
Mr. Julian	4579
Mr. Zimmer	4579
Mr. Brassard	4579
Mr. Julian	4580
Mr. Seeback	4580
Mr. Trudel	4580
Mr. Steinley	4581
Ms. Mathysen	4581
Mr. Patzer	4581
Mr. Beaulieu	4582
Mr. Julian	4582
Motion agreed to	4584
Motion No. 11	
Motion	4584
Mr. Brassard	4584
Amendment	4586
Mr. Gerretsen	4587
Mr. Perron	4587
Ms. Mathysen	4587
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	4588

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Ukraine

Mr. Turnbull	4588
--------------------	------

Play by Local Theatre Troupe

Mr. Généreux	4588
--------------------	------

Honorary Consul of Lebanon

Ms. Diab	4588
----------------	------

International Workers' Day

Ms. Chabot	4588
------------------	------

Abdelghani Dades

Ms. Bendayan	4589
--------------------	------

Amherst Little League Baseball

Mr. Ellis	4589
-----------------	------

Pakistani-Canadian Community Leaders

Mr. Arya	4589
----------------	------

Canada Summer Jobs Program

Mr. Sidhu (Brampton East)	4589
---------------------------------	------

Douro Minor Hockey

Ms. Ferreri	4589
-------------------	------

Gaelic Awareness Month

Ms. Duncan (Etobicoke North)	4590
------------------------------------	------

Mental Health

Mrs. Roberts	4590
--------------------	------

Grace McSweeney

Mr. Brock	4590
-----------------	------

Royal Military College Officer Cadets

Mrs. Romanado	4590
---------------------	------

Mental Health Week

Ms. Barron	4590
------------------	------

Ginette Reno

Mr. Champoux	4591
--------------------	------

Royal Military College Officer Cadets

Mr. Ruff	4591
----------------	------

Asian Heritage Month

Ms. Yip	4591
---------------	------

ORAL QUESTIONS

House of Commons

Mr. Berthold	4591
Mr. Lamoureux	4591

Ethics

Mr. Berthold	4592
Mr. Lamoureux	4592

Mr. Berthold	4592	Official Languages	
Mr. Lamoureux	4592	Ms. Lapointe	4597
Mr. Bezan	4592	Ms. Petitpas Taylor	4597
Mr. Lamoureux	4592		
Mr. Bezan	4592	Health	
Mr. Lamoureux	4592	Mr. Ellis	4597
		Mrs. Fortier	4597
Public Safety		Mr. Ellis	4597
Mr. Therrien	4592	Mr. van Koeverden	4597
Mr. Mendicino	4593	Ms. Gladu	4597
Mr. Therrien	4593	Mr. Alghabra	4598
Mr. Mendicino	4593	Ms. Lantsman	4598
		Mr. Alghabra	4598
COVID-19 Economic Measures			
Mr. Julian	4593	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship	
Ms. Gould	4593	Mr. Perron	4598
Mr. Blaikie	4593	Mrs. Lalonde	4598
Ms. Gould	4593	Mr. Perron	4598
		Ms. Gould	4598
Ethics			
Mr. Brock	4593	Passport Canada	
Mr. Lametti	4594	Mr. Lehoux	4598
Mr. Caputo	4594	Ms. Gould	4599
Mr. Lamoureux	4594	Mr. Généreux	4599
Mrs. Vien	4594	Ms. Gould	4599
Mr. Lamoureux	4594	Ms. Ferreri	4599
		Ms. Gould	4599
Public Safety			
Ms. Dancho	4594	Indigenous Affairs	
Mr. Mendicino	4594	Mrs. Atwin	4599
Mrs. Thomas	4594	Mr. Badawey	4599
Mr. Mendicino	4594		
Mr. Lloyd	4595	Taxation	
Mr. Mendicino	4595	Mr. Baldinelli	4599
		Ms. Freeland	4600
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship			
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe	4595	Health	
Mrs. Lalonde	4595	Mr. Aboultaif	4600
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe	4595	Mr. van Koeverden	4600
Mrs. Lalonde	4595		
Ms. Chabot	4595	Seniors	
Mr. Rodriguez	4595	Mrs. Kramp-Neuman	4600
		Mr. Fisher	4600
Housing			
Mr. Albas	4596	Diversity and Inclusion	
Ms. Martinez Ferrada	4596	Mr. Schiefke	4600
		Mrs. Fortier	4600
The Economy			
Mr. Martel	4596	Public Safety	
Ms. Freeland	4596	Mr. MacGregor	4600
		Mr. Mendicino	4601
Housing			
Mr. Williams	4596	Natural Resources	
Ms. Anand	4596	Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	4601
		Mr. Wilkinson	4601
Climate Change			
Ms. Zarrillo	4596	Royal Military College Officer Cadets	
Mr. Guilbeault	4596	Ms. Findlay	4601
		Motion	4601
Public Safety		(Motion agreed to)	4601
Ms. Ashton	4597		
Mr. Badawey	4597		

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Economic and Fiscal Update Implementation Act, 2021

Bill C-8. Report Stage	4601
Motion No. 1 negatived	4603
Motion for concurrence	4603
Motion agreed to	4604

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Government Response to Petitions

Mr. Lamoureux	4604
---------------------	------

Committees of the House

Transport, Infrastructure and Communities

Mr. Schiefke	4604
--------------------	------

Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics

Mr. Kelly	4604
-----------------	------

Indigenous and Northern Affairs

Mr. Garneau	4604
Motion	4604
(Motion agreed to)	4604

Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics

Mr. Kurek	4604
Motion for concurrence	4604
Mr. Lamoureux	4606
Mr. Julian	4606
Mr. Bezan	4606
Amendment	4608
Mr. Lamoureux	4608
Mr. Julian	4608
Mr. Gerretsen	4609
Motion	4609
Motion agreed to	4610

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Extension of Sitting Hours and Conduct of Extended Proceedings

Motion	4610
Mr. Lamoureux	4610
Mr. Brassard	4610
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	4610
Mr. Thériault	4611
Amendment to the amendment	4613
Mr. Gerretsen	4613
Mr. Kmiec	4613
Mr. Julian	4614
Mr. Villemure	4614
Mr. Lamoureux	4614
Mr. Morantz	4614
Mr. Julian	4615
Mr. Gerretsen	4616
Mr. Brassard	4616
Ms. Chabot	4616
Mr. Blaikie	4617

Mr. Gerretsen	4618
Ms. Dancho	4619
Ms. Pausé	4619
Mr. Gerretsen	4619
Mr. Small	4622
Mr. Perron	4622
Mr. Green	4622
Mr. Morrice	4623
Ms. O'Connell	4623
Mr. Small	4623
Mr. Calkins	4623
Mr. Lamoureux	4625
Mr. Blaikie	4625
Mr. Morantz	4626
Mr. Kurek	4626
Mr. Lamoureux	4627
Mr. Garrison	4628
Mr. Morrice	4628
Mr. Sorbara	4628
Mr. Melillo	4630
Mr. Blaikie	4630
Mr. Lamoureux	4630
Mr. Scarpaleggia	4631
Mr. Melillo	4632
Mr. Barsalou-Duval	4632
Mr. Garrison	4632
Mr. Kmiec	4632
Mr. Gerretsen	4634
Mr. Green	4635
Mr. Reid	4635
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	4635
Mr. Morantz	4635
Amendment to the amendment negatived	4638
Amendment negatived	4640
Part I of motion agreed to	4641
Part II of motion agreed to	4642
Part III of motion agreed to	4644

Economic and Fiscal Update Implementation Act, 2021

Mrs. Petitpas Taylor (for the Minister of Finance)	4644
Bill C-8. Third reading	4644
Mr. Lamoureux	4644
Mr. Steinley	4646
Mrs. Desbiens	4647
Ms. Blaney	4647
Mr. Small	4647
Mr. Morrice	4648
Mr. Fast	4648
Mr. Gerretsen	4649
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe	4649
Ms. Idlout	4650
Mr. Albas	4650
Amendment	4651
Mr. Gerretsen	4651
Mr. Blaikie	4652
Mr. Patzer	4652
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe	4652
Mr. Richards	4654

Mr. van Koeverden	4654
Mr. Johns	4654
Mr. Barsalou-Duval	4654
Mr. van Koeverden	4656
Mr. Johns	4656
Mr. Morrice	4656
Mr. Blaikie	4657

Mr. Richards	4658
Mr. Scarpaleggia	4659
Mr. Johns	4659
Mr. Gerretsen	4661
Mr. Schmale	4661
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe	4661

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>