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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, May 31, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*Translation*]

AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to subsection 7(5) of the Auditor General Act, it is my duty to lay upon the table the spring 2022 reports of the Auditor General of Canada.

[*English*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(g), these documents are deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

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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 two petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, entitled “Main Estimates 2022-23”.

[*English*]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, entitled “Differential Treatment in Recruitment and Acceptance Rates of Foreign Students in Quebec and the Rest of Canada”.

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

[*Translation*]

HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities in relation to the motion adopted Thursday, April 28, 2022, regarding disability support benefits.

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: We have a point of order.

The hon. member for Carleton.

• (1005)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the hon. member for Thornhill put forward a Conservative opposition day motion on ending COVID-related restrictions on travel. Consistent with my prior two votes on February 14 and March 24 in favour of ending all vaccine mandates and COVID restrictions, I logged into the app to vote in favour of this motion and in favour of ending COVID travel restrictions. I did attempt to make the vote, but for technical reasons, the app did not register the vote that I made. I believe it had something to do with the uploading process, but somehow that vote did not get registered, and so I ask that the House update the record to show that I voted in favour of the motion from the member for Thornhill to end COVID travel restrictions.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the member for the intervention. There are a number of other options to be able to log in, but unfortunately we did not have that happen.

I do have to ask for unanimous consent to allow for a change in the record. All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion to let his vote stand will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

*Routine Proceedings***PETITIONS**

ELECTORAL REFORM

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I will just parenthetically say to the hon. member for Carleton that I did not object, but I think he has made his position well known, so perhaps he can rest assured.

On the subject of my petition, on behalf of residents of Kitchener Centre, I am presenting a petition sponsored by the hon. member for Kitchener Centre calling for a review and immediate changes to Canada's voting system. The petitioners point out that the current voting system, known as "first past the post", is almost unique in the world of democracies in presenting results that are perverse, in that the public will is distorted in the distribution of seats that occurs in the House following an election. They point out that in the 2021 election, the percentage of the popular vote versus the number of seats was quite disparate.

They call for proportional representation as a system that ensures that any government elected with a majority of the seats actually entertains a majority of public support. They call for the immediate move to a proportional representation system to bring credible representation to Canadians.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present today on behalf of 1,391 Canadians, including many of my constituents in New Westminster—Burnaby. The petitioners are drawing the attention of the House to the following: that the shock collars used to train and manage pets can often cause severe pain, suffering and distress, and that many studies have shown that electronic shock collars can actually lead to further behavioural issues, including aggression, endangering both pets and society at large.

These petitioners, 1,391 in total, call upon the House of Commons to amend the federal Criminal Code cruelty to animals legislation to specifically include wording that bans the sale and the use of electronic shock collars on domestic pets. These petitioners further ask that legislation include hand-held remote-controlled shock devices and anti-bark shock collars.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in this place and share a petition. This particular petition is signed by more than 100 folks from across Canada who call upon the House of Commons to protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis, without discrimination on the basis of political or religious values and without the imposition of another "values test", and to affirm the rights of Canadians to freedom of expression.

This is certainly an issue that I hear often about from constituents. I am pleased to be able to present this petition on behalf of more than 100 Canadians in the House here today.

• (1010)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 461 to 463, 475 and 477.

[Text]

Question No. 461—**Mr. Chris Warkentin:**

With regard to the government's commitment to be transparent about which media organizations receive funding through its programs providing \$600 million in funding for the media: (a) which media outlets has the government designated as a qualified Canadian journalism organization, broken down by type of outlet; and (b) since January 1, 2019, how much funding has each outlet in (a) (i) received to date, (ii) been eligible for, but has not yet received, broken down by specific funding program and type of funding (grant, tax credit, etc.)?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what follows is the response from the Canada Revenue Agency, the CRA. In budget 2019, the government introduced three new tax measures to support Canadian journalism: the Canadian journalism labour tax credit, a 25% refundable tax credit on salaries or wages payable in respect of eligible newsroom employees for periods beginning on or after January 1, 2019; the digital news subscription tax credit, a 15% non-refundable personal income tax credit for qualifying digital news subscription costs paid by an individual to a qualified Canadian journalism organization, or QCJO, which applies to qualifying amounts paid after 2019 and before 2025; and a new type of qualified donee called a registered journalism organization, or RJO, for not-for-profit journalism organizations, which is in effect as of January 1, 2020.

To be eligible for any of the three tax measures, an organization must first be designated as a QCJO. Once designated, a QCJO must meet additional criteria for each of the tax measures. Designation as a QCJO in and of itself does not mean that an organization is eligible for any or all of the tax measures.

In response to parts (a) and (b) of the question, the confidentiality provisions under section 241 of the Income Tax Act prevent the CRA from releasing taxpayer information unless an exemption exists. No exemption exists to permit the disclosure of information related to QCJO designations or taxpayer information related to the Canadian journalism labour tax credit. As such, the CRA is able to provide neither a list of organizations that have been designated as QCJOs nor information on organizations that have claimed the Canadian journalism labour tax credit on their income tax returns.

In accordance with subsection 241(3.4) of the act, the CRA has made public the list of qualifying digital news subscriptions. The list includes the names of the organizations that have requested confirmation that the subscriptions they offer qualify for the digital news subscription tax credit, together with the names of the qualifying subscriptions and associated publications.

In addition, the CRA also makes public the names of journalism organizations that are registered journalism organizations, through the list of registered journalism organizations. The disclosure of this information is permitted by subsection 241(3.2) of the act.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 462—Mr. Chris Warkentin:**

With regard to measures taken by the government in response to the SNC-Lavalin affair: (a) what specific measures, if any, has the government taken to prevent future political interference or favouritism; and (b) what are the details of each measure related to (a), including, for each, the (i) title of the measure, (ii) date the measure was announced, (iii) date the measure came into force, (iv) summary of the problem being addressed, (v) summary of how the measure addresses the problem?

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in August 2019, the Prime Minister accepted the report prepared by the hon. Anne McLellan on the dual role of the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, and committed to carefully reviewing her recommendations to determine how best to implement them. She made a total of eight recommendations in her report, all aimed at addressing concerns around the dual roles and, in particular, concerns around prosecutorial independence and public confidence in the criminal justice system.

The government has either addressed or is working to address all the recommendations in the report. For example, changes to the oath of office were completed in the fall of 2019, and the new oath was first used on November 20, 2019, for the swearing in of the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada. This new oath directly addresses concerns around the independence of the Attorney General of Canada by stating that the Attorney General will “uphold the Constitution, the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary and of the prosecutorial function”.

Question No. 463—Mr. Colin Carrie:

With regard to the government’s response to COVID-19: (a) on what date did the government first become aware that COVID-19 vaccines could not prevent infection and could not prevent transmission; (b) did the government change the definition of the terms (i) vaccine, (ii) herd immunity, (iii) fully vaccinated, in 2021; (c) if the answer to any part of (b) is affirmative, what are the details of each change, including the (i) term whose definition has changed, (ii) date of the change, (iii) scientific basis for the change, if any; (d) why did the government change the longstanding definition of “case” from a “sick person” to “anyone who tested positive on a PCR test”, even individuals who remained perfectly healthy; and (e) what was Health Canada’s guidance about cycle thresholds for the PCR test and what specific scientific evidence was this guidance based on?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a) of the question, the omicron variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus was first reported in southern Africa in November 2021 and officially designated by the World Health Organization as a variant of concern with the Greek letter omicron on November 26, 2021. Within days of its appearance, preliminary analysis suggested that the variant may have a transmission advantage as compared to the delta variant of concern, though it would be some weeks later that vaccine effectiveness in terms of preventing transmission of omicron could be confirmed. By mid-December 2021, the Public Health Agency of Canada had sufficient evidence, including from international sources, that vaccine effectiveness against omicron infection and symptomatic disease after an mRNA primary series was lower than that for the delta variant.

As regards parts (b)(i), (b)(ii), (b)(iii) and (c) of the question, COVID-19 vaccines are defined by the manufacturer, and their intended use described in the product monograph, or label, as part of the information required when seeking regulatory authorization for these products in Canada. Health Canada, as a regulatory body, determines the terms and conditions under which a COVID-19 vac-

cine may be authorized for sale in Canada, based on an evaluation of the safety, efficacy and quality of that vaccine. There is no federal definition for a COVID-19 vaccine outside of what the product label describes, and as authorized by Health Canada.

Given the frequently changing context of COVID-19 variants of concern globally and the evolving science, which affects the understanding and measurement of immunity of individuals and population protection against COVID-19, including the variable and changing duration of immunity conferred by vaccination and infection-acquired immunity, the Government of Canada does not have a definition of herd immunity specific to COVID-19. The Canadian Immunization Guide, developed based on the recommendations and statements of expert advisory committees, including the National Advisory Committee on Immunization and the Committee to Advise on Tropical Medicine and Travel, refers to herd immunity in general for a number of viruses; it was developed prior to COVID-19 and is not specific to or directly applicable to COVID-19.

The Government of Canada’s definition for a fully vaccinated person entering Canada considers a traveller fully vaccinated if they have received at least two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine accepted for travel, a combination of accepted vaccines, or at least one dose of the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine, and have received a second dose at least 14 days before entering Canada. The government first established the definition of fully vaccinated as part of the quarantine, isolation and other obligations emergency order under the Quarantine Act in the context of border entry measures, to provide for a return to some degree of normalcy by facilitating the travel corridor for vaccinated travellers while retaining additional measures such as mandatory 14-day quarantine for unvaccinated travellers. The definition of a fully vaccinated person for border entry purposes into Canada came into force on July 5, 2021 and has not changed; it remains in effect until further notice.

In response to part (d) of the question, the Government of Canada’s national surveillance case definitions can be reviewed at www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/national-case-definition. The government uses standard definitions for confirmed, probable, reinfection, deceased and resolved cases of COVID-19. These national case definitions use the standard terminology of “case” for national surveillance of COVID-19; the case definitions do not refer to a definition for “sick person”, and this was not included in previous case definitions.

Concerning part (e) of the question, the cycle threshold value is specific to each test. It is established by the company that developed the test to ensure that the test performs accurately. Health Canada does not set recommended cycle thresholds and has not published specific guidance related to cycle thresholds.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 475—Mr. Richard Cannings:**

With regard to the Black Entrepreneurship Loan Fund, since its inception: (a) why was the second phase of the program, which included a joint \$128-million fund from Canadian financial institutions, dropped from the program's total loan fund; (b) what efforts did the government make to ensure that financial institutions fulfilled their portion of the initial \$291.3 million investment; (c) how many applications submitted (i) received full funding, (ii) received partial funding, (iii) were denied funding; and (d) how many entrepreneurs were expected to receive funding as part of the second phase of the fund?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the Government of Canada has convened transformational conversations with all of Canada's major financial institutions to fundamentally change the way our country supports Black entrepreneurs, and we're seeing the results. Since the launch of the Black entrepreneurship program, or BEP, in September 2020, many financial institutions, FIs, have launched their own initiatives targeting Black entrepreneurs, totalling over \$230 million. This exceeds the \$128 million collectively committed during the announcement of the program. The objectives of these initiatives align with those of the Black entrepreneurship loan fund, the BELF, and demonstrate the continued commitment of FIs to supporting Black Canadian business owners and entrepreneurs.

With regard to (b), following the announcement of the BEP in September 2020, financial institutions voluntarily committed to provide additional lending of \$128 million to support the BELF. Since launching their respective initiatives, officials from Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, ISED, have held bilateral meetings with FIs to better understand these initiatives and to encourage them to continue to ensure transparency in their reporting on these initiatives and to continue collaboration with a view of furthering the objectives of the BEP.

With regard to (c), the loan administrator, the Federation of African Canadian Economics, FACE, has autonomy over the adjudication of and decisions on loan applications, in partnership with the Business Development Bank of Canada, the BDC. This process and the resulting decisions are independent of any government intervention or input. Consequently, this question would be best directed to FACE, which could provide the very latest data on applications received and loans issued.

With regard to (d), the government continues to work with FACE, the BDC and other financial institutions to find opportunities to increase access to capital for Black Canadian business owners and entrepreneurs.

Question No. 477—Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:

With regard to measures put in place by the government to curb violations by Canadian companies overseas: is there evidence that voluntary approaches have had an impact on mending the damaged reputations of Canadian mining companies operating overseas, and, if so, what data shows the impact of these measures?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada expects Canadian companies active abroad to respect human rights, to operate transparently and in consultation with host governments and local communities, and to work in a socially and environmentally responsible manner while respecting applicable laws. Companies are also expected to adopt best practices and

internationally respected guidelines on responsible business conduct and to take measures to meet anti-corruption objectives.

Canada pursues a balanced approach to responsible business conduct, RBC, which includes prevention, legislation and access to remedy.

In terms of prevention, the Government of Canada provides guidance on preventive measures that Canadian companies can take to mitigate risks in various markets and builds awareness about tools available to support company efforts. The Government of Canada endorses and promotes RBC standards and guidelines, including the OECD's "Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises" and the UN's "Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights".

With respect to mandatory measures, Canada has adopted legislation addressing critical issues related to RBC, such as corruption, transparency and forced labour. For example, Canada has made it a criminal offence to offer a bribe to a foreign public official under the Corruption of Foreign Public Officials Act; under the Extractive Sector Transparency Measures Act, Canada requires extractive companies listed in Canada to declare all taxes paid and where they are paid; and, in July 2020, amendments to the Customs Tariff made it illegal to import products manufactured wholly or in part through forced labour. This prohibition applies to imports from all foreign sources and is enforced at the border by border services officers. Importers are ultimately responsible for ensuring compliance with the prohibition and are encouraged to work with their foreign suppliers to ensure that any goods being imported into Canada have not been mined, manufactured or produced wholly or in part by forced or compulsory labour. Canada has also committed to enacting supply chain legislation.

Canada provides access to remedy through two dispute resolution mechanisms: The Canadian ombudsperson for responsible enterprise and the national contact point for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's "Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises". If a Canadian company does not co-operate in good faith with Canada's dispute resolution mechanisms, a recommendation may be made to withdraw or deny trade commissioner service support. A recommendation may also be provided to Export Development Canada and the Canadian Commercial Corporation to also withhold future support.

*Routine Proceedings**[English]***QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS**

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 464 to 474, 476 and 478 to 488 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Is it the pleasure of the House that the aforementioned questions be made orders for returns and that they be tabled immediately?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 464—Mr. Colin Carrie:

With regard to data held by the government related to Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine: (a) on what date and how was the government informed of the clinical trial data of the vaccine that was published on November 4, 2021, in the *New England Journal of Medicine*; (b) on what date and how was the government informed of the adverse reactions and side effects of the vaccine as mentioned in the documents released in accordance with the order made by Justice Mark Pittman of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Texas on January 6, 2022; and (c) is the government aware of any additional data that will be released by Pfizer this year, and if so, what are the details, including the (i) date the government became aware of the data, (ii) date the data will become public, (iii) summary of data findings?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 465—Ms. Rachel Blaney:

With regard to the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), broken down by province or territory, region, and constituency, and by year from 2017 until now: (a) how many Canadians received the GIS; and (b) of those Canadians receiving the GIS, how many (i) received the maximum amount, (ii) of their spouses received the allowance benefit for couples, (iii) lost the benefit because they filed their income taxes late?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 466—Mr. Clifford Small:

With regard to Fisheries and Oceans Canada's Conservation and Protection Program, broken down by year since 2015: (a) how many charges, citations, or other type of enforcement action were taken through the program, broken down by type of enforcement action (criminal charges, ticket, etc.), and by type of illegal activity (fishing without a license, illegally caught species, multiple charges, etc.); and (b) of the instances in (a) where charges were laid, what is the breakdown by final judicial outcome (charges dropped, conviction, case still ongoing, etc.)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 467—Mr. Martin Shields:

With regard to the government's position on farmers using Bovaer to reduce methane emissions from livestock: (a) why has the government not yet approved Bovaer for agriculture use in Canada; (b) has the government conducted any studies related to the potential level of methane reduction that could be achieved in Canada with the approval and use of Bovaer, and, if so, what are the details, including the findings of any such studies; (c) what is the timeline within which a decision on the approval of Bovaer will be made; (d) does the government have an explanation for why the European Union was able to make a decision on Bovaer years ahead of the Canadian government, and, if so, what is the explanation; (e) has the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food taken any specific measures to expedite the decision on whether or not to approve Bovaer, and, if not, why not; and (f) if the response in (e) is affirmative, what are the specific details of each measure taken, including the (i) date of the measure, (ii) specific measure taken?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 468—Mrs. Tracy Gray:

With regard to the Canada Digital Adoption Program: (a) how many and which vendors applied to administer the (i) "Grow Your Business" stream, (ii) "Boost Your

Business Technology" stream; (b) what metrics and criteria were used by the department when determining which applicants in (a)(i) and (a)(ii) would become administrators, broken down by stream; (c) what is the dollar value of the contracts provided to Magnet to administer the "Boost Your Business Technology" stream; (d) which vendors were awarded the contracts to administer the "Grow Your Business" stream; (e) what is the dollar value of the contracts provided to each of the vendors in (d); (f) what is the number of students hired, as of April 5, 2022, via the (i) "Grow Your Business" stream, (ii) "Boost Your Business Technology" stream; and (g) what is the number of businesses which have applied, as of April 5, 2022, to the (i) "Grow Your Business" stream, (ii) "Boost Your Business Technology" stream?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 469—Mr. Chris Warkentin:

With regard to the government paying social media influencers to promote the government's messaging, broken down by department or agency: (a) who in each department or agency decides which influencers to (i) hire, (ii) pay; (b) what is the manner in which influencers can apply to get paid to promote the government's messaging; (c) how many applications related to (b) have been received since January 1, 2021; (d) of the applicants in (c), how many were awarded a contract or payment from the government; (e) are there any specific criteria that government-paid influencers must meet, and, if so, what are the details; (f) are the influencers prohibited or in any way censored from publicly voicing their disagreement with any government policies or messaging, and, if so, what are the details of the prohibition; (g) what specific policies are in place regarding the use of social media influencers; and (h) on what date did each policy in (g) come into effect?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 470—Ms. Leah Gazan:

With regard to the funding announced in budget 2021 and in the Fall Economic Statement 2020 to support Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQIA+ people: (a) how much of the \$36.3 million has been spent to enhance and support Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations; (b) of the funding in (a), which organizations received funding and how much was received; (c) how much of the \$49.3 million allocated for the implementation of Gladue Principles has been spent; and (d) how much of the \$8.1 million to develop justice agreements with Indigenous communities has been spent?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 471—Ms. Leah Gazan:

With regard to the funding announced in budget 2021 to measure progress and provide accountability on the government supports for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people: (a) what mechanisms have been implemented; (b) how much of the \$20.3 million has been allocated; and (c) of the funding in (b), how much have Indigenous partners received, broken down by organization, institution, or governing body?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 472—Ms. Leah Gazan:

With regard to the development of a comprehensive violence prevention strategy announced in the Fall Economic Statement 2020: (a) how much of the \$724.1 million announced has been spent; and (b) broken down by province and territory, how many shelters (i) have been newly opened, (ii) are currently in construction, (iii) are planned, but the construction has not begun?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 473—Ms. Leah Gazan:

With regard to federal government funding for fiscal years 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22, allocated within the constituency of Winnipeg Centre: what is the total funding amount, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) department or agency, (iii) initiative, (iv) amount?

(Return tabled)

Routine Proceedings

Question No. 474—Mr. Richard Cannings:

With regard to government funding for fiscal years 2019-20 to 2021-22 allocated within the constituency of South Okanagan—West Kootenay: what is the total funding amount, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) department or agency, (iii) initiative, (iv) amount?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 476—Mr. Richard Cannings:

With regard to the government's commitment in budget 2021 on interchange fees for small and medium-sized businesses: (a) what stakeholders did government representatives meet with since April 19, 2021, with the objective of (i) lowering the average overall cost of interchange fees, (ii) ensuring that small businesses benefit from pricing that is similar to large businesses, (iii) protecting existing reward points of customers; and (b) on what dates were the meetings referenced in (a) held?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 478—Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:

With regard to Canadian mining companies operating abroad and accused of violations, as well as the government and Canadian embassies: (a) do Canadian embassies have a mandate to ensure that Canadian companies are respecting and advocating for human rights, and, if so, what are the full details and implications of these actions; (b) do embassy staff keep a record of all requests regarding (i) services and support provided to companies, (ii) support from human rights advocates; (c) do allegations and accusations of human rights violations have an impact on embassies' consideration of requests for support or services from Canadian companies, and, if so, what is this impact; (d) have there been cases where embassies have refused to provide support to companies because of allegations of potential violations, and, if so, what are these cases; (e) what institutional mechanisms can Canadian embassy staff turn to when they become aware of human rights or environmental violations committed by Canadian companies abroad, especially companies that have benefited from embassy services or support in the past; and (f) has the government been made aware of human rights and environmental violations by Canadian companies abroad in the case of Goldcorp, as reported in the Hill Times article of March 30, 2022, and, if so, what actions have been taken to address these violations, with regard to (i) Canadian companies abroad, (ii) the affected groups?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 479—Mrs. Laila Goodridge:

With regard to Service Canada centres located in flood plains or flood zones: (a) how many Service Canada centres are located in a flood plain or flood zone; (b) what is the location of all such centres, including the street address; (c) for each location in (b), is there a contingency plan to be used during a flood, and, if so, what is the plan; and (d) for each location in (b), has an alternate location outside of the flood plain been designated to be used as a temporary Service Canada centre during a flood, and, if so, what is the location?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 480—Mr. Corey Tochor:

With regard to expenditures and other transactions made by the government using the Treasury Board object code 3213 (Losses of *money*) or any similar code related to the loss of money: (a) what are the details of all such transactions since fiscal year 2018-19, broken down by department, agency, or other government entity, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) amount, including whether the amount represents the amount of government expenditure or the amount of payment being received by the government, (iii) summary of what took place, (iv) description of the items or services involved; and (b) what was the total value of transactions related to (a), broken down by fiscal year since 2018-19?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 481—Mr. Corey Tochor:

With regard to expenditures and other transactions made by the government using the Treasury Board object code 3214 (Deficits and write-offs not elsewhere specified), or any similar code: (a) what are the details of all such transactions since fiscal year 2018-19, broken down by department, agency, or other government entity, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) amount being written off, (iii) reason for the write-off, (iv) description of the items or services being written off; and (b) what was the total value of transactions related to (a), broken down by fiscal year since 2018-19?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 482—Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:

With regard to meetings between senior government officials (those at the assistant deputy minister level or higher) and the former Unifor President, Jerry Dias, or events attended by both a cabinet minister and Mr. Dias, since January 1, 2016, broken down by each official: (a) on how many days did each official meet with or attend an event where Mr. Dias was present, including private meetings and informal events that are not listed on the lobbying registry or any official government itinerary; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by year; and (c) what are the details of all such meetings or events, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) type of meeting or event (in-person meeting, virtual meeting, government announcement, etc.), (iii) agenda items, if known, (iv) known list of attendees, (v) summary of what took place, (vi) government officials that were in attendance?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 483—Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:

With regard to meetings between cabinet ministers or their staff and the former Unifor President, Jerry Dias, or events attended by both a cabinet minister and Mr. Dias, since January 1, 2016, broken down by minister: (a) on how many days did each minister meet with or attend an event where Mr. Dias was present, including private meetings and informal events that are not listed on the lobbying registry or any official government itinerary; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by year; and (c) what are the details of all such meetings or events, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) type of meeting or event (in-person meeting, virtual meeting, government announcement, etc.), (iii) agenda items, if known, (iv) known list of attendees, (v) summary of what took place, (vi) ministers and exempt staff members that were in attendance?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 484—Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:

With regard to meetings between the Prime Minister and the former Unifor President, Jerry Dias, or events attended by both the Prime Minister and Mr. Dias, since January 1, 2016: (a) on how many days did the Prime Minister meet with or attend an event where Mr. Dias was present, including private meetings and informal events that are not listed on the Prime Minister's official itinerary; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by year; and (c) what are the details of all such meetings or events, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) type of meeting or event (in-person meeting, virtual meeting, government announcement, etc.), (iii) agenda items, if known, (iv) known list of attendees, (v) summary of what took place?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 485—Mr. Adam Chambers:

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), real estate transactions and a report in the Toronto Star on May 30, 2019, about tax evasion in the real estate markets in Ontario and British Columbia: (a) how many Canadians (individuals, companies or corporations) have been identified as having evaded taxes through real estate transactions; (b) how many non-Canadians (individuals, companies or corporations) have been identified as having evaded taxes through real estate transactions; (c) of the Canadians identified in (a), how many of them are being, or have been, reviewed by the CRA; (d) of the non-Canadians identified in (b), how many of them are being, or have been, reviewed by the CRA; (e) how many (i) audits, (ii) reassessments or related compliance actions, have been undertaken against the Canadians identified in (a) by the CRA; (f) of the audits in (e)(i), how many (i) have been closed, (ii) are still ongoing; (g) how many (i) audits, (ii) reassessments or related compliance actions, have been undertaken against the non-Canadians identified in (b) by the CRA; (h) of the audits in (g)(i), how many (i) have been closed, (ii) are still ongoing; (i) how many identified (i) Canadians, (ii) non-Canadians, have availed themselves of the Voluntary Disclosure Program with the CRA; (j) how many identified (i) Canadians, (ii) non-Canadians, have settled with the CRA; (k) how much money has the CRA assessed as a result of investigating these cases, broken down by the amount in (i) unpaid taxes, (ii) interest, (iii) fines, (iv) penalties; (l) how much of the money has been collected; (m) how many of these cases (i) are under appeal, (ii) remain open, (iii) have been closed, i.e. the full amount of taxes, interest, fines and penalties have been collected; (n) how many tax evasion charges have been laid; and (o) how many convictions have been recorded?

(Return tabled)

*Business of Supply***Question No. 486—Ms. Laurel Collins:**

With regard to federal transfers through the Low Carbon Economy Fund from April 1, 2021, to March 31, 2022: (a) how much funding has been allocated, broken down by (i) grants and contributions, (ii) province and territory; (b) how much has actually been transferred since April 1, 2021, broken down by (i) grants and contributions, (ii) province and territory; and (c) for each transfer payment identified in (b), what is the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 487—Ms. Laurel Collins:

With regard to the \$8 billion Net Zero Accelerator initiative of the Strategic Innovation Fund: (a) how many potential applicants have submitted a statement of interest to date, broken down by (i) small and medium-sized businesses, (ii) large businesses, (iii) province and territory, (iv) potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; (b) how much has been spent to date, broken down by (i) business name, (ii) province and territory; and (c) of the funding in (b), what is the cost per tonne of greenhouse gas emission reductions for each applicant funded?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 488—Mr. Alex Ruff:

With regard to the press release dated April 4, 2022, “Government of Canada announces affordable high-speed Internet to help connect low-income families and seniors”: (a) which participating Internet service providers (ISP) will be providing services under Connecting Families 2.0 to rural areas as defined by Statistics Canada; (b) how many eligible households whom received a letter from the government will not be able to participate in Connecting Families 2.0 due to not having a participating ISP service in their geographic area; (c) how many and which census divisions with rural areas will have (i) no participating ISP servicing the area, (ii) less than 50 per cent of the census division serviced by a participating ISP, (iii) less than 25 per cent of the census division serviced by a participating ISP; (d) in the federal electoral district of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, which census subdivisions or municipalities will have no participating ISPs; (e) how will the government increase participating ISPs servicing rural areas; and (f) how will the government ensure that this program provides equal access to the social and economic advantages of affordable internet to both rural and urban low income Canadians?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—CANADA RESEARCH CHAIRS PROGRAM

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ) moved:

That:

- (a) the House denounce all forms of discrimination;
- (b) in the opinion of the House,
 - (i) research is necessary for the advancement of science and society in general,
 - (ii) access to the Canada Research Chairs Program must be based on the candidates' skills and qualifications; and
- (c) the House call on the government to review the program's criteria to ensure that grants are awarded based on science and not based on identity criteria or unrelated to the purpose of the research.

He said: Madam Speaker, I would like to inform the House that I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from La Prairie.

I rise today to open up a debate that is as important as it is necessary for the future of science and research in Quebec and Canada.

Historically speaking, research funding has always been awarded on the basis of excellence. The scientific process takes place at the frontier of human knowledge, and advancing beyond that frontier requires someone with a combination of skills and qualities that are beyond the ordinary. It therefore seems reasonable, essential even, to direct our limited financial resources towards the individuals with the greatest expertise, towards the most promising projects. That is how we maximize the benefits for society as a whole.

In recent years, however, under the federal government's direction, this basic tenet has been undermined by a new set of equity, diversity and inclusion criteria, which advocate a funding approach based on factors related to identity and representation. While these criteria are rooted in a desire to correct certain historical inequalities that we do not deny exist, the way in which they have been implemented is perplexing.

The most obvious evidence of this trend is the Canada research chairs program, where strict representation targets were unilaterally imposed on universities. Moreover, the members of the House of Commons were never asked for their input either, since the policy is based on a decision that was made by the Canadian Human Rights Commission and ratified by the Federal Court of Canada.

The impact of the policy is starting to be felt. A number of sometimes absurd and aberrant situations have arisen in recent months, where postings for open positions automatically excluded certain candidates regardless of their qualifications. Some positions reserved for representatives of certain groups also remained vacant because no one applied.

In light of this, it is high time that the House reviewed this matter. That is why the Bloc Québécois is moving a motion today for the House to “denounce all forms of discrimination”, recognize that “research is necessary for the advancement of science and society in general”, and acknowledge that, in order to maximize benefits, “access to the Canada Research Chairs Program must be based on the candidates' skills and qualifications” above all else.

To that end, the government must review the criteria for the Canada research chairs program.

Business of Supply

In addition to posing a threat to the excellence of Quebec and Canadian research, the equity, diversity and inclusion criteria applied by the Canada research chairs program encroach on Quebec's exclusive jurisdiction over education in three separate ways, since it is a program for hiring professors, it impinges on the autonomy of universities, and it restricts academic freedom.

I will now give my colleagues a brief lesson on constitutional history. The Constitution Act, 1867, placed education under the sole jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. Research is an area of concurrent jurisdiction and can therefore be dealt with by both levels of government.

In 2000, the federal government invoked its powers relating to research funding to launch the Canada research chairs program.

We were told at the time that there was no encroachment on Quebec's jurisdictions and that the goal was merely to fund research. However, if we look closely at the program two decades later, we can see that a research chair is a direct pathway to a professorship. In fact, the criteria for awarding research chairs determine who will teach in universities in Quebec and the other provinces.

In addition, the equity, diversity and inclusion requirements under the Canada research chairs program also blatantly violate the universities' autonomy.

As specified in the program policies, "if an institution is not meeting its equity targets, following a deadline stipulated by the program, nominations will be restricted to individuals who self-identify as one or more of the four designated groups until such time as the targets are met". The four designated groups are women, racialized minorities, indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities.

• (1015)

We have started seeing the impact of this policy on Quebec universities. Laval University recently posted a job offer stating that only candidates with the required skills and who have self-identified as members of at least one of the four under-represented groups will be selected. The university is basically being forced to shred certain applications regardless of those candidates' qualifications or the relevance of their research projects.

That is only the beginning. The program also states that "[i]nstitutions that do not meet their equity targets by the December 2029 deadline will have their allocation of chairs reduced". Universities are being held hostage by the federal government, which is threatening to slash their allocated funding and reduce the number of prestigious research chairs they get. One of the cornerstones of university autonomy is the power to select and appoint professors, so the idea that the federal government could change the process cannot and should not be tolerated.

The third issue with the current policy is that it is an assault on academic freedom, which guarantees academics the inalienable right to teach or study any subject, school of thought, or theory without fear of reprisal or discrimination. However, the numerous administrative and bureaucratic requirements heaped on researchers in all disciplines include the submission of an EDI action plan that conforms to certain social sciences theories that are not universally

accepted in academia or in society in general. This type of requirement impedes the academic freedom of researchers, who are forced to adhere to certain concepts if they want to obtain a research chair.

As a result, the very imposition of these criteria by the federal government for research chairs undermines several key principles and is in itself sufficient justification for a review. This being said, a quick analysis of the numerical requirements reveals the full scope of the policy's incongruity.

As I said earlier, universities have been ordered to meet representation targets by 2029. These strict, one-size-fits-all targets are applied equally to all Quebec and Canadian universities. They are based on the average representation rates in Canada of the four under-represented groups targeted by the program.

For visible minorities, the target is 22% for all universities because that is the Canadian average according to the latest census in 2016. However, what seems to have been forgotten or, worse still, ignored, is the fact that the population is not evenly distributed across the country. In Toronto, members of visible minorities represent 51.5% of the population. In Quebec City, they represent just 6.5% of the population. As it turns out, 6.5% happens to be the exact proportion of Université Laval professors who are members of visible minorities.

Where I am from, Rimouski, which is far from the big cities, members of visible minorities make up barely 2% of the population, but for the purposes of the Canada research chair program, they are supposed to hit a target that is 10 times higher than their actual representation. The federal government's one-size-fits-all solution does not take distinct regional characteristics into account and forces universities in the regions to recruit abroad rather than develop homegrown expertise. That makes no sense at all and it flies in the face of Quebec's university model, which is all about developing skills and expertise across Quebec.

Again, there needs to be a review of the federal government's policy of applying ideological math that does not work in the real world. There are concrete solutions to this nonsense. Of course, we need to increase funding for research and development. Canada is the only G7 country that has reduced its investment over the last 20 years. We need to increase graduate scholarships at the master's and doctoral levels. These scholarships have not been indexed for almost 20 years, since 2003.

Business of Supply

• (1020)

In closing, I would like to clarify, specifically for my colleagues in the House, that the debate that we wish to have is not about positive discrimination in general, but about this specific, poorly crafted federal policy that is, moreover, encroaching on Quebec's jurisdiction—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but it is time for questions and comments.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House Leader.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, at first blush, when I listened to the member, I had a grave concern for how important it is that we recognize the diversity that exists in Canada. Recognizing it is more than just acknowledgment. We have to have policies in place to ensure that there is a higher sense of fairness and a more level playing field.

I am wondering if my colleague could provide his thoughts in regard to the importance of diversity to the province of Quebec. He makes reference, for example, to Quebec City, but one could equally make reference to the city of Montreal. How important, for that member, is diversity of population in the province of Quebec?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Speaker, I think that my colleague from Winnipeg North misunderstood my speech. The debate is not about the importance of diversity. We recognize the need for diversity, inclusion and, of course, equity.

What we are saying is that the basic criterion that must take precedence when selecting candidates for Canada Research Chairs is excellence. This criterion should not be based on identity, which sometimes has nothing to do with the context of the research.

[*English*]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, as somebody who spent almost 20 years teaching in academia, I can tell members that the last thing we need to be fighting for is more white males in power. In fact, I would argue that we did not get the best and the brightest because all of the focus and prestige was given to white males in power.

I would say that we are at a time in history when we need diversity. We certainly need gender parity, and I would ask this: Why is the Bloc fighting so fiercely to keep white males in positions of power, to the exclusion of others?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Speaker, I think the debate is taking an unhealthy turn, and that is not what the Bloc Québécois wants today.

We are asking that the primary criterion for the recruitment of candidates for Canada research chairs be excellence. The best example I can give is this. The policies of Quebec universities have

achieved greater representation for women without any federal government meddling.

We recognize the need for equity, diversity and inclusion. However, in the event of equally qualified candidates, although the government may favour certain groups of people, identity should not be the primary criterion. The excellence of the candidates for federal government research chair grants and the quality of their applications must be the primary considerations.

• (1025)

[*English*]

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am happy to sit with my hon. colleague on the science and research committee. We are studying top talent right now in Canada. As for the job market, we are short 1.03 million jobs in Canada.

My question for the member, as we are studying this important decision and talking about talent, is this: Do we have a shortage of talent for research chairs in Canada? Do we have a shortage of talent in Quebec right now?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Speaker, I salute my colleague. It is a pleasure for me to sit with him on the Standing Committee on Science and Research.

There is obviously a shortage, a labour shortage. However, I would like to redirect him to the main debate today, which is specifically about the selection criteria for research chairs at universities in Quebec and Canada.

The primary criterion right now is based on identity, the aim being to meet certain federal government targets and improve the representation of the four groups previously designated by the federal government. We are asking that the criterion based on identity be withdrawn and that excellence be the primary criterion.

Many research chairs remain vacant because the criteria fail to take the socio-demographic reality into account. This situation does not contribute to the development of science and research at any university or in society.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Madam Speaker, the motion we are discussing today is extremely important, and I salute my colleague who moved it.

I would like to start by addressing the revolution in economic thinking. From 1929 onward, economic interventions tended to be short-term. Towards the end of World War II, the Keynesian school of thought emerged. Keynesianism advocates spending more money to stimulate the economy and spending less money and tweaking taxes to slow inflation. The Keynesian school of thought was alive and well during what is known as the “Glorious Thirty”, a three-decade period that lasted until 1973.

Business of Supply

After that, a change happened. It was very slow, but it foreshadowed what was to come for university economics. Madam Speaker, you will see what I am getting at. I know you well, and I know that you are interested in economics.

Since I taught for 20 years, I know that, starting in the 1990s, the focus turned more and more to long-term economic growth. The important thing was no longer to solve current inflation and unemployment problems, but rather to consolidate current political and economic actions to create stronger growth in the future. This is more complicated than starting to spend money at a given point in time. It was decided that the best way to make a population richer in the medium and long terms was to implement measures that would have an impact in the medium and long terms. The concept of long-term economic growth and its determining factors was a novelty.

The number one determining factor for economic growth is research and development. If we want to improve society as a whole, we need to improve every member of society, regardless of their origin, using knowledge. We need to increase production without creating inflation.

I will return to what the Conservative member was saying about the labour shortage. There is a simple solution to the shortage, and it is to improve every employee's productivity. I am not talking about increasing the efforts of every employee, just improving their productivity. For this, we must improve the knowledge that will allow them to increase their productivity. That will slow inflation and reduce the labour shortage, because our people will be better equipped in terms of knowledge and know-how. The source of the knowledge is irrelevant, since knowledge is like a fruit. We eat the fruit, not the tree. Consequently, we need to invest in research and development. In many cases, research and development is carried out in universities.

That brings me to today's topic. Canada has a reputation for underinvesting in research and development. The first major problem is that we are not investing in our future. Canada invests less than other countries. While other countries are moving swiftly, we seem to be shuffling along in a burlap sack. We are inching forward, trying to catch up, because we do not invest enough money in research and development. It is not easy to run in a burlap sack.

We are saying that we need to encourage research and development. Today's motion will allow us to do just that. It will allow us to determine how we can ensure the accumulation of knowledge and know-how in order to improve our position in the medium and long terms.

Obviously, that will take money and concerted government action, but this falls under Quebec's jurisdiction. For research and development in universities, the federal government should give Quebec and the provinces money to hire people with the necessary qualifications to produce the knowledge we need.

It is not easy to find people skilled in research and development. We are not talking about jobs in fast food. Not everyone is up to the task. It requires years of study, and there is a lot of competition between cities, between universities and even between governments, which are all trying to hire the most highly qualified people in the

world. It is obvious that the search for knowledge is predicated on finding the most highly qualified people.

• (1030)

That is what we need to do. I think that just about every country on the planet is doing it. Once again, the federal government is encroaching on the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces, saying that it will give money through the Canada research chairs program, with strings attached.

The government realized that some minorities were under-represented in research chairs. It targeted four groups: indigenous peoples, women, persons with disabilities and racialized minorities. Well done. That is good. Do I think that is a bad thing? Not at all. As I was saying, the government noticed this and decided it should do something about it. The money that the government gives will dictate how many people will be hired. That means that universities will no longer necessarily base their decisions on candidates' qualifications, but on EDI criteria. If not, their funding will be cut.

That is the problem. Some people who do not fall into any of these categories will be rejected. Even if they have outstanding qualifications, they will be locked out, despite the fact that they have expertise that could help build knowledge and improve the situation in the community. These people will be deprived of research and its fruits. In some cases, these people will be the best qualified by far. That is the situation in university research. Highly qualified candidates from a variety of backgrounds will be rejected. That is where things stand.

Are we in favour of equity? Of course. Are we in favour of diversity? Of course. Are we in favour of inclusion? Of course. This being said, we are not in favour of discrimination. The government is trying to solve an obvious problem by using discrimination. In the end, it is not solving much. What should we do in this situation? We should do what we would do in any other situation. Doctors can look at patients' symptoms and treat them. However, they try to find the source of the problem. That is what we need to do.

If fewer members of these minorities are working as researchers in universities, let us determine where the problem lies. Let us be proactive by working on the cause rather than on the effect. That will be effective, and universities will then be happy to say that there are more and more members of minorities holding research chairs. In fact, if we do this, the accumulation of knowledge will double or maybe even triple in Quebec and Canada, and that is what we want.

My colleague spoke about women in Quebec. More and more of them hold university research chairs. The situation is not yet perfect, but we worked on the cause rather than the effect. I am taking a proactive approach with my children. I have three daughters. I am being proactive. I told my daughter that she can do anything she wants in life. These people need to understand that anything is possible. We need to make sure the university gates are open to them from the beginning. Do these people have financial problems? If so, we must help them. There must be grants for more of these people to go to school. Do these people live in remote areas or have accessibility issues? If so, we need to make school more accessible. These people need to go to school. We have to work on that. They must embrace an academic career the minute they walk through the door. When we open the door to university, it is a victory. That is what we need to work on.

That is the problem the Bloc Québécois is proposing a solution for, but we do not support the Liberal government's solution, which is to use discrimination.

• (1035)

[English]

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened to the member's speech and found it quite interesting. I agree that we need the right talent in Canada in order to innovate and to grow our economy. Quebec is no different, but the concerns raised by the member lead me to think that perhaps Quebec is having an extra strain or an extra hardship in finding talent among diverse groups.

I am wondering, as the member spoke about finding solutions to the root cause of this problem, whether he could shed some light on what the root cause might be, and whether this problem is worse in Quebec than in other provinces.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Therrien: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her question. The root of the problem is access to university. That is it exactly.

For whatever reason, these people do not have the same access to university as most other people, and that is what needs to be addressed. Is it a financial problem? If so, there should be grants or scholarships to help them go to school. Is it because they live in a remote area? Going to university can be more difficult for first nations people. We need to work on that and find solutions. We must provide these people with access to university. That is what we need to do. We must make services more accessible to the public and allow these people to go to school. They should not be impeded by a lack of income or accessibility.

That is how we should be working. We need these people. They need to be integrated so that we can all work together.

When I was teaching, I liked walking into a classroom filled with people from around the world. It made for extremely interesting debates. It is a way for us all to prepare for the future together.

[English]

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Madam Speaker, from what I understand of this debate, the CRC is getting funding.

Business of Supply

The government is handing out funding for the Canada research chairs. That funding is based on a lot of different criteria, but some of it is based on inclusivity and diversity requirements.

Could the member just give me some examples from Quebec of what he is seeing in job postings, which are part of this motion? What examples is he seeing of postings that are excluding some or including others?

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Therrien: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his question. However, to be honest, I do not really understand it.

Let us talk about job postings for research chairs. When hiring researchers, nothing is more important than qualifications. That is what universities should focus on. I do not even want to know who discovered the coronavirus vaccine. I got my shot, and those people have my gratitude. That is science.

• (1040)

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague.

Women are still under-represented in academic communities. This discrimination reinforces biases that are deeply rooted but that can be mitigated using active measures.

Instead of strengthening measures that eliminate the systemic barriers that women face, why does the hon. member want to maintain those barriers?

Mr. Alain Therrien: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question and her effort to speak French. It is wonderful.

Perhaps I was not clear.

Whenever my students did not understand something I had said, I would never tell them that they had misunderstood. I would say that I had misspoken.

I never said that we need to maintain the barriers that women face when trying to teach or do research. On the contrary, I want to break down these barriers. Women make up half of Quebec's population. There should be no barriers to entry for students, regardless of the type of barrier.

I have three daughters, and I do everything I can to make sure that they do not put any barriers in their way to do what they want to do in life. I work very hard on that. I raise my children to know that there are no barriers to their ambition, and I would like to see that everywhere.

[English]

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House today to participate in the debate on the Bloc Québécois motion about science and research in Canada.

Business of Supply

I would like to begin by stating my unequivocal agreement with the notion that science is foundational to our economic prosperity, to our well-being overall in Canada and to the quality of life for all Canadians. World-class research and scientific excellence are a critical foundation of Canada's social, health and economic well-being. The talented individuals include countless in my riding of Halifax doing their work at Dalhousie University, the University of King's College, St. Mary's University, the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and so on. These researchers in Halifax and across the country are our primary engines of discovery, innovation and new knowledge to help us advance our country.

Science and research supply knowledge to develop new technologies, solve complex and persistent problems and generate innovations with real economic and social value for Canadians. Such research touches upon all aspects of our daily lives, including the challenges we face in protecting our environment, moving to clean growth, how we recover from major crises like COVID-19 and how Canada can be an effective player and role model in the shifting geopolitical context.

The federal government plays a very important role in providing the framework and funding that support and enhance Canada's performance in scientific research. Since day one, our government has put science and research front and centre and prioritized evidence-based decision-making in all that we do. After a decade of neglect under the Harper Conservatives, our government has brought science back. It is now at the forefront of our decision-making, and our scientific community looks a lot more like Canada does right now.

In keeping to our commitment to evidence-based decision-making, in 2016 we set up a blue ribbon panel of experts to advise on the ways to improve federal support of the Canadian science ecosystem so that our investments in the sector could be strategic and effective. I am proud to say that we responded to almost all of the recommendations in that report.

This approach has been buttressed by historic levels of funding. In fact, since 2016, our government has committed more than \$13 billion to support research and science across Canada. Through budget 2018, for example, we announced nearly \$4 billion in new funding to support Canadian research and researchers. This included the single largest investment in discovery research in Canadian history, at \$1.7 billion over five years, as well as ongoing funding after that to support researchers through Canada's world-class granting agencies and research institutes.

Within this investment was funding to create the new frontiers in research fund, which supports research that is international, interdisciplinary, fast-breaking, higher risk and higher reward. This is an agile and responsive program that is unleashing some of our best minds to tackle important domestic and international challenges.

Budget 2018 also included significant new funding for the Canada research chairs program to better enable it to attract and retain younger, emerging research leaders in Canada while increasing the diversity of nominated researchers. This was done because the COVID-19 pandemic also brought home the importance of science and research to Canada and the world.

Canada's science and research community responded admirably to the challenges brought about by the pandemic, and Canadians can rightly be proud of our scientific and research community. Our scientists and researchers have shown profound resilience throughout these challenging times, playing a huge role in the unprecedented mobilization and ramping up of international collaboration. Indeed, if there is a silver lining to this pandemic, it is that the world has been reminded of the power and importance of scientific research.

The true value of our investments in science has indeed been brought into sharp focus. The enduring strength of Canada's science and research capacity meant that we could get to work straight away with Canadian businesses to develop vaccines and therapeutics, as well as to help produce ventilators and personal protective equipment. That strength also meant government and health authorities were able to connect with expert, evidence-based advice through bodies such as the vaccine and therapeutic task forces and the Industry Strategy Council.

As we begin to pivot from the pandemic to a postpandemic economic recovery, a made-in-Canada plan will help to anticipate the challenges and opportunities that may lie ahead for our country. Cutting-edge government investments in life science research and biotechnologies will be a key part of this.

● (1045)

Strength in these areas is not only critical to our health and safety. These are also emerging growth industries that support well-paying jobs and attract investment. Our government is taking steps to grow a vibrant domestic biomanufacturing and life sciences sector. This includes foundational investments to build and support Canada's talent pipeline and research systems, as well as to encourage the growth of Canadian life sciences firms.

That is why, through budget 2021, our government allocated \$1 billion to the strategic innovation fund to support promising life science and biomanufacturing companies; \$500 million to the Canada Foundation for Innovation for a new bioresearch infrastructure fund and support of infrastructure at post-secondary institutions and research hospitals; \$250 million to increase clinical research capacity through a new Canadian Institutes of Health Research clinical trials fund; \$250 million for a new Canada biomedical research fund; and investments in the stem cell network and regenerative medicine research, as well as in adMare Bioinnovations, to support company creation and scale up on training activities in the life sciences sector.

To continue, through budget 2022, we would continue to provide new funding to attract leading researchers, advance Canada's critical research priorities and strengthen the security of research institutions. This funding would include \$38.3 million over four years and \$12.7 million ongoing to add new Canada excellence research chairs to attract and retain top-tier global researchers; \$40.9 million over five years and \$9.7 million a year ongoing to support targeted scholarships and fellowships for promising Black researchers; \$159.6 million over five years and \$33.4 million ongoing to protect federally funded research from foreign threats; and \$100 million over six years to support post-secondary research in developing technologies and crop varieties that will allow for net-zero emissions in agriculture.

I am very proud to represent a riding as diverse and as thriving as Halifax. Moreover, I am certain that my colleagues on all sides of this House would join me in recognizing that Canada is a tremendously diverse country and that this diversity is a source of strength, resilience, innovation, knowledge and growth. It is this diversity that drives our very success as a society. In that vein, the importance of equity, diversity and inclusion in supporting research-based innovation is well documented. Studies show that capturing diverse cultural and social perspectives contributes to scientific impact. They also show that highly diverse teams outperform in innovation, critical and creative thinking, problem solving, productivity, and ethical conduct, and a lack of diverse thinking is actually a barrier to innovation in the Canadian economy.

Despite this, many Canadians continue to face systemic barriers to full participation in our society and our economy, including in science and research. Our government has recognized the importance of inclusivity and diversity in science since the outset. Budget 2018 tied new funding to federal research granting agencies to establishing clear objectives and plans to achieve great equity and diversity in federally funded post-secondary research. Since then, government has continued to improve the representation of marginalized and under-represented communities in Canada's research ecosystem to address deeply entrenched systemic barriers and biases to enable all talented individuals to participate in research if they wish to.

To oversee this and other work, in 2017 we instituted the Canada Research Coordinating Committee with a mandate to improve the harmonization and coordination of the granting agencies as well as the Canada Foundation for Innovation. Under the direction of the committee, the agencies have launched a cohesive tri-agency equity, diversity and inclusion action plan that outlines measures to increase equitable and inclusive access to granting agency funding opportunities to address systemic barriers that limit participation of all talented individuals. It has instituted the Dimensions Canada pilot program, a made-in-Canada adaptation of the internationally recognized Athena Swan program, which aims to remove systemic barriers and improve equity, diversity and inclusion by providing a structure for universities and colleges to transform research culture. Further, it has provided capacity-building programs to post-secondary institutions to tackle challenges and barriers faced by under-represented groups in career advancement.

We have also taken a broader view with regard to realizing equity, diversity and inclusion across the economy and society. In bud-

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get 2021, we announced funding for academic research into systemic barriers that diverse groups face in our country.

• (1050)

Earlier this month our government announced an investment of \$19.2 million to support 46 community-based and community-led research partnerships through the race, gender and diversity initiative. This initiative is led by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, or SSHRC, in partnership with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, or CIHR, and the investment is helping to fund projects that have a focus on health. These funded partnerships will draw on collaboration and mutual learning to foster the co-creation of new knowledge, capacity building and knowledge mobilization on issues related to systemic racism and discrimination of under-represented and disadvantaged groups.

In that same spirit, we have also instituted the 50-30 challenge, which challenges businesses and other organizations in Canada to increase the representation and inclusion of women and other equity-deserving groups in their workplaces.

Finally, the government provided new ongoing funding in 2019 for the granting agencies to offer extended paid parental leave for students and post-doctoral fellows, so these promising young workers can take the time they need to start families without having to worry about their career paths being adversely affected. We need these minds working for our country, and affording them this leave will help us to retain them here in Canada.

To close, I would like to speak to the importance of the Canada research chairs program to our country. Created in 2000, this program stands at the centre of a national strategy to make Canada one of the world's top countries in research and development. Budget 2018 added 285 new positions to the program, so there are now over 2,000 chairs available, and provided researchers early in their careers with a new \$20,000 annual stipend.

The program has its own equity, diversity and inclusion plan, which is yielding results with record proportions of women nominees in recent competitions and increases for members of other under-represented groups. In the most recent round, women accounted for 53.2% of nominations, while 29.8% of the nominations were racialized minorities, 5.9% were persons with disabilities and 2.7% were indigenous peoples.

A research ecosystem that looks more like Canada itself will deliver better results for Canada. This is our country's flagship research program, and we must ensure that all talented individuals who wish to participate have a chance at obtaining these prestigious positions.

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Earlier this month, the Canadian Science Policy Centre hosted a science meets Parliament event here on the Hill. MPs were paired with Canadian scientists from across the country, and I was lucky to be paired with a constituent of mine from Halifax, Dr. Rachel Chang, a Canadian research chair in atmospheric science and assistant professor at Dalhousie University. She, like all of the representatives who met with MPs of all parties, represents the best of what our country has to offer in research and discovery, and our government is committed to supporting their work. I want to take this opportunity to thank Rachel and all of the delegates who came to Ottawa to share with us their perspectives.

I would also like to thank the opposition member for his insightful question and assure him and all my parliamentary colleagues that the government continues to work hard to keep Canada a world leader in science and research, while making opportunities available to all qualified individuals in the interests of driving new knowledge and innovations to the benefit of all.

• (1055)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would urge my colleague from Halifax to reread the opposition motion, which specifically calls for a review of the recruitment criteria for research chairs, for they are currently identity-based.

At the end of his speech, my colleague said that he was proud that Canada is a world leader in research and development. I urge him to reread the Naylor report, which issued 35 recommendations.

Canada is the only G7 country that did not invest, that has reduced its investments over the past 20 years. It is the only country in the G7 that has lost researchers over the last six years. It is not a world leader, far from it.

Would my colleague agree that there are people who are competent, talented and have projects, but are unable to get funding through the Canada research chairs program because they do not meet certain identity-based criteria?

Their abilities are not taken into consideration due to voluntary targets set by the federal government to increase representation for certain under-represented groups.

[*English*]

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Madam Speaker, to begin with the Naylor report, I have read the Naylor report quite carefully, and I have had extensive discussions with researchers in my riding about it over a number of years since it was completed. In fact, they are often reminding me that one of the key findings and recommendations within the Naylor report is to improve diversity, equity and inclusion. That is what we are focused on doing.

On the point of researchers being left out, it is very clear from some of the studies I mentioned in my remarks that our ability to innovate and conduct world-leading research is improved when we have a much more diverse and inclusive research ecosystem in Canada. That is what the tri-council is focused on. That is what the Naylor report prescribed, and that is what our government is working hard to accomplish.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Madam Speaker, my question is quite simple. Does the member believe that the most qualified people should be the ones receiving grants, or does he believe that positive discrimination is the best way forward?

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Madam Speaker, the member mentioned discrimination. Of course, the very intention around my speech and my response to the Bloc Québécois opposition day motion is to eliminate any kind of discrimination. As I have said, our work to innovate and face the greatest problems of our country in the world today is improved by the participation of equity-seeking groups, including women and people from all backgrounds and all nationalities. This is the strength of our ecosystem, and we are building on that strength to address the future.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, many years ago—in 1988, to be precise—I was recruited by the spectacular scientist who headed The Royal Society of Canada, which is Canada's premier scientific body. He was Dr. Digby McLaren, and he realized they had a problem. The Royal Society had fellows, and they happened to mostly be fellows, so they asked this question: Why do we have such a high proportion of men? This was the beginning. It is hardly diversity and inclusion to recognize that white men dominated everything. Bringing in more white women is an improvement, but our society has overwhelmingly failed to have institutions that look like Canada.

In the context of this debate, the research councils and the tri-councils have made it a priority to look at diversity and inclusion. Was that their decision or was it politically dictated by the Liberal Party, as some have suggested in this debate?

• (1100)

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for her remarkable advocacy for science and research in Canada and for her friendship as well.

The tri-councils themselves have a posture of seeking to improve the equity and diversity within their ranks. The federal government's role in this is to fund their work and offer support of direction. That is what we are doing. My answer to the member would be that we are working together with the tri-council to achieve mutual goals that will improve outcomes for all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

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

We all agree that we need to increase representation within our institutions for visible minorities, women and people with disabilities, but we have to do it the right way.

Does my colleague not believe it is better to engage in positive discrimination based on a criterion that, for equal or comparable qualifications, favours certain minority candidates rather than disqualifying certain candidates outright?

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I feel it is important that we address this fundamental issue. The problem we have today, with all due respect to the House, is that certain candidates are being disqualified outright. In my view, you cannot right a wrong by creating another wrong.

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

[English]

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Madam Speaker, I agree with the member that the ultimate goal is to get the best researchers possible in place and achieve the best possible outcomes. The notion of positive discrimination is a very tricky one. We are operating in a Canadian society that admittedly has systemic barriers to the advancement of people who do not look like me. Let me just say it that way. We need to change that, because it is the diversity of people from all backgrounds that will strengthen our research community, and it is incumbent upon us to create those pathways.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one of the things I have noticed over the years is that it is often the appointments of minorities, whether they be of ethnic origin, women or people with disabilities, will inspire younger people in those different areas to get engaged and be more inspired to do what is before them.

I am wondering if my colleague could provide his thoughts regarding how, as a society, we benefit when we get the types of appointments that reflect our nation and the inspiration that is provided directly and indirectly to future generations, which enriches our nation.

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the excellent question about youth.

I have mentioned a number of the fine research institutions in my riding, such as Dalhousie University, Saint Mary's, NSCAD University and King's College. I have spent a great deal of time at all of them, and in fact sometimes on the faculty of Dalhousie University, and one thing is absolutely clear: We have to be extremely intentional, open-hearted and open-armed about inviting young researchers and youth into those university programs. They are literally the future, and the ability to create a future for all young Canadians, including newcomers, is to be found in the work that we are doing with the tri-council around diversity and inclusion.

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canada's science and research ecosystem is extremely important for economic development in Canada, and we must ensure that there are equal opportunities for all Canadians and international talent who wish to work in Canada in order to fill a shrinking labour pool and to fill an enormous and important growing future in Canada.

We have never seen a moment like this in history in terms of the amount of change that has already started, with five innovation platforms evolving at the same time. We would have to go back to the early 1900s to see anything like it, and we had only three platforms then. In the 1900s we had the telephone, the automobile and electricity. Today we have DNA sequencing, robotics, blockchain technologies, energy storage and AI. All of them are in exponential growth and converging with each other in profound ways.

Over the past several months, those of us on the science and research committee have been studying the state of science and research in Canada, and we found a few fundamental conclusions; actually, we found three of them.

First, Canada is leading in several key areas of research worldwide, including genomics, DNA sequencing, biomanufacturing, AI and quantum physics. We have an incredible genomics program in Canada. When it comes to AI, the University of Waterloo, in the Kitchener area, is doing incredible things in quantum computing. We lead the world in quantum computing, which is fascinating and far above what I sometimes understand.

However, we are failing not only when it comes to funding for research, and specifically private business research funding, but in what we call the "Valley of Death". We give a lot of money to universities to develop intellectual property, and then that intellectual property gets shelved. It stays in a drawer and we do not commercialize it. That Valley of Death is costing us a lot of money.

The measure of science and research in Canada is intellectual property. We call it the currency of innovation. It includes patents, trademarks, copyrights and trade secrets, but we are falling behind the world in getting science and research out the door. Dr. Bell stated, "To a large extent, the question of how to attract and retain top scientists should therefore be rooted in how science innovation can be fostered in Canada right now."

Translating that IP, commercializing it and accelerating Canadian companies and Canadian GDP should be paramount to our whole strategy of how Canada develops and attracts talent. If we compare ourselves to the United States, we see that the United States creates 169 times the IP that Canada does, despite being only 10 times our size. It has \$6.6 trillion of IP, and nearly 90% of the growth of the United States can be attributed to the generation and commercialization of IP. What it means for Canada is that if we attribute just 5% of GDP growth to innovation, research and development, it would equate to over \$80 billion in GDP and thousands of high-paying jobs.

I want to thank the chair of the science and research committee, the member for Etobicoke North, for starting the committee. It is very important to Canada. Within the recommendations from the first report that the committee submitted is the note that Canada is lagging in attracting and retaining top talent with research and innovation, which is in parallel to the crisis we have with the shortage of skilled trades and workers across this nation. This is a main barrier, alongside bridging the Valley of Death, to unlocking Canada's true economic potential.

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We have an acute labour shortage right now in Canada to add to our acute housing crisis and our acute inflation crisis, and they are all converging at the same time, causing massive economic peril to our nation. We are short 1.03 million jobs in this country right now, and this number has risen by 150,000 jobs in just a few months. “Help wanted” signs are all over Canada, and I do not think there is a riding where employers are spared from the perils of looking for employees.

However, we have not spoken very much in this Parliament about the cost of that. According to the Conference Board of Canada, the cost is \$25 billion. We can compare that to our tourism industry in Canada, which is trying to get back on pace. It is worth \$35 billion to Canada, and the cost of not having talent in Canada is costing us \$25 billion a year. It is costing employers and it is costing companies when they cannot scale and cannot grow. This costs Canada money; the money we need to grow this country and ensure that we are becoming the best country we can.

• (1105)

When it come to top scientists, Dr. Thomas Bell, a professor at the Imperial College in London, stated at committee that “top scientists are attracted by top science” and that “The best scientists will not come to Canada and will not stay in Canada if they feel that their science will suffer.” Dr. Bell stated that “the question of how to attract and retain top scientists should therefore be rooted in how science innovation can be fostered in Canada right now.” Dr. Bell also spoke to how “attracting scientists and retaining scientists are two separate issues.”

When we are trying to attract a scientist, Dr. Bell states:

There are significant academic costs in moving labs. It's hugely disruptive. Packing up and reassembling a lab takes time, often resulting in months of inactivity. Moving to a new university means relearning all of the internal systems and ways of doing things, and moving countries is doubly disruptive. Scientists moving to Canada for the first time need to learn how funding and hiring works and how to attract students, and they need to build their collaboration networks from scratch. Many will have young families and would need to learn how the school system works. The cost of moving is therefore very high for a scientist, so attracting the top scientists to Canada is more difficult than retaining scientists. If you want to attract the top scientists from outside the country, these significant additional costs should be considered.

We spoke to many different witnesses in the science and research committee, including the chancellor from the University of Waterloo, who stated that we are losing 75% of our software engineering grads to the U.S., so retaining top talent is something we are not only striving for but are failing at.

When it comes to attracting top talent, Canada starts at a disadvantage. In particular, we need good Canadian research chairs to oversee major development and research in intellectual property, but overreach of government policy is leaving applicants out, despite good intentions. Diversity targets set by the government are unrelated to the research; they exist only to fulfill targets of inclusivity, rather than being included in criteria that include merit.

This new practice is called target ad postings. They are meant to meet diversity, equality and inclusivity targets, and they were created to tick boxes off as per government quotas, or government funding would be lost. Examples of targeted ad postings for CRC positions included a Queen's University posting for an engineering chair that was only open to women. Men could not apply. That

means that if a Black man of equal merit were to apply, he would not qualify. A position in the University of Waterloo faculty of environment exempted men from applying. That meant that if an aboriginal male applied, he would not be considered, despite any merit he might have.

All these institutions were following guidance and diversity targets laid out by the Tri-Agency Institutional Programs Secretariat, which is the government body responsible for administering the CRC program. The promotion of diversity, equality and inclusion allows CRC program job postings to exclude applicants if they do not meet diversity targets, and that is wrong.

Target postings need to be reviewed so that diversity, inclusion and equality remain key pillars in hiring, but the practice of exclusion needs to be reviewed immediately, as it sets a target for equality of outcome instead of providing all candidates with an equality of opportunity. Only an equality of opportunity will ensure we will look at breaking down barriers that exist with inclusion and diversity and still ensure we hire top talent where we need it. Only by ensuring there is equality of opportunity do we ensure we do not practise inclusion by excluding someone else.

Additionally, because we are also striving for equality of opportunity for all our institutions, Canada research chairs should always maintain excellence as their primary criterion. We are simply not seeing enough talent. What equality of opportunity means is that we break down barriers that exist. It is not going to be easy. It is going to be quite hard, but we have to do that.

We have to do that especially when some smaller institutions are lucky to get any applicants and are under threat to meet quotas or lose funding. By all means, let us work together toward improved opportunities for everyone, but let us not pretend that targeted hiring does not, by design, put other criteria ahead of excellence or put some institutions ahead of others.

Professor David Wolfe, of the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Toronto, has noted that talent was important 20 years ago and it is 10 times more important now. He said, “If we don't fund, support and nurture that talent and put it out into the local labour market, we don't have the base either to grow our own domestic firms or to attract other firms into our regions.”

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• (1110)

The CRC program was launched in 2000 to fund 2,000 research chairs, although there are now 2,285 of them. The program's aim is to attract and keep top academics in Canada. Tier two chairs are five-year terms worth \$100,000 in annual federal funding and are awarded to emerging researchers; tier one chairs are awarded to leading academics and are worth \$200,000 annually over seven years. The research chairs are Canada's effort to recruit top talent from around the world and enhance our competitiveness. We need more than one or two demographic groups to do that.

With the 2022 deadline looming, universities are acting on their EDI plans. UBC, which has 199 chairs, has filled 60 CRC positions in 2020, which is great, but they are all targeted hires.

Moura Quayle, the UBC associate vice-president of academic affairs, said:

We've been more than successful with white women, we're now over that target. But we need to work on finding people with disabilities.

That is fantastic for UBC, but now white women are going to be excluded. At the same time, if we look at that across the nation, we see that we have a lack of talent at the table to apply for these institutions, and if we look at areas like Quebec, which has smaller institutions and smaller areas, we are eliminating huge sections of the population instead of looking at the barriers that exist for those individuals to apply and to get into the programming.

I think when it comes to this motion, all we are looking at is a review of the program and the criteria to ensure that anyone who wants to get an education and become a Canadian scientist or work with our innovation sectors in Canada—which, by the way, are going to grow to 2.25 million jobs by 2026, which is 11% of the whole workforce population, and pay over \$80,000 or \$90,000—should be afforded the opportunity to do just that. When we are a million jobs short and are so many jobs short in our science and research industry, our government should be doing the best it can to ensure that anyone from any creed, any background or any community who wants to join the industry has the opportunity to do so.

We are doing it all wrong. This practice is not only excluding candidates in the name of exclusion, it is not a one-size-fits-all across the nation. Each region in Canada has its own talent needs. What I love about the college system is that there is a college within 50 kilometres of 95% of Canadians. Through our research for top talent for SRSR, science and research, we have found that if universities and colleges are located in a certain region or city, it encourages students to enrol there and enables people in the labour force to go back to university to develop their talent if they so wish.

Furthermore, follow-up data on graduates shows that students who have studied in the region generally pursue careers there. For nursing talent, universities at Trois-Rivières, Rimouski and Abitibi-Témiscamingue offer nursing programs. We learned this in the science and research committee. Between 80% and 90% of professionals trained by those universities remain in and work in those regions, so those universities are training nurses who are working in those same regions that desperately need nurses. We are short 60,000 nurses in Canada right now.

The work of inclusion and diversity would include, in this instance, not just hiring qualified applicants from diverse backgrounds, but ensuring that colleges break down barriers and enrol students from all backgrounds. However, colleges need funding, and not all funding is equal. If we want to talk about quality of opportunity, let us look at the funding.

It is well known that 15 universities in Canada receive over 72% of the research funding. Let us think about that for a moment. There are over 380 colleges in Canada, but 15 universities receive 70% of all research funding. Colleges receive 2.5% of funding. What was awesome at this committee was that when we looked at what colleges do, especially when it comes to commercializing IP for existing companies, they are doing that work. They are engaging with companies and doing such great things.

My point is that setting diversity targets flows funding that is absolutely lopsided to the few rather than to the many. I am talking about another problem, which is that in Canada we spread the peanut butter a little too thin across the country, but when we look at programs, we see that extra funding for research and development can attract many Canadians to participate in an innovative and prosperous Canada. We need to look closely at where funding is going and how we are attracting talent where it is needed, and ensure that we are developing those programs and the science to make sure Canada prospers. Canada will prosper from that.

• (1115)

We need to work more on breaking down barriers for equality of opportunity. That means more work, not less. That means that we make diversity a top priority, not cherry-picking the results we want. For instance, J.P. Morgan in the U.K. is pushing for more inclusion of Black diversity in the finance industry, and recently held its first EMEA Black advocacy program, with about 200 people from institutions across London gathering to discuss how progress could be made.

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The bank in the U.K. has increased its Black U.K. employees by 45% by breaking down barriers and ensuring that Black people see themselves in roles and seek to obtain the education for the roles they want. It involved mentorship. It involved making sure that there was community promotion and inclusiveness. It made sure there was internship programs and co-ops. It meant breaking down a lot of barriers that existed in those communities. It did not mean that 45% of those positions were posted only for Black men for J.P. Morgan. That is not how that was done, nor how it should be done.

In Canada, we see barriers broken every day. The Alpine Club of Canada just appointed its first female leaders: Isabelle Daigneault, the first female president, and Carine Salvy, the first female executive director. The Alpine Club is an organization based in Canmore, Alberta. It manages a network of cabins across Canada's remote back country, and it has worked to educate people in the world of mountain climbing. It was a big barrier and it took many years, but how great it is. We celebrate that the barrier was broken.

Amita Kuttner is Canada's first trans person and the first person of East Asian descent to lead a major Canadian political party, the Green Party. This is very important. It is a major glass ceiling to be broken.

We have Major Guenther, who is an F-18 fighter pilot in Cold Lake, Alberta. How amazing is that, to have those barriers broken?

In my own riding today, I am sad to announce that our own Loyalist College CEO, Dr. Ann Marie Vaughan, is resigning to become Humber College's first female president and CEO, near Toronto. We are sorry to lose her, but how great is it that she is breaking barriers and moving on?

Our university, college and polytechnic system has been a critical provider for many of our technical skills shortages for technology clusters across Canada in the past two decades. We are so happy she has been a leader in our region for that.

At the end of the day, we really have to look at what this motion is and what it is not. This motion is about looking at equality of opportunity for all Canadians. What I like about this motion is that we are going to review a program that ensures that the barriers that exist are going to be broken down.

The other side of it is that we are going to make sure that we do things the right way so that when we are funding research in Canada, we are getting the best and brightest, as well as having an inclusive and diverse policy. That means not posting jobs that say "for women only", or for a different sector of diversity only, and that we include that in decision-making, in policy-making, in interview processing, in various education and in funding.

As a parliamentarian, a Conservative and a Canadian, I believe in equality of opportunity for Canadians versus equality of outcomes. Canadians are unique, innovative, creative, entrepreneurial and competitive. As long as we focus on breaking down barriers, we focus on that equality of levelling the starting blocks. Equality of outcome as a goal skips that part, whereas as Canadians, we can do the work ourselves. It is a utopian fantasy that often ends in a dystopian outcome: excluding someone else in the name of inclusion.

We are a great nation. We have so much to achieve. As we work through the work in reporting, new science, research and industry, I look forward to the policy that will not only build the future, but policy for the government that embraces this new era when Canada has the opportunity to leap ahead. Let us ensure that we break down any and all barriers for the future leaders in this country and for all who will find this country home.

Let us not practise inclusion with exclusion. Let us break down barriers to include everyone and provide equality and opportunity.

• (1120)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech, in which he spoke of equality of opportunity, a value that I hold dear.

As status of women critic, I would like to bring a very feminist perspective to today's debate. We have done a lot of work in Quebec to integrate more women into our research chairs. It is very exciting.

My colleague from La Prairie spoke of the importance of working proactively and of determining why women are still under-represented in Canada. I will give you an example. During the pandemic, a number of female researchers had to postpone or delay submitting their research programs because they were locked down at home with their children.

How can we work proactively and promote better work-life balance policies so that women who want to be mothers will see they can also be researchers at the same time, for instance in our research chairs? Instead of setting criteria that exclude certain targets, for example the white males of a certain age mentioned by my colleague, how can we work proactively to attract these under-represented groups to our research chairs?

• (1125)

[*English*]

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, as I noted in my speech, we have to look further downstream to how we attract those individuals into education and how we then ensure those people have equal opportunity when it comes to jobs, which means breaking down those barriers.

I know we can all agree that any Canadian who has the opportunity and the education has the merit and the ability to get themselves into a position they want. As I mentioned, what I love about individualism is that all of us as Canadians have the ability, competitiveness, drive and work ethic to be able to do that. That applies to all Canadians.

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What has been really great, as we have seen lately, is that there are women, for instance, who are breaking down those barriers and there are people of different ethnic backgrounds breaking down those barriers. We are seeing it happen. We just have to ensure that with those barriers that exist, whatever they may be, we have honest discussions and speak about them, break them down and ensure everyone has equal opportunity to achieve what they want to achieve.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member made reference to research chairs from UBC, where he said that more than 50% are now female. If that is the case, it kind of sets the example and proves that as a society we need to do what we can to ensure there is a higher sense of equality and fairness. Actions need to be taken in order to encourage that to take place. As an example, I would just look in the front benches of government, where 50% of cabinet is female. It is a specific action.

When we see wider participation, whether it is females, visible minorities or people with disabilities, it does inspire others to take on that larger role. In particular, I am focusing on young people. Could the member provide his thoughts on that?

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, the difference between women who have earned their places and women being appointed to their places is paramount. Women I have spoken to take offence at the fact that they have to be appointed in order to make it to a position rather than earning their place as they should, and they do. The difference is that we are jumping a couple of steps on that.

Eliminating barriers allows women or anyone with an ethnic diversity to get through that barrier in order to earn their own place on the podium. However, we jump that and say we know there are barriers but we are just going to appoint someone anyhow. We eliminate the systemic problems that exist in the first place. UBC, which appointed 60 positions, put out a target ad, meaning it posted a job for women only to apply. The problem when that is done and a quota is filled is that the next ad would say that only people with disabilities could apply and women are excluded. We cannot exclude them in order to get others ahead.

What we need to do is break the barriers down, to your point, so we have more women who want to enter politics who can and are able to then do it on their own merit, because we know—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Just a reminder to the hon. member that I did not make any point.

The hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith has the floor.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, if I can speak frankly, I am very disheartened that this is a debate we are having today. Quite frankly, I am feeling that many of the comments in the previous intervention were insulting to many. I am standing here today and want to express that there is a big difference between equity and equality, and it is clear that concept is not being understood.

We have so many systems that were built by white men, for white men. To say that we should not be providing equitable opportunities and looking at these systems to ensure that everybody has access to these systems is clearly inaccurate. I ask the member to

please take a moment to look at the Conservative Party and share today whether this theory of equality is working well with the Conservative Party, which currently has only 18% representation of women within the caucus. Clearly, this shows the evidence we need that this equality theory being proposed today is not effective in ensuring equitable access for everyone to these systems made by white men.

• (1130)

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, I am a little confused about the comments. As for equality of opportunity for everyone, I think everyone in Canada would like that. She talks about the Conservative Party. We have members from all different sects of this country. We had the first female prime minister in the country: the only female prime minister in the country. We have members who represent our gay community, who are ethnic and who have different backgrounds.

It is not about us. It is about Canadians as a whole having equal opportunity. I have a daughter who is four years old. I think, for all our daughters and for anyone across the country, all we ask for is equal opportunity for those children to get an education, to ensure they are included and inclusive and to ensure they have an opportunity to work hard and achieve what they want to achieve.

We look at barriers in our institutional systems and in our schools and our communities themselves. I think what we are all saying here is that, when it comes to funding, funding should follow exactly what we are practising in Canada. What we are trying to strive for is that everyone should have the same opportunity as everyone else. Those who work hard and achieve that and get to this place, or others, have done it of their own accord and not because someone else told them to do it. It is because they did it.

I think that is really important.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I think it is unappreciated by some in this place that the barriers to entry for women are quite significant and that they will not be broken down unless the first step is to ensure what used to be called affirmative action. That is just recognizing women like me, who are women of privilege by the colour of our skin. If we are going to also want to ensure diversity, inclusion and equity, we need to do more.

I am reminded of one of the really good things that the Prime Minister did, which was to appoint a gender-equal, balanced cabinet.

I vividly recall listening to conservative media commentators. By conservative, I do not mean capital-C conservative: that was not a partisan comment. They were on the national news saying, “Oh, are we now going to have less qualified cabinet members because the Prime Minister is forced to find 50% of them as women?”

It was so insulting, but it was so ingrained that the cabinet ministers in this country, the members of Parliament, are all supposed to be white men, and they were from 1867 until Agnes Macphail was elected.

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Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, I am not going to take a lot of lessons from this leader, considering how the last leader of the Green Party was treated.

Some hon. members: By you.

Mr. Ryan Williams: At the end of the day, we have to look at breaking barriers down—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The member for Saanich—Gulf Islands is rising on a point of order.

Ms. Elizabeth May: The heckling that I just experienced was a personal attack to my personal integrity, and I take personal offence. I ask the hon. member to withdraw those remarks, because they are untrue, unfounded and based on malicious gossip. He should be ashamed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): In particular, partisan issues are not the business of the House and should not be dealt with by the House. I would like the hon. member to please address the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her comment but, at the end of the day, I do not understand. We are talking about equality of opportunity and especially about breaking down barriers. Would the hon. member rather have been appointed to the position she holds in the Parliament instead of earning it, as she rightfully has done?

At the end of the day, when we talk to women and to people across Canada, should they have to be appointed in order to break down barriers? Can they not break them down of their own accord? Equality of opportunity means that we break the barriers down so that those individuals can do just that. That is all we are talking about.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to start by saying that I will be sharing my time with my amazing colleague, the member for Nunavut. I am eager to hear what she has to say.

I would like to point out that we are currently, here in Ottawa, on Algonquin territory. Personally, as a member for Montreal, I represent a territory that was never ceded by the Kanyen'kehà:ka, a place for the nations to gather and exchange. I think that it is important to point this out, especially given the nature of today's debate.

I am not particularly surprised to hear the Conservatives speak of unbridled individualism and individual responsibility. I am a little surprised, however, to hear my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois following the same line. That is a symptom of a conservative shift in the Bloc that has been happening for years but is coming to the fore once again. We can see it in today's motion. However, intellectually speaking, the motion raises some interesting questions. These are questions concerning equity, sociology, social determinants, systemic racism, the representation of diversity in our institutions and the fact that our public and private institutions should be a reflection of our society, a society that is as open, diverse and inclusive as possible. We need to work on that. I think we need to think about that. These are important subjects and issues.

Did this warrant an opposition day and a full day of debate? That is a good question. That being said, the choice was the Bloc Québécois's.

I would like to put things in context. After devoting an entire day of parliamentary work to the prayer in the House of Commons, the Bloc now introduces a motion whose main issue is that some white males will not have access to positions in federal research centres. That is the biggest problem for them. That is the Bloc's priority. That is what we are talking about today. It is frustrating that these white males are facing restricted access to positions where they have been the overwhelming majority for decades.

We are experiencing a housing shortage; some people cannot pay their rent; others have not received an employment insurance cheque for three or four months; still others want to regularize their status but are in the dark because the wait times for immigration are interminable; people are unable to get a passport; we are in the middle of a climate crisis and a climate emergency; we are being told to expect a hot summer with forest fires, floods and violent storms.

However, let us talk about the poor white males who may not have access to certain positions, when they have occupied 65%, 70% or 80% of these positions for years.

A minimum of effort is being put in to facilitate access to these positions for women, indigenous peoples, visible minorities and persons living with disabilities. Apparently, that is unfair and discriminatory. It is called affirmative action, with a view to effecting a social change that will not happen on its own for historical, sociological and societal harmony reasons. I could give several examples, since we still have to deal with sexism, we still have to deal with systemic racism, and we still have to deal with discrimination and prejudice against immigrants and first nations.

That does not count, because we live in a meritocracy. Each individual is responsible for their own success or failure, and that is it. It is that simple. Now there is an intellectual shortcut if I have ever seen one.

I will use the percentage of women in this Parliament, in the House of Commons, as an example. In 2011, when I arrived here, 24% of members were women. That figure was 26% in 2015, 29% in 2019, and 30% last year. On average, the percentage of women in parliament in a democratic G7 country increases by 1.5% to 2% a year. At this rate, our Parliament will have achieved equity in 40 years. My daughter Marianne will be retired when Parliament achieves gender equity. Without serious incentives and sometimes even coercive measures, it will never happen.

● (1135)

We could also look at unemployment rates. In January 2021, unemployment among Black people in Quebec stood at 13%, which is 70% higher than the Quebec average. The Black community has more university graduates but an employment rate that is 5% lower than the average rate, and they earn \$4 an hour less than white people.

In February 2021, one month later, the unemployment rate in Canada increased by 0.6%. That same month, the unemployment rate increased by 4.5% for Latin Americans, 5.5% for the Black community and 7.6% for Southeast Asians. They have higher unemployment rates, earn less and have greater difficulty finding a place to live, even though they are better trained and educated than the average Canadian.

If this is not proof of systemic racism and barriers that must be broken, I do not know what is.

At Laval University it was an awful scandal that women make up 38% of professors, or below 40%. This figure is 6% for members of visible minorities. Fully 13% of Quebecers are members of a visible minority. That represents one million people. That is halfway to the target. Persons with disabilities represent 1% of professors at Laval University.

As far as research chairs in general are concerned, the numbers are practically the same if we look at the average of federal research chairs. Women represent 34%, even less than at Laval University, and members of visible minorities 6%. The number of persons with disabilities or members of first nations is so low that it cannot be counted. The numbers are not available.

Then I am told that we should not have measures to increase these shameful percentages by giving a chance to someone who does not have the same opportunities in life when it comes to filling a researcher or professor position.

Affirmative action measures work, as we have seen in many countries, such as the United States, where such measures were absolutely necessary. I know that “affirmative action” is sometimes translated in French as “discrimination positive”, or “positive discrimination”. Some people find that amusing and say that you cannot fix discrimination by adding discrimination. That is a bad joke that comes from a narrow, short-sighted perspective. Éric Duhaime, the new leader of the Conservative Party of Quebec, was the first to say this in 2019. That is the very perspective that the Bloc Québécois is embracing here. Bravo.

As a way forward, this is just appalling. We could be talking about any number of things that could be done to help people, but instead you move a motion that will actually hurt people.

• (1140)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would remind the member that it is not my motion, but rather a Bloc Québécois motion.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: I apologize, Madam Speaker.

We need to do some collective soul-searching. Why is it that women make up only 20% of corporate boards and only 25% of senior management in Canada?

According to an Osler report, a university professor looked at 2,000 senior management positions in Canada. Of the 2,000, he found seven indigenous people and six people with disabilities. That is it. Among senior managers, women's salaries are 56% lower than men's. Visible minority women earn 32% less than white women. That is huge. The gaps are enormous.

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It makes perfect sense to try to do something to fix this and ensure that women, indigenous people, members of visible minorities and people with disabilities take their rightful place within our institutions, including universities.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, I do not have a question for my colleague since I doubt that he will answer it.

I simply want to inform him that when he throws out statistics, within faculties, for example, he is referring to professors who might have been hired in 1987, 1988 or 1989, and not just ones who were hired recently. I am a university professor, so I am part of the academic community.

It worries me that there are some members in the House who cannot count. I wanted to point that out.

• (1145)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his pleasant question.

I need only give him the Université de Moncton as an example, where the majority of students have been women for years now. We learned recently that in the Université de Moncton's faculty of science, women make up barely 15% of the faculty.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments from the member. What I think of here is that there has to be a will to see the changes we want to see for society to evolve. In many ways, we see very progressive-minded people taking policy initiatives that will in fact achieve, hopefully sooner as opposed to later, a wider participation in our chairs so that they do incorporate minorities, whether they be women, people with disabilities or ethnic minorities. It is important for society as a whole that these chairs reflect the Canadian population, ultimately. I wonder if the member can provide his thoughts on how important it is to have the will to see that take place.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, indeed, I do think that progressive movements have always worked to achieve equity and equality. Sometimes that requires restrictive measures.

That is okay, because what I am hearing from the Conservative Party and the Bloc right now makes me think of Margaret Thatcher when she said:

[*English*]

There is no society; there are only individuals.

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[Translation]

However, that is not how it works. I feel that, as parliamentarians and elected officials, we have to take responsibility and foster meaningful action that moves society forward for all Canadians, making it possible to achieve better representation of our diversity.

[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to pick up on a theme we heard from a previous speaker about this apparent distinction between equality of opportunity and equality of outcome. I cannot think of how we can define progress if we do not look at outcomes. I think that often equality of opportunity is used as an excuse for not doing anything.

I wonder if my colleague can think of any institutions in Canadian society that have achieved diversity that is reflective of the population without proactive equity measures.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, if we say that we do not need to focus on equity outcomes, if we think that access is basically equitable, we are forgetting that access is ultimately not so equitable if the outcomes are not there. Otherwise, there would be no reason for it. Therefore, we need to take proactive and affirmative steps to be able to have those role models.

As my colleague said earlier, it is important to have indigenous and visible minority women as role models who have succeeded in certain positions or situations. In the long run, this will help us look beyond theoretical rights to achieve true equity backed by real outcomes.

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will try to refocus the debate and not make any generalizations or take intellectual shortcuts, out of respect for the debate today.

My colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie tried to reduce the debate to skin colour. All that the Bloc Québécois is saying is that the criterion that should take precedence when recruiting researchers in the Canada research chairs program is excellence. However, the criterion that currently takes precedence is based on identity.

I would like to quote a few visible minority researchers, such as Dr. Kambhampati from McGill University. He told me that he does not care about skin colour when he wants to hire someone who is interested in working on a project and is good in that field. What does my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie think about that?

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, it is rather unfortunate, but, if only 6% of the researchers who are capable of excellence are members of a visible minority, then I wonder how it is that all the excellent researchers are white men.

• (1150)

[English]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): [Member spoke in Inuktitut]

[English]

Uqaqtittiji, I wanted to start my statement in Inuktitut to portray the impacts of what could happen if this motion were to pass. It would allow for a lot of exclusion. In addition, it would diminish the years of hard work that the Canada research chairs program has done to increase equity, diversity and inclusion.

I turned to speak the rest of my statement in English because I know just how important it is to work collaboratively and to work toward a common understanding. Having been educated in a colonial system, I have learned that Canada is proud of its history. By this point in our society, we espouse inclusiveness, diversity and equity.

Allowing this motion to pass will see results as catastrophic as the Franklin expedition. I am sure that I do not need to remind my colleagues in the House and those listening to this debate that Sir John Franklin perished in the Arctic. When Franklin left England, I am quite sure that he was selected for his skills and his qualifications. After all, his research and advances to achieve navigation could benefit travels across the north.

For years, academics and researchers searched for the demise of this expedition. For years, academics and researchers ignored Inuit knowledge passed on from the 1800s, as much of our knowledge is still in many aspects ignored, impacting our Inuit lives. It took 165 years, and only with the knowledge and guidance of Inuit was Franklin's ship found. In this history, Canadians can thank Louie Kamookak, an Inuk from Gjoa Haven in my riding. It was his talk on the Inuit knowledge that led to the wreck finally being found 165 years later.

I seriously question the Bloc members who have decided to use their opposition day on this matter. Why are they so adamant to protect white male privilege? Why are they looking to remove the equity, diversity and inclusion objectives that address the underrepresentation of women, visible minorities, people with disabilities and people from indigenous communities in federally funded research chairs? Why have they not focused on important matters requiring our attention? We are experiencing a climate crisis and a housing crisis, and there are indigenous people who are being deprived of their rights.

Inuit and first nations are questioning the Bloc's position on the French-language laws and the lack of commitments toward promoting and revitalizing indigenous languages. Indigenous people in Quebec are often excluded, as Bloc members continually debate their nationhood in Canada, a place they settled on, a place they took from indigenous peoples.

This motion reeks of “all lives matter”, a slogan associated with the criticism of equity, diversity and inclusion of the Black Lives Matter movement. We must not try to hide that Canada is still a place of discrimination and that legislation and policies protecting equity, diversity and inclusion are still very necessary.

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• (1155)

We hear the need for them every day in this House. We hear every day about the atrocities experienced by indigenous women who continue to be targets of violence, leading to the need for the National Inquiry on MMIWG to have been created. We hear weekly how much the federal government says it funds initiatives to make improvements on indigenous peoples' lives, and yet, because of the systemic racism, we still hear about violent deaths of indigenous women. As recently as last week, another indigenous woman was murdered.

We must do better to increase these existing figures: 40.9% of women hold research chairs; 22.8% of visible minorities hold research chairs; 5.8% of people living with a disability hold research chairs; and 3.4% of indigenous people hold research chairs. All of these figures are just too low. The only way to continue to advance Canada as a society is to continue to use the criteria to keep equity, diversity and inclusion.

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a very simple question.

Competent researchers from visible minorities do not have access to research chair funding because they do not meet the criteria or do not want to meet them. If that is not discrimination, then I do not know what to call it.

There is already discrimination against people who are under-represented and do not meet certain criteria of the Canada research chairs program. What is my colleague's opinion on this?

[English]

Ms. Lori Idlout: Uqagtittiji, I think it is a statement that absolutely makes it necessary why we need to keep that legislation and those policies, because that discrimination exists. We need to make sure that these policies are used to open opportunities for people who are indigenous, who have disabilities, who are visible minorities. It is the reason why we need to say not to pass this motion, because we still have too much systemic discrimination in Canada.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, *qujannamiik* to my hon. colleague.

I have the same thoughts that the member shared about this motion. With such limited opposition days, it is quite interesting to me that this one was selected as the issue to be debated today.

It is a bold move to make such a statement about whom we want in these positions. Can we all agree that these are highly educated, highly experienced individuals who made this decision to ensure that equity and diversity are included in this process? Are we kind of jumping ahead of ourselves here, not letting the potentially beneficial outcomes for these institutions to be seen before we criticize it, before we look again at these concepts of a dystopia? I think that was mentioned in a different version, as if there is going to be a reversal of *The Handmaid's Tale* should we allow these kinds of actions to take place.

I am wondering if the member could comment on that. Why are we sounding the alarm before we even know how beneficial this could be?

Ms. Lori Idlout: Uqagtittiji, I enjoy working with the member on the standing committee.

It is a difficult question, but it is an important one, with all that is going on in Canada, with all that is going on in research. I know that in the Arctic, for sure, a lot of the academics are starting to open up to the idea of the importance of using indigenous traditional knowledge so that academia and indigenous traditional knowledge are used in parallel and are not separate from each other.

In Canada's time, we are moving toward a greater future where there is inclusivity and where it is necessary to make sure that we are keeping these opportunities open and making sure that it is the relationships that we focus on when it comes to people who have the ability to make decisions about what research will happen. These chairs have important positions, and the themes and guides that they provide to the rest of academia will be truly important, so making sure those groups of chairs are diverse is very important in Canada.

• (1200)

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, earlier today, a member from the Conservative Party spoke a little about the importance of what he referred to as “individualism” and the importance of ensuring that those who are accessing positions in educational institutions “have earned” the right to be there.

I am wondering if the member could please share her thoughts as to why that narrative is extremely problematic in having equitable access within our systems.

Ms. Lori Idlout: Uqagtittiji, I just want to drive back to the importance of identity. I think that identity does play a huge role in Canada. We are quite proud of ourselves as Canadians who support each other, and Canadians are the most generous when it comes to charity. Being an individualistic person who only serves to promote oneself as a person is not something that is a very Canadian part of our identity. I think most Canadians would prefer to be known as generous, caring and inclusive, as we hope we will continue to be.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, today I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

We are talking about research funding in a provincial jurisdiction, meaning Quebec's jurisdiction, and we are talking about it here in the federal Parliament. Clearly, there is already a problem. What is even more problematic is that these criteria for awarding Canada research chairs are not a lesson in democracy. It is not a lesson in democracy because they were introduced in 2000 and this is the first time we have debated them here in the House.

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Regardless of what the NDP members say, it is healthy to debate, even if they do not like it. This is especially true given that we have never debated this matter here, thoughts have not been shared, and what I have heard today shows a complete lack of understanding of the academic world. I would very much like to hear what the Minister of Health has to say about this motion, as he is a professor at Laval University. I hope he will have the opportunity to speak.

Let us go back in time. Let us look at the Liberal legacy with regard to funding public services, particularly that of Paul Martin in the 1990s. What was done then? From the first half of the 1990s until 1998, cuts were made to health transfers and social programs, leaving provinces in so much trouble that they had difficulty funding their public services.

Of course, as time went on, health care took up more and more space in the provinces' finances and came to cannibalize all other government responsibilities, including funding for higher education, preschool education and elementary school education. Ottawa's actions left the provinces in turmoil.

Moreover, in the mid-1990s, there was a referendum in which half of Quebecers said no to Canada. What did Ottawa do? It decided to plant its flag all over provincial jurisdictions. It started with the sponsorship scandal, one of the worst Liberal disgraces in history. It continued in the late 1990s with the millennium scholarships, when a jurisdictional squabble took place with Quebec. The Liberals thought that Quebec's financial assistance to students was not doing the job. They had to get involved.

Since the provinces were in trouble because of the cutbacks, Ottawa said it would create these research chairs. This is the typical old Liberal reflex: they place the provinces in a tight spot, they wait awhile, then they come to the rescue. First, there are no conditions, but, with time, more and more conditions are set, which are expensive for the provinces to administer. Thus, 22 years later, here we are today to discuss the matter.

The issue with the criteria has nothing to do with inclusion or exclusion. Quite simply, the federal government has no business in the matter. It is none of its business. The Liberals will claim they established these criteria to satisfy the courts. However, the courts are only involved because the Liberals are involved. If they had minded their own business, the courts would never have gotten involved in their programs.

Today, we find ourselves with all kinds of criteria for hiring professors. These criteria impede academic freedom, even though professor recruitment is under the purview of the universities, the professors and the researchers.

I am a university professor. I have participated in the meetings to hire professors. Hiring a researcher is such a delicate situation that even university HR departments do not get involved, whether we are talking about McGill University, Laval University or the University of Toronto. However, here we have the smart alecks from the NDP who are able to tell us, in a convoluted way, how researchers should be hired in fields they know nothing about.

I will explain to the House how a professor is hired. Let us say, for example, that there is an opening in the economics department at UQAM. There is a particular need for someone who specializes

in health economics, and 300 people apply. After we eliminate those who do not speak French, we still have between 100 to 110 applicants remaining. Unlike the Liberals, we think that French is important in Quebec. Of those applicants, there are some who specialize in all sorts of fields that are not needed, such as macroeconomics and the like, so we have to sort through all the applications. We are left with between 50 and 60 excellent candidates from all over the world, because the market is global. Then, we have to interview about 40 of them. Some of them fail the interview, so we are then left with a short list of about 20 to 25 candidates. Of those 20 to 25 people, we will choose the best seven or eight to attend what is called a fly out. They are invited to present their research to other researchers who have knowledge of the field, unlike the Liberal Party and the NDP. In the end, a professor is selected and offered the position.

What happens then? Sometimes the person who is offered the job will turn it down because our public services are poorly funded and we do not have the means to pay our researchers properly.

● (1205)

Off they go to France, Great Britain, or back to the United States. Even francophone Quebecers, who have long been under-represented in academia since before the Université du Québec came to be, no longer want to come to Quebec because our institutions have a hard time paying them. We move on to our second choice, our third and our fourth and we do the best we can. In the end, the short list is whittled down to one or two candidates who are the only ones we can hire. That is how it works in universities.

Some people here think that introducing new criteria and making this costly process even more burdensome makes it easier to hire skilled people. They obviously know nothing at all about the sector. Like many of my colleagues, I spent the past 20 years in and around academia. Every time researchers were hired, the most important criteria were gender equality and the integration of cultural minorities. Every time we managed to hire researchers, those criteria were met without the help of federal government conditions or the Canada research chair program. These criteria expose the Liberals' moral narcissism. It is their way of signalling that they are better than anyone else.

What happens in the short term when criteria like these are imposed? Sometimes a few candidates who are members of a visible minority or women qualify for the position. However, because of these criteria, every university wants them. If we are unable to hire them, it is because we cannot afford to increase salaries because of the current salary scales. The money is in Ottawa, and Quebec City has been "defunded" once more in its history, so we do the best we can.

This brings me to Quebec's reality and the Liberals' vision of diversity and inclusion. At the Université du Québec à Rimouski, for example, there is a marine sciences department. There is also the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue. The Université du Québec has campuses in several different regions, and in some places, the local social makeup makes it hard to recruit researchers. In these places, these criteria are doubly, triply and quadruply limiting. Once again, the universities pay the price, because the Liberal method is to impose conditions but not pay.

The federal government tells us that to have diversity every university needs to reflect the average. When diversity is just an attempt to reflect averages that is a big problem. These conditions substitute appearance for competence. The Liberals know about that because that is how they chose the Prime Minister.

However, our universities need to be independent and have academic freedom. It was universities and their rules that gave us the Enlightenment and that gave rise to the greatest research we have today. Every university and every department across Quebec and Canada knows this and is already acting accordingly.

The government is not telling us that this requires diversity. It is telling us not to trust Quebec to manage its own university sector and research funding. Criteria exist to include diversity, but that is up to Quebec, not the federal government.

Where do we go from here? The universities need to keep working on diversity and inclusion, but the federal government needs to leave them alone. The government needs to stop interfering in research because that is not its wheelhouse, because it is ineffective and incompetent. Personally, I do not get involved in areas of expertise that I know nothing about.

We need to get rid of these ineffective rules that are costly for the Quebec government and the universities and that violate long-standing traditions of academic freedom. These rules are adversarial and punitive, and they are poisoning the work environment of our universities. I will repeat that I participated in departmental meetings to hire professors where these inclusion criteria were used, and it is not an easy process.

What should we do? We have to be proactive, restore funding to the provinces and increase student scholarships. We must ensure that those involved in hiring university professors, as I was, have access to a pool of competent people and have all the necessary options. The moral narcissism of the Liberals and the NDP will not result in better research.

• (1210)

[*English*]

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened to my friend opposite's speech intently and I have some underlying concerns. First and foremost, the implication is that when we look at diversity and inclusion as an issue, it precludes those who are qualified and intellectually capable of a job, so there is a premise I reject.

What the member is trying to say, I believe, is that there should be no measures put in place at any level, whether in academia, gov-

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ernment or government jobs, that set particular criteria, whether they be for someone who is indigenous or racialized, for women or, in a case when the Government of Canada hires people, for people who are bilingual. Those may not be criteria we set forth.

I am wondering if my friend could reflect on that and tell us why he fully rejects the notion of any form of personal characteristics being incorporated into the jobs—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, but we need time for other questions.

The hon. member for Mirabel.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Speaker, the member is putting words in my mouth.

Members know, and I will repeat, that I spent my life in academia. It is a place where we find the people who are most educated about, open to and aware of diversity. It is not true that we are opposed to having inclusion criteria, but it is not up to the federal government to set out such criteria. This is not the right legislature for that. Teaching and research funding are part of higher education. It is part of that. That is how doctoral and masters students are guided. It is the responsibility of the Government of Quebec.

The Liberal Party's vision is the following: If the Liberals did not set out the criteria, then there are no criteria. The Liberals cannot seem to figure out that such is not the case.

[*English*]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I wonder if there is a common misunderstanding of how the hiring process works. Should the focus not be on improving that process, rather than breaking down the years of work that have been done to keep discrimination at bay?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Speaker, people are putting words in my mouth again. That might be because my speech was so good.

Eliminating these rules will not break down years of work. People want inclusion and integration, and I can attest to that based on my own career experience and my colleagues'. Every province, like Quebec, is responsible for funding and managing post-secondary education. Ottawa cannot tell the provinces what to do, period.

If the member wants to get involved in that then she should move to provincial politics.

• (1215)

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Mirabel for his speech.

I remind members that this is yet another example of Ottawa's paternalistic approach with Quebec. That is not what my question is about, however, because my colleague did a great job explaining what the federal government is doing.

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This morning I explained that if we want to get more women in academia and in other fields, we should be proactive, as my colleague from La Prairie explained so well, and ask why women are less likely to go into certain sectors. I gave an example about how women reportedly had a harder time submitting their research because they were at home carrying a heavy mental load.

How can the federal government be proactive and make life easier for women? It could implement work-life balance initiatives. Essentially, all of this should be set up beforehand. I do not think that university requirements explain why it is difficult to recruit women.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Speaker, we hear about all kinds of averages and the Canadian average.

Research facilities do not reflect society perfectly. They have evolved with the times. We need to be very careful about all the statistics used to apply averages to this, that and the other thing. That does not work.

My colleague is right. It has been harder for minorities and women for many years. Scholarships have been created and efforts have been made to increase inclusion awareness. This has been the case in Quebec and at Quebec universities. There is still progress to be made and work to be done to encourage more people like Marie Curie and Amartya Sen, magnificent Nobel Prize winners.

Imposing conditions today and preventing Quebec universities from hiring professors will not improve the quality of research. It is the Liberals, not us, who are playing politics with inclusion. It is important to note that they are actually hurting inclusion in the long run with this, because they are directing their energy to the wrong place.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today, on this Bloc Québécois opposition day, to speak to our motion on federal funding for university research and the associated conditions.

With this motion, which I will not read again, our objective is clear: we must ensure that grants are awarded without discrimination, based on skills and qualifications, essentially on merit, and not on identity-based criteria, in the interests of genuine equality of opportunity.

This motion is particularly important to me, because universities have long been some of the institutions where I have been fortunate enough to spend some of my career. In Quebec, I studied political science at the Université de Montréal, and sociology at the Université du Québec à Montréal. I was fortunate to have been a lecturer at Laval University and at the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi. I was also able to see what was happening across the ocean because I had the amazing fortune to complete my doctorate in the socio-economics of development at the École des hautes études en sciences sociales in Paris. Those were probably the best years of my life.

I have very fond memories of my university days, although they were unfortunately not without a few dark periods. During their careers, young students, researchers and teachers quickly learn about the hegemony of research chairs, which unfortunately too often comes at the expense of teaching, a role that is now mostly carried out by precarious staff.

This hegemony of the chairs also lets Ottawa take control of research and impose its ideological terms and themes. This is especially true in the social sciences, where radical ideologies are often lifted directly from American campuses. Academic researchers who arrive in the middle of this have no choice but to conform, or else be pushed to the academic sidelines.

The Canada research chairs program was created by Jean Chrétien's government 20 years ago, in a context where Ottawa was sucking the lifeblood out of Quebec's public finances and then using its surpluses, obtained on the backs of Quebeckers, to invade areas of provincial jurisdiction, with education being one such jurisdiction.

At the time, Ottawa swore that they would not be intruding on education since research was not specifically under any jurisdiction. However, it is now clear that the creation of research chairs was a direct intrusion. The program is basically acting as a hiring program for professors. Ottawa is dictating to the universities the terms and conditions for hiring faculty. This situation is unacceptable and the program must be overhauled.

Ottawa is using its spending power to occupy the field of research funding. It is taking advantage of the fact that money is key and thus changing the way our universities operate. That is what is happening with the excessive demands imposed by the Canada research chairs program, particularly its requirements for equity, diversity and inclusion, which we find unreasonable.

By imposing its requirements under these research funding programs, Ottawa is not respecting the autonomy of universities. There is no reason for Ottawa to dictate conditions of employment for faculty. If Ottawa wants to take over spending power in the field of education, it should offer funding unconditionally, but that will never happen. As my colleague from Mirabel said earlier, Ottawa imposes conditions but does not offer funding, as always.

It is unacceptable for Ottawa to impose targets on Quebec universities under threat of sanctions. These universities are educational institutions where independence of thought should be at the forefront. Why can they not be given free rein to set up their own diversity and inclusion programs, without being dictated to by Ottawa under the threat of losing some of their funding?

The requirements imposed by Ottawa are unacceptable and illegitimate obstacles. It was no doubt to remedy this problem that the Pauline Marois government, with Pierre Duchesne as minister of higher education, sought to liberate Quebec's education system from Canadian ideological control by creating Quebec research chairs. That would have been a good idea.

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I am being critical of the research chairs, but I want to make it clear that we strongly support permanent, increased funding for scientific research. There is no denying that Canada is unfortunately not a leader in this area. I could even say that it is a real dinosaur, and I think the best example of that is the fact that one former minister of state for science and technology was openly creationist. This was in the 2000s, not 1950. That gives an idea of how scientific research was treated by that government, and the underfunding of scientific research has been a glaring issue.

• (1220)

The Naylor report clearly showed that funding cuts in research and development over the past 20 years have had devastating consequences. We saw that at the beginning of the health crisis, which we are barely out of. We had no pharmaceutical industry. We had no drugs, no medical equipment, no vaccines. Worse yet, we had no adequately funded structure to begin working on developing everything I just listed. We had no capacity for rapid development.

As for the scientific research institutions that used to be the pride of Quebec, such as the Centre Armand-Frappier, they were all simply abandoned by Ottawa. I think we can see that there are consequences to living in what the Prime Minister proudly called the first “post-national” country. We have more examples. Canada would do well to put its energy into evolving out of the Jurassic age instead of trying to dictate the nature of scientific research and who is authorized to conduct it.

Of course we are in favour of including people from diverse backgrounds as much as possible. That goes without saying, because diversity is neither good nor bad. It is a reality. It is a reflection of contemporary society. Let us not forget that the Bloc Québécois once included in its ranks Osvaldo Nunez, the first Latin-American MP in the history of this parliamentary institution. The Bloc also had Bernard Cleary, an indigenous person, and Vivian Barbot, who is originally from Haiti. It also got my predecessor, Ève-Mary Thāi Thi Lac, elected in Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot as the first Quebec woman of Vietnamese descent in the House. Today, I am the first member of the Huron-Wendat nation to become a member of the House, and I did it as a member of the Bloc Québécois. We have no lessons to learn on that score. Let us make that clear.

I would hope that, in addition to representing a diverse population, all these people, myself excluded, were chosen to be lawmakers, elected to serve as members of this Parliament, because they were, first and foremost, skilled and qualified. When people have the same qualifications, of course, no problem. We have no problem with affirmative action to right some of the grave injustices of the past that, unfortunately, very much persist to this day, but restrictive criteria other than straight-up qualifications should never be imposed. Recently, Laval University put up a job posting that did not say an equally qualified person from a diverse background would get the job. The posting specifically said “reserved”. If that is not discrimination, what is it?

My riding is home to an internationally renowned university-level institution, the faculty of veterinary medicine at Saint-Hyacinthe. Naturally, as the only French-language veterinary training institution in North America, it attracts talent from around the world. Re-

cently, students and young researchers told me that the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council sent bursary applicants a survey asking them to disclose their sexual orientation.

Can someone explain to me how sexual orientation has any bearing on one's ability to dissect a dead bird or on the quality of laboratory testing for avian flu? Why is that relevant? I am still wondering.

As a final point, I would say that academic freedom is a fundamental struggle that comes down to the most basic independent thought, the need to reflect on things using reason. It has long been said that the purpose of education is to learn to think, not to learn what to think. The research chair system is a way to tell students what to think. It not only tells students what to think, it also tells their instructors what to think.

• (1225)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, a member of the House indicated earlier that it is unfortunate the Bloc has brought forward this particular motion, maybe even suggesting that it could have used a different motion today.

I look at the motion a little bit differently. I see the motion as something that, at the end of the day, I do not believe is in the best interests of Canada, primarily because I see the true value of Canada's diversity. Often when we get the types of appointments that are necessary, they can be inspirational for younger generations. This allows us to build a healthier and richer society.

I am wondering if the member could reflect on the province of Quebec in its entirety, whether it is the rural part or the city of Montreal. Does he believe that his attitudes toward ignoring women, minorities and other ethnic—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, but I have to get to other questions. I would ask individuals to mind the time. For questions and comments, about 45 seconds would be good. People have been extending them past one minute.

The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Madam Speaker, I have a lot to say in response to that.

I am amazed by how concerned they get about the topics we choose to debate on our opposition days. It is the same argument every time. Why did we not move a motion on another topic? It makes no difference to the government what topic we want to debate.

I often get the impression that people still think of Quebec as being just the city of Montreal surrounded by fields, an image that is pretty outdated.

I represent an extremely rural riding that elected the very first Vietnamese woman in the history of this House, so enough with the stereotypes of rural folks. We can settle this right now. She was elected for her skills and her ability to be a good MP.

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Quebec has taken a number of positive steps, as I said. “Discrimination” is an ugly word. I am in favour of these positive steps, of course, but I also support equal qualifications. It is as simple as that. We can look at all kinds of models—

• (1230)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. We must move on to the next question.

The member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

[*English*]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I cannot imagine that my hon. colleague opposes the idea that Canada's research chairs should reflect the diversity of our country. However, I did not hear him spend any time in his remarks talking about the many barriers that indigenous people, people of colour, people living with disabilities and all of these groups face in Canadian society.

I would like to give him the opportunity to elaborate on the many systemic barriers faced by those groups in institutions like our Canada research chairs.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Madam Speaker, if my colleague would like us to increase scholarships to encourage more first nations people to attend university, I would be his best ally. I support that.

There are currently programs that pay first nations students' tuition for a certain number of years. That already exists.

Some measures could still be improved.

Racism is still far too present with respect to first nations, of which I am a member. As was mentioned earlier, let us be proactive. Universities should consider skills and not discriminate based on identity. That is quite simply our message.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, let us be clear. Education and the funding of universities and university research fall under provincial jurisdiction, and thus are Quebec's responsibility.

Judging from the questions from the other side of the House, there would be no inclusion and diversity in Quebec unless Ottawa imposed conditions. It is as though they are saying that letting Quebec do its job results in racism and exclusion.

I would like my colleague to comment on the government members' perception of Quebec.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Madam Speaker, I would like to remind members of a historical fact.

The first Jewish person to be elected to public office in the entire British Empire was elected in Trois-Rivières, Quebec. He did not have the right to sit in this chamber because of his religion.

We will not take any lessons about diversity from Canada.

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the privilege of rising today to speak to an opposition motion. I will

be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from Vaughan—Woodbridge.

I usually get the text of an opposition motion the night before the debate and take the time back at the hotel to read it over and review the principles.

Two weeks ago, I got the text of the Bloc Québécois's opposition motion on the prayer in the House. When I shared my thoughts on that motion, I said that I thought it was weak. The issue was not very important compared to the war in Ukraine, climate change or affordability, which are all important issues worthy of debating in the House.

I saw the same problem yesterday when I got the text of today's motion. The motion itself is not a problem, because the Bloc Québécois has the privilege of raising issues in the House, but, once again, this motion does not deal with issues of concern to Canadians and Quebecers.

With the war in Ukraine still raging, the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food will be looking at the importance of food safety and the importance of supporting our allies and supporting Ukraine. Ukraine is very important for grains and various commodities. With the Russians targeting critical infrastructure, this is a very important issue. What is the best way for the Government of Canada and our allies, including NATO, Europe and the United States, to address this issue?

Well, no, today we are talking about the Canada research chairs program. Of course, the research program is very important in terms of innovation, science and the various programs designed to improve our economy. I agree with that principle, it is very important.

I will read the principles of the motion.

That: (a) the House denounce all forms of discrimination;

I agree with this principle. I think that most, if not all, members and all Canadians do too.

The motion goes on to say:

(b) in the opinion of the House, (i) research is necessary for the advancement of science and society in general,

I just expressed my point of view on that so, of course, I completely agree. Research is very important for Canada's future.

Next, the motion says:

(ii) access to the Canada Research Chairs Program must be based on the candidates' skills and qualifications; and

I agree with this principle as well. In fact, I find the Bloc's position interesting. The text implies that some of Canada's research chairs have the required skills. I think the members of the Bloc Québécois need to stand up in the House and explain their position. Do people think that some research chairs in Canada and Quebec have the necessary skills? I have confidence in the skills and qualifications of those who are in those positions right now, but I think perhaps the Bloc has a problem with that.

The motion concludes by stating:

(c) the House call on the government to review the program's criteria to ensure that grants are awarded based on science and not based on identity criteria or unrelated to the purpose of the research.

• (1235)

These criteria are primordial in order to assess the person's qualifications and understand the purpose and importance of their research for solving certain problems in society. However, I think that it is also crucial to encourage diversity and to make sure that some people have the same opportunities as others. For me, this is where the text of the motion is problematic.

I think it is very important to outline the history of the program. Established in 2000, the Canada research chairs program, or CRCP, is a key component of a national strategy aimed at making Canada one of the best countries in the world for research and development. It invests approximately \$311 million annually to attract and retain a diverse group of top researchers in order to strengthen research and training excellence at Canada's post-secondary institutions.

In 2017, a court order required the Canada research chairs program to meet the mandatory equity, diversity and inclusion objectives of a 2006 Canadian human rights settlement agreement. The government naturally supported this equity, inclusion and diversity plan, but a court also ruled that the program was problematic and that the government needed to change the way it selected research chairs.

The outcome of that decision is very important. From 2016 to 2021, the percentage of women who received CRCP funds rose from 28.9% to 40.9%, the percentage of visible minorities receiving funds rose from 13.4% to 22.8%, the percentage for people with disabilities rose from 0.3% to 5.8%, and the percentage of indigenous recipients rose from 1.3% to 3.4%. These numbers are statistics, but they represent much more: They are opportunities that have been offered to certain people. Therefore, they are not just statistics. This is important for diversity and for ensuring that everyone across the country has a chance at success. We need to make sure these jobs are open to all.

• (1240)

[English]

It is important, and research shows that diversity can lead to better results. Yes, we can put a lens on diversity and inclusion and trying to be equitable, but we also want the best results from what we do.

As I mentioned earlier in French, the Bloc Québécois motion reads as though individuals who are currently being appointed to these chairs are not qualified. I take issue with that. The parliamentary secretary before me said the same thing in that same vein. At the end of the day, as has been illustrated, diversity is important in leading to teamwork and driving better results.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I congratulate him again on his excellent French, which just keeps getting better.

My colleague seems to wonder what the problem is in our motion today. There is always this argument that we could have cho-

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sen another topic. We hear this every time that we bring an issue forward. I will identify the problems and ask my colleague to respond.

The first problem that we are raising today is that the federal government imposes funding conditions in an area under Quebec's jurisdiction. As this House is aware, this is something that the Bloc Québécois condemns all the time. It is in our DNA. I would like my colleague to tell me what he thinks.

The second problem that we are raising is exclusion. We are all for diversity and positive discrimination. What we condemn is the fact that certain applicants are excluded out of hand. Is this not a problem?

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

I am a bit confused, because when I read the text of the motion, I did not see anything about provincial jurisdiction. I think that Quebec probably respects the principles of diversity and inclusion. If the goal is for the federal government to work with Quebec to incorporate the principles of inclusion and diversity into the field of research, then I think that this is another matter. However, that is not in the text of the motion. I thank the hon. member for his explanation, but that is not in the text of this opposition day motion.

[English]

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, some groups experience multiple discriminations at the same time, such as, for example, women from indigenous communities who are under-represented in academic settings. That is just one example. Therefore, an intersectional approach is essential to understanding and addressing the barriers and biases that exclude under-represented groups.

Does the member believe that removing affirmative action may reinforce these biases and further exclude under-represented groups?

• (1245)

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, I will respond to that with a couple of things. Obviously, as I mentioned, the tribunal had suggested the government had to do a better job of trying to drive diversity and inclusion. The hon. member mentioned that some people, such as women in indigenous groups, have a double challenge. At the end of the day, what I take notice of in this Bloc Québécois motion is that it almost reads as though it is a type of discrimination to encourage individuals who are under-represented to have more status in these chairs. I disagree with that principle.

I think it is also extremely important for universities and that culture to play an important role there. I would like to commend Acadia University. They are doing really important work in this domain. They have great research chairs, some of whom are supported by us, some of whom are being driven by themselves.

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To answer her question, institutionally it is important, and to her point, these types of principles need to stay.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one of the issues that I have been raising is the issue about young people and how young people look to important positions that are in society, such as university chairs or research chairs, and how they can be very inspiring for youths who are of a minority.

I wonder if my colleague could provide his thoughts as to why it is so important that, as we diversify, young people see that these important positions are reflective of Canadian society.

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, I think the parliamentary secretary has hit it right on the head with the question. I will certainly just elaborate a little bit further.

Regardless of what profession one might seek to take on in the future, one wants to see oneself reflected and have mentorship in that role. Whether or not that is the diversity that the parliamentary secretary talked about, or indigenous communities or handicapped individuals who have been finding their way here, that is extremely important. That matters in research chairs, and that matters in politics.

That is why we are certainly trying to get even more women involved in politics and more women involved here in Parliament. It extends far beyond the research programs that we are talking about, but he does make a very good point.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am happy to participate in the debate on the Bloc Québécois motion and to have the opportunity to speak to the Government of Canada's commitment to supporting Canada's best and brightest minds, and to highlight Canada's efforts to attract and retain global research leaders.

[Translation]

Talented people conducting scientific research are our primary drivers of discovery, and they provide new knowledge that helps us move forward as a nation. Talented researchers play a critical role in science and research activities by ensuring that Canada has the capacity to make discoveries, tackle challenges and seize research opportunities.

The government is helping Canadian universities attract and retain the best researchers from Canada and abroad to meet the research interests and priorities of the institutions and the country.

[English]

The Canada excellence research chairs program aims to position Canadian universities at the leading edge of discovery, building long-term research strengths in areas of strategic importance to Canada. Its prestigious awards are supporting important research in areas such as global food security, which we know is of paramount concern today, big data, green technology and artificial intelligence. A former chair, Dr. Michael Houghton, was jointly awarded the 2020 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for the discovery of the hepatitis C virus.

It is clear that supporting top research talent benefits Canada and all Canadians. That is why in budget 2022 we announced an addi-

tional \$38.3 million over four years starting in 2023-24, and \$12.7 million ongoing, to expand the Canada excellence research chairs program.

[Translation]

The government has recognized that, while supporting established researchers in their endeavours is essential to a strong research community, it is crucial that steps be taken to make Canada attractive to promising early career researchers.

Supporting these early career researchers ensures that a pipeline of highly qualified individuals are available to grow Canada's research activities, which is critical for this country's knowledge economy.

• (1250)

[English]

Through its exploration grants, which inspire high-risk, high-reward and interdisciplinary research, the new frontiers in research fund supports early career researchers by design. The proportion of awards granted to early career researchers equals the proportion of applications that are submitted by these emerging scholars, an action that levels the playing field for those who have not yet established an extensive record of research achievement.

The Canada research chairs program supports exceptional emerging researchers in kick-starting their careers, awarding five-year grants valued at \$100,000 annually. Each of these early career Canada research chairs comes with an additional \$20,000 as an annual research stipend for the first five-year term.

The Canada research chairs program allocates proportionally more chairs to emerging scholars over established scholars who have had the opportunity to establish a record of research achievement. Furthermore, I am happy to say that when budget 2018 announced the creation of 285 new Canada research chairs, the majority were allocated to emerging research.

[Translation]

The government values the critical role played by graduate students and fellows, who are Canada's future researchers, in producing the knowledge, discoveries and innovations that help build a strong future for Canada and the world.

Through the three federal granting agencies, the government is making significant investments to support students and fellows with a range of scholarships and fellowships that make a post-graduate education more accessible to those interested in pursuing higher learning and developing the skills needed for the knowledge economy.

[English]

The government has committed to ensuring Canada's next generation of researchers is more diverse. This diversity includes trainees who are at different life stages, including parenthood. Recognizing that research trainees receiving federal scholarships are unable to take advantage of parental leave benefits offered under the EI system, in budget 2019 we expanded the duration of paid parental leave coverage for students and post-doctoral fellows funded directly or indirectly by the federal granting agencies from six months to 12 months. This investment is making a real difference for research trainees, supporting their pathway to careers as highly qualified personnel in Canada.

[Translation]

The government recognized the vital research role played by highly qualified staff and the need to maintain the talent pool during major disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

To mitigate the impact on students, fellows, and research support personnel funded by research grants, the three federal granting agencies have extended the scholarships and fellowships that directly support fellows and have provided additional funding to eligible research grant recipients who indirectly support fellows through salaries and allowances.

The government fully recognizes that in today's rapidly changing world, diverse and inclusive science is essential for maintaining the talent pool that is integral to new discoveries and innovations, and for building the evidence base that we need in order to tackle the big problems facing Canada and the world.

[English]

Canada will always be a place where science is valued, independent and encouraged. We understand and cherish the value of scientific freedom. That is why the government is working to provide support to research trainees affected by Vladimir Putin's unjustified invasion of Ukraine with the creation of the special response fund for trainees. We have established this measure as a way of demonstrating our support for Ukraine and to help Ukrainian trainees working in Canada continue their important work. This action contributes to Canada's diverse and inclusive research community, a goal that our government is fully committed to.

[Translation]

There is no doubt that a diverse, inclusive and equitable research community contributes to better scientific research and is essential if we want Canada to reach its full potential. It is also true that many people face systemic barriers that prevent them from fully participating in our country's social and economic life, including in post-secondary institutions.

To underscore the government's commitment to building a diverse, inclusive and equitable research environment, budget 2022 announced new funding to support scholarships and fellowships for promising Black researchers, a group that remains particularly marginalized in Canada's post-secondary research ecosystem. We see this investment as a step forward in ensuring that people from all backgrounds are welcome in the labs, in the field, and in the

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classrooms, and that Canada remains an inclusive and welcoming society for all, where everyone has the opportunity to participate.

• (1255)

[English]

Simply put, we are committed to supporting Canadian science and all the talented individuals belonging to the Canadian science ecosystem. Going forward, the government remains committed to gathering the ideas and talent in our research community to help address the opportunities and challenges we face.

In closing, we must continue to build a more inclusive and stronger Canada. One way of doing it is through the Canada research chairs program.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague from Vaughan—Woodbridge, whose French is getting better all the time.

Obviously, the Bloc is opposed to any sort of hiring quota and the imposition of such quotas on the basis of the four criteria set out by the Liberal government.

How would the member, who is from the business community, react if his superiors gave him similar instructions and he had to hire people in his sector based on those four criteria?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Rivière-des-Mille-Îles for his question this afternoon.

[English]

In society today, we must recognize that there are obstacles or systemic barriers for people in advancing and receiving opportunities. We must continue to break down the barriers that certain communities face in Canada. At the same time, we must encourage diversity within our Canada research chairs. There are ways of doing that. We have identified ways to continue to diversify them while we continue to break down the systemic barriers that exist for particular communities that are marginalized here in Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech and making an effort to speak French.

I get the impression that we are engaging in a dialogue of the deaf. People think that we support discrimination, when the exact opposite is true. We absolutely support better representation of women, cultural communities and so on in institutions.

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The main problem, and the reason for our motion, is that some candidates are being excluded from the very beginning of the hiring process. Why not trust the institutions? It is risky to not let people apply. It is all well and good to want the pendulum to swing back, but we must not go too far either. I would like to hear my colleague's comments on that.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

[English]

I will say this about the motion the Bloc Québécois brought forward: I agree with denouncing all forms of discrimination. We all agree on all sides of the House that we must always confront, denounce and condemn all forms of discrimination, whether it is anti-Semitism, Islamophobia or others, and the systemic barriers that exist, for example, against Black Canadians in this country. With that, we must continue to put in place programs that reflect and look at the way Canadian society is and where we are today, ensuring that people have opportunities to succeed and have opportunities to do groundbreaking and innovative research.

• (1300)

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, people with disabilities face multiple barriers, including those of research chairs, which we are debating today. In order to make academic communities more accessible to people living with disabilities, positive action is needed to improve accessibility.

Does the member believe abolishing affirmative action would undermine the long-standing efforts of people with disabilities?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, looking at the statistics this morning, I saw that the percentage of persons with disabilities who are now participating in the Canada research chairs program has risen to over 5%. I think that is a great effort.

The actions to make sure that Canada research chairs reflect what Canada is about and who we are as a country must continue. We must put in parameters to ensure that we have representation from all groups, that the groundbreaking research these individuals are doing is allowed to continue and that they are provided the resources and tools to continue doing their great work.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Madam Speaker, this is a wonderful opportunity to say hello to my constituents in Beloeil—Chambly and to inform you that I will be pleased to split my time with the very distinguished member for Drummond.

We are starting a debate. I am not only talking about here, today. I am talking more generally about society, after a number of years that have been quite turbulent in this regard. We are starting, we must start a crucial debate to question centuries of evolution in scientific knowledge. This knowledge is behind pretty much everything in our daily lives, from health to transportation, not to mention our capacity to adapt to the technological and demographic changes in our world.

I have questions about a number of related issues. Others will have answers to suggest. Mine are no more valid than anyone else's, but it is my duty to put them up for public judgment. Next weekend, the Bloc will be holding a conference on freedom of expression, which will focus on our topic, on academic freedom, freedom of education, and freedom of research. We have already been criticized for our choice of speakers for the conference. We are organizing a conference on freedom of expression that allows people to speak, and we are being told that we should not give a platform to this or that person.

It is rather fascinating, and it shows we have a long way to go.

Yesterday, we introduced anti-scab legislation. It is a bill that deals with collective rights. It is important to talk about collective rights. I am talking about collective representation and the need to ensure that our society is not so completely fragmented into individual rights conveyed outside of institutions, particularly institutions of the state, that this starts to impede rather than contribute to progress. For decades, progress was represented by collective rights. It was collective representation. It was an emergence.

We have seen this for several decades. Nations have been emerging in waves, of sorts, like with the collapse of the Soviet Union or the decolonization of Africa. As a result, communities, nations, groups, and people who identify themselves as groups and act as groups have been emerging. They emerged without denying individual rights, which must always be preserved. Fragmentation is not the best way to preserve individual rights. On the contrary, it is best to build bridges, bridges of solidarity between people who form groups because they have common interests.

Impatience can sometimes lead us to point the finger at institutions. In fact, we recently saw an elected member of another legislature talking up the work of people who had resorted to approaches unworthy of elected officials that even verged on aggressive. Regardless of what was at issue, institutions are being targeted and undermined, and that should worry us. This is an exclusionary approach. Researchers are being condemned. Research subjects are being condemned. Course content is being condemned. Supposed ideology is being condemned. Ideology is being judged as good or bad. What ends up happening is that the conclusions of very high level scientific research are being written before that very high level scientific research has even been done.

Knowledge is under threat. Science and the fundamentals of our societies are under threat. When the government gets involved, supports this kind of thing, gives this kind of thing its blessing, there is a significant risk, which is why we need to have this debate and, as a member said, make sure that it is the nature of the research itself that informs choices, not the nature of the researcher.

At the core of this debate is science. Science does not want to lie, but science is not perfect, of course. It can be mistaken. What was scientific truth 30, 130 or 230 years ago may be true no longer. Science evolves. Research challenges many ideas we took for granted.

• (1305)

The need to move forward comes, of course, with the recognition that, in the past, there will have been choices, decisions, goals, research, results and certainties that suddenly evaporated. However, science remains our best way forward. It has saved lives during the pandemic. It must not be perverted.

This is also true in the social sciences. As I said at the beginning of my remarks, our societies must adapt to the speed of phenomenal technological change, as well as the speed of demographic change, with its multiplication of contacts of all kinds, all of them beneficial. This means intervention or attention is also needed in the social sciences, whether it is the very real phenomenon of racism or any form of discrimination. The very notion of systemic racism must be entrusted to science before it is entrusted to ideology and politics. The real fear of difference or the desire to silence others would in itself be a potential research topic. Information in isolation, where we simply reinforce our convictions by not exposing ourselves to different ideas, and the desire for the survival of a language and a culture could also be interesting and legitimate research topics. They all depend on science, which should not be asked to lie by writing conclusions before the research is completed and the science is ready. However, this is the subject of what I believe to be very serious censorship.

History is no longer taught according to the scientific method because it is often written by the dominant culture or the victor. Quebec's most nationalistic or sovereignist moments and periods have been gradually expunged from its history books. However, history must continue to contribute its share of knowledge, wisdom and collective experience.

It is never a good thing to lie. Lying to oneself is obviously dangerous. Believing one's lies is even more dangerous. We must not make science lie. We must provide science with every opportunity to include everyone, based on the quality of the research project and the researcher's focus. We must let science express itself and continue to contribute to progress.

Ottawa's current policies, or its complacency in some cases, discriminate against potential talent by dictating conclusions and not protecting researchers and teachers. This jeopardizes the very essence of what science should be. In doing so, it jeopardizes the well-being of society.

In the name of democracy, knowledge, science and diversity itself, which must be enhanced by sound science, we ask Parliament to come to its senses.

• (1310)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars coming from the federal government to fund over 2,000 very important jobs dealing with research, technology and so forth. When we take

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at look at Canadian society being as diverse as it is, there is an expectation that the government will try, in the best way, to ensure that these appointments reflect the population.

Could the member provide his thoughts on the importance of society being properly reflected in many different spectrums of our communities, including our post-secondary institutions and their research chairs?

[Translation]

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet: Madam Speaker, I fully support the notion that institutions of all kinds should be representative of and reflect the extraordinary diversity of the societies in which we live.

Today's debate is not about inclusion. It is about the need to resist the temptation to exclude people, the need to avoid discriminating, even with the best possible intentions, against people who can make a significant contribution to knowledge, science and the betterment of society.

[English]

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, what I heard today from the leader of the Bloc Québécois was more or less a speech in which he mentioned democratic evolution, scientific evolution, social evolution, the amalgamation of all philosophies together and the impact on society in a country such as Canada.

I have a specific question: How does he see ideology in the world we live in, which is evolving to basically compete with scientific evolution, and others, to change societies?

[Translation]

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet: Madam Speaker, I would respectfully submit that ideology does not compete with research and science, but rather it comes from research and science. An opinion must be based on some minimal knowledge. Science, research, education and the sharing of these ideas and these possibilities all contribute to the shaping of minds and forming of opinions. As those opinions expand, deepen and develop, they often become an ideology. We are simply saying that ideology derives from knowledge.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

The under-representation of marginalized groups will not fix itself. Active measures need to be taken to ensure that academia is more inclusive and representative. Why does the member refuse to tackle the root causes of these injustices?

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Mr. Yves-François Blanchet: Madam Speaker, I am being told that I refuse to address the root causes of injustice, whereas I am suggesting that we take a positive approach, not a negative one. I am suggesting that we take an approach that will rally people around this diversity. I am suggesting that there be a set of incentives, including financial ones, to help ensure this extraordinary diversity is better represented.

Discrimination and intimidation is out there now, with stickers on doors, calls, attempts to exclude people from faculties, research projects being impeded. I do not think this contributes to anything positive.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today following my distinguished colleague, friend, member for Beloeil—Chambly and leader, in that order.

I also want to acknowledge the exceptional work that my colleague from Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques has done on the research chairs file, work that is behind the opposition day we are presenting today.

The motion reads as follows:

That: (a) the House denounce all forms of discrimination; (b) in the opinion of the House, (i) research is necessary for the advancement of science and society in general, (ii) access to the Canada Research Chairs Program must be based on the candidates' skills and qualifications; and (c) the House call on the government to review the program's criteria to ensure that grants are awarded based on science and not based on identity criteria or unrelated to the purpose of the research.

Regarding point (a), as we often say in Quebec, no one is against apple pie. The proposal is easy to accept. As for point (b), it is hard to be against that either.

I think that what the motion proposes makes perfect sense.

I would like to make one thing clear right from the start, because I can already see the pernicious insinuations and attacks coming. We are not against equity, diversity and inclusion. In short, we are not against the principle. Rather, we are in favour of finding solutions and potentially implementing policies that will lead to the intended objective, which is equity, diversity and inclusion. Solutions do exist. Some are well thought out; others, less so. There is always a bit of work to do to improve things. That is why we are here, and that is the spirit of our motion today.

First, how did we get to this point?

The first instinct may be to blame a current movement that is fighting hard to restore some degree of social justice, but we must dig a bit deeper and do more research.

In 2003, a group of eight academics from across Canada filed some human rights complaints. These complaints alleged that the Canada research chairs program discriminated against individuals who are members of the protected groups set out in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. An agreement was proposed in 2006, which required that the program implement specific measures to increase representation of members of the four designated groups, namely, women, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and visible minorities. The agreement clearly did not work because it was made a federal court order in 2017.

You can try to fix as many cracks as you want in a house, but what ultimately needs to be fixed is the bad foundation. I think that we need to do the long-term work to address the issue of lack of representation of designated groups in research programs. We too often forget that things take time these days and that shortcuts are inadequate and are a bad way to achieve certain specific objectives.

In today's case, this involves facilitating and promoting access to post-secondary education for under-represented groups and getting more young people from different backgrounds interested in the programs that lead to research.

● (1315)

Without a doubt, this will take time. However, it will lead to much more lasting results that will visibly improve over time and a method that will call for occasional improvements. In the long run, we will be able to benefit more from diversity in our research chairs. We will not suffer the disadvantages of so-called positive discrimination, which, as I said earlier, are in fact mere shortcuts that will only compound the problems in the very short term.

The proof that the cart is being put before the horse in terms of achieving the objectives of equity, diversity and inclusion, or EDI, is the fact that more and more job postings for university-level teaching positions no longer even require a Ph.D. This argument alone should be enough to show that we are not on the right path and that we have chosen the wrong one, and to make us understand that the solution lies elsewhere and that we need to dig a little deeper to find better, more effective and certainly more lasting solutions.

Another problem that I see is the way that it hinders university autonomy. Universities are places for the development of knowledge and learning. That is where we learn how to think critically. We need to allow people to exchange ideas, to challenge each other and to have open discussions, while not leaving any room for censorship. We have seen many abuses in this area recently, but that is not really the focus of today's discussion.

Rather, my concern is with the criteria imposed by the federal government in an area of jurisdiction that belongs not just to Quebec and the provinces, but also very directly to institutions of higher learning. Let us be clear: the Canada research chairs program is a way for the federal government to impose its views on the entire academic community.

On April 2, Professor Yves Gingras wrote in *Le Devoir* about universities suffering from provincial underfunding that cannot afford to turn up their noses at tens of thousands of dollars available from research chairs to pay for these new professors.

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Not all university presidents are acting in bad faith. They are faced with a certain reality, and most of the time they have no choice but to stay silent, turn a blind eye, and take the money by accepting guidelines and criteria. Sometimes they agree with them. Often, I am sure of it, they do not quite agree. This is how they slip into a trap that quickly becomes a costly, vicious cycle.

The other problem with this measure is the recruitment pool. I will now take my colleagues back to Quebec, which is home to the Université du Québec network that is well established in various regions: we have a Université du Québec in Rimouski, in Chicoutimi and in Trois-Rivières, and I am proud to say that we have a beautiful campus in Drummondville, thanks in part to my leader and colleague.

Imagine the challenge and the major issue the recruitment pool would represent for institutions located outside large urban areas like Toronto should EDI criteria be imposed. I draw my colleagues' attention to a recent column by Jean-François Lisée in *Le Devoir*, published on April 7 and easily found on the Internet, in which he draws a parallel. Imagine being able to require that the ratio of francophone professors and researchers in Canada match the representation of francophones across Canada, 23%, or else universities would not receive federal funding. Imagine the headache that recruiting the required percentage of francophone professors would cause for universities out west and even elsewhere.

That is basically the issue here. Virtue is all well and good, but there is also reality, and we have to take that into account. We cannot start standardizing everything. We cannot set up criteria across the board and introduce hiring processes to achieve instantaneous equity overnight. There are processes that take time.

In closing, my colleagues need to understand that we fully support the principle of equity, diversity and inclusion. However, we believe that it must be applied thoughtfully, not simply in response to pressure from activists who demand immediate results, regardless of collateral damage or effectiveness.

For example, fostering inclusion can be done by giving preference to candidates from groups that are under-represented, but equally qualified. This has been done in the past in a variety of settings, such as academia, to achieve gender equity.

There is still a long way to go, but the work has begun. It may not be a perfect solution, but it is a solution that works. We need to focus on solutions that work, not utopian goals.

• (1320)

[English]

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am wondering if the member could provide me with his idea of what systemic racism looks like and how we could address those barriers without concrete measures like this. This is a measure that the university administrators took upon themselves in order to take a concrete step toward ensuring more diversity and inclusion. They are going to see how it works. We should give them the space to do that work as autonomous institutions.

What does your understanding of systemic racism look like, and how do we address it without measures such as these?

• (1325)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I remind members to address the questions and comments through the Chair and not directly to the member.

The hon. member for Drummond.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, those are two different things. My colleague talked about systemic racism, and I think that is an issue that can be dealt with separately. However, my colleague raised a very important point in her question. We should let universities manage the hiring of professors.

Targets can be set. Universities can be asked to ensure that they achieve a certain representation and make room for under-represented groups. They can be told to favour candidates from these under-represented groups, in the event of equally qualified candidates. However, imposing criteria is a very slippery slope and very dangerous.

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, setting aside the selection criteria imposed by the Liberal government, the whole identity aspect that appears in these criteria, and the interference, once again, by the Liberals, is there not a major risk that the government may in some way undermine the autonomy that is so important to universities?

Mr. Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, indeed, my colleague from Rivière-des-Mille-Îles is raising a very important point. The independence of institutions of higher learning is fundamental and essential. Any institution where knowledge is developed and shared, where the leaders of tomorrow hone their critical thinking skills, must not be influenced by any external factors, and certainly not by any government.

These criteria must be applied, enforced and fulfilled, or else funding will be pulled. This is very serious. These are not just objectives for reaching a certain ideal. These objectives are being imposed with serious financial consequences attached for universities. My colleague's question is therefore very relevant. The government, regardless of its political stripes, is playing an extremely dangerous game when it imposes criteria and objectives with financial penalties attached. This is highly problematic.

[English]

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, as of right now, there are few people from racialized communities and indigenous groups on Canadian university faculties. This is unfortunate, and it is because of the history of systemic and colonial practices. This under-representation is real, and it is caused by barriers that prevent access and participation by academics from these groups. If these symptoms are to be corrected, equity measures must be taken to change the culture and make the academic environment more inclusive.

Why is the member opposed to the steps needed to remove these systemic barriers to ensure that these groups have access to these positions?

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[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, my colleague's question is a pernicious one. People need to stop saying that we are against achieving objectives. They have to stop insinuating that we are sabotaging the achievement of equity objectives. That is not okay, and that is not the right way to ask questions.

As we have said, we agree, we are aware and we fully support implementing measures that will give these communities and these under-represented groups the space they are entitled to. In fact, we think there is a need for effective, sustainable measures. That is what I said in my speech earlier. In this kind of situation, shortcuts are dangerous and will end up doing more harm than good.

What we need to do is implement measures now that will, for example, give young people from communities that are under-represented among research chairs better access to post-secondary education and spark their interest in the programs that lead to these research chairs. That is how we can create an environment in which these communities are adequately represented, are present, and can ensure the diversity we want to see in research chairs and in university and post-secondary faculties in general.

● (1330)

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Fredericton.

I rise in the House today to talk about the undeniable fact that the people of Quebec and Canada are increasingly diverse. As a society, we are being called upon to ensure diversity in all sectors.

In 2016, 22.3% of Canadians reported being members of a visible minority and 4.9% reported being members of the first nations, Inuit or Métis. In addition, 70% of these people indicated that they had been born outside of the country.

There are more than 250 ethnicities represented in Canada. Statistics Canada estimates that by 2036, visible minorities will represent between 31% and 36% of the population.

In spite of these statistics, indigenous peoples, Blacks, racialized communities and minorities are subject to racism and discrimination on a daily basis, at work, when applying for jobs or a promotion, or when renting or buying a house.

The notion of systemic racism and discrimination refers to an organizational culture, policies, directives, practices or procedures that exclude, displace or marginalize racialized communities and indigenous peoples. This creates unfair barriers to real options and opportunities, which means that non-racialized groups end up being prioritized over others.

In recent years, our government has worked hard to address systemic racism and discrimination, in particular through Canada's anti-racism strategy. We have also focused on including diversity and indigenous peoples across all government policies.

When it comes to the research environment, it is important to recognize the need for ongoing and sustainable action to address growing inequalities.

Our government is taking important and necessary steps to build a more inclusive society, notably by developing a national action plan on combatting hate and by increasing funding for Canada's new anti-racism strategy.

Budget 2022 announced \$85 million over four years, starting in 2022-2023, to support ongoing work to launch a new anti-racism strategy and a national action plan on combatting hate. This funding will support community-based projects that ensure Black and racialized Canadians and religious minorities have access to resources so they can fully participate in the Canadian economy, while raising awareness of issues related to racism and hate in Canada.

Fighting racism and discrimination also means working to ensure that this diversity is better represented among our scientists and researchers. After decades of neglect, our government has reinvested in the scientific community. Budget 2022 provides \$38.3 million over four years to add new Canada excellence research chairs.

The Canada research chairs program aims to make Canada one of the world's top countries in research. This requires us to ensure better representation, and we have a long way to go. In 2016, visible minorities were about 13%; today, this figure is just over 22%.

For new researchers, especially those from diverse backgrounds, it is very difficult to find their place in the scientific community, because historically the scientific community is a white Western community based on white knowledge. This refers to a white elite that has grown up in conscious and unconscious privilege.

There is a lot of work to be done to ensure that we include diverse communities and indigenous peoples in the scientific community and to break out of historical white paradigms that do not represent multiple perspectives.

Today we need to work toward a multiplicity of knowledge. Paradigms are diverse, and the multiplicity of knowledge helps give people a greater understanding of the world, an understanding that is more open to different perspectives.

Research criteria and scientific rigour are the same for everyone. I find it dangerous to claim anything else. We need to recognize the challenge that indigenous and diverse peoples face when taking their place in the scientific community. It is a real challenge.

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• (1335)

It is critical because, once again, a multiplicity of knowledge brings diverse perspectives. It provides a broader spectrum of knowledge, and fosters a broader and more inclusive understanding of the world. This multiplicity of knowledge is expressed through the diversity of researchers who have experienced the realities of racialized communities and indigenous peoples. Otherwise we end up with a single world view in a monolithic identity, and that is the danger looming over Quebec.

If you are from a diverse background or indigenous, that means you are not white. Wanting to be sure that we include these diverse perspectives is in no way indicative of a lack of scientific rigour.

I would like to point out that if the Montreal police force had not been using hiring selection criteria to ensure that the police looked like their community in the 1990s, we would not see this much diversity on the police force today.

While we have a strong legislative framework that supports diversity and fights discrimination, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, we have witnessed some troubling events here and abroad in recent years, which tells us that the charters and laws are not enough and that better representation of diversity and indigenous peoples in the scientific community is part of the work that remains to be done.

Eliminating racism and discrimination is part of the government's responsibility—it is everyone's responsibility, in fact—to support a society that brings out the best in its members and treats them with dignity and respect. Treating people with dignity and respect means acknowledging that scientific rigour is not the issue. The issue is equal opportunity to ensure that our research chairs represent Canada's and Quebec's population as a whole.

All Canadians, along with all Quebecers, have a duty to do their part to fight all forms of hatred, discrimination and systemic discrimination, including at the research chair level.

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Chair, I thank my colleague from Hochelaga, whom I respect and admire. I would like to ask her a very simple question.

Imagine she is choosing between two job applicants. One has a great personality, an outstanding resumé and amazing experience. The other meets one of the four criteria.

Assuming we are talking about science, and not some other thing, would my colleague really be okay with hiring the second applicant?

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question and his kind words about me. I also have a high regard for him.

I think this question is dangerous, because it assumes that right now, there is no rigour in the analysis of research programs. I can give the example of my aunt, who is a Ph.D. student. She is part of the research programs. The scientific rigour with which issues are studied is very real. Assuming that things are done differently is a rather inappropriate and dangerous observation by my colleague.

[English]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, after the 15th-year evaluation of the research program, they responded to the recommendations by implementing the equity, diversity, and inclusion action plan.

Does the member agree that continued implementation is required to continue to ensure that there is transparency in the allocation, selection and renewal processes of chair holders?

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. I agree with her that there is a need to ensure transparency in the programs and in how funding is allocated.

We need to make sure that we do so in order to counter my colleague's previous question, that is to say that we are not questioning the scientific rigour or the competence of indigenous peoples and racialized communities. What we are questioning is equality of opportunity.

I agree with my colleague. We need to make sure that all programs are transparent, because we have to demonstrate that they have the merit to be among the research chairs and to be funded by the research chairs.

• (1340)

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her fine speech. Once again, I feel like I am taking part in a dialogue of the deaf, because I agree with everything she said. She pointed out that we need to tackle all forms of discrimination, and that is exactly what we are trying to do.

Prohibiting someone from submitting their application crosses a dangerous line. How does the member feel about the fact that certain groups of people are being prohibited submitting applications?

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Madam Speaker, what I find dangerous is what I have been hearing about what is going on in the scientific community, where the focus is on checking off boxes. Research groups will be created, people will come together and two or three researchers who represent this visible minority will be invited in order to check off boxes. Researchers from visible minority groups are also entitled to access funding through research programs on their own.

I understand my colleague's question, but this dangerous tendency can go too far and we have to be careful. I am a little disappointed by today's motion, because it compels us to ask questions that certainly do not reflect the Bloc's intention, which is a shame.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for sharing her time with me.

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I want to begin by acknowledging that the land we are gathered on today is unceded Algonquin territory and I represent the unceded Wolastoqiyik territory in Fredericton, New Brunswick. I think it is important that we predicate our conversations today on that piece.

I could have started by saying how deeply disappointed, even saddened, I was by the motion that the Bloc members have decided to focus on today for their precious time in opposition as an opposition day motion. However, I changed my tune in listening to the conversations that we are having today. I am going to thank them for this opportunity to discuss inequality in Canada, particularly in academia, because it is a pervasive issue that needs concrete steps to address. We will be able to take this opportunity to discuss that today, so I want to thank them for it.

[Translation]

I thank my colleagues from the Bloc Québécois and I hope that the members will listen to the other perspectives and pay particular attention to the speeches of their colleagues who are directly affected by the issue: women, indigenous peoples, Black people and diverse individuals.

[English]

I want to take a moment to say to everyone who is listening to this debate at home, the Black or indigenous researchers, the women and people living with a disability, that not only are they qualified, but their life experiences and identity are an asset to their work and to improving the quality of the research in Canadian institutions.

I am a white woman born in Canada. I have been so fortunate in my life that I was able to chase my dreams, reach my goals and have a good life for my children.

The first point I would like to make on this motion is that there is no acknowledgement of the high privilege experienced by white males in particular in this country. Perhaps it is important for context to explain how we came to be debating this today.

[Translation]

The issue that the Bloc is raising is that positions are being reserved for women, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities.

[English]

I have heard hon. colleagues mention things. I will read the motion itself. It reads:

That:

- (a) the House denounce all forms of discrimination;

Absolument. The motion goes on to state:

- (b) in the opinion of the House,

- (i) research is necessary for the advancement of science and society in general,

Absolument. It continues:

- (ii) access to the Canada Research Chairs Program must be based on the candidates' skills and qualifications

Vraiment. It adds:

- (c) the House call on the government to review the program's criteria to ensure that grants are awarded based on science and not based on identity criteria or unrelated to the purpose of the research.

There is a lot to unpack with such characterizations and assumptions that are baked into this motion.

I have heard members warn of a dystopian alternate reality if such targeted hiring measures are allowed to continue. These arguments dangerously hinge on replacement theory rhetoric. We are all too familiar with that fact in Canada. Actually, while I was knocking on doors in my riding this weekend, I was faced with these kinds of opinions. They are very real. They do not need us to stroke them or encourage them in this place in particular.

This idea that by not supporting indigenous women, for example, when applying for research chair positions is going to somehow threaten the existence of white males in our society and their positions of privilege is outlandish, to say the least.

It is a fact that when diverse perspectives and voices are at the table the outcomes are better, but diverse voices historically have been excluded from participating in research. Today, people continue to face systemic barriers within the research field, including pervasive systemic racism.

Systemic barriers within academia and the research ecosystem are well documented in Canada, and it is our responsibility, as a government, to play a role in addressing these barriers to ensure that equity, diversity and inclusion are integrated into all parts of the research ecosystem, even the hiring practice.

The lack of diversity leads to oversight, bias and mistakes. I heard the leader of the Bloc in particular talking about the dangers of excluding. I would argue the danger resides in the status quo. Years of not implementing direct action to ensure diversity among our institutions leads to gaps in our collective knowledge.

I can give so many examples. The fact that women are excluded from the medical field has led to ignoring the impact of certain medications on their bodies, not having accurate protocols, ignoring their needs and not understanding conditions specific to them. I am thinking of the lack of knowledge on and treatment of endometriosis, for example. There are so many across this country who suffer immensely because, for decades, no interest was put into researching this topic whatsoever. The vast majority of researchers did not have a uterus; thus they were not impacted by that condition. It was not seen as a priority to study or provide that care.

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The lack of indigenous voices in the sciences field, for example, led to deep gaps in our collective knowledge in fighting the climate crisis and wildfires. Indigenous fire stewardship blends intergenerational knowledge, beliefs and values with advanced methods of controlling several aspects of fire. It is a more holistic approach. Small, prescribed or cultural fires can recycle nutrients into the soil, and support the growth of plant species used for food and medicine.

Fire stewardship can also protect communities. In central British Columbia, fire is commonly applied in the spring and the fall to reduce the risk of lightning fires that may cause harm in communities in the summer months. This is a very concrete example.

Indigenous knowledge regarding health, the environment, sociology, history and language was not only ignored, but since the foundation of this country institutions have tried to suppress and indeed eliminate it. That is a fact.

On other types of systemic barriers, within the research field there continue to be wage gaps between men and women and between white and indigenous or racialized staff. Across Canadian universities, Black people and indigenous people continue to face racism from their colleagues. This is both overt and internalized. They face barriers in advancing their careers because of unconscious or implicit bias on hiring committees, such as a bias on the perspective of resumés from white versus non-white candidates and a bias against people who have accents, for example. This is the reality in this country.

Women also face barriers, including stereotypes, a lack of role models and mentors, and institutional practices and policies that prevent their further and full participation.

We know representation matters, and that is what these initiatives are about. They are about increasing that representation and removing those barriers in a concrete way.

There was conversation about the independence of universities. Universities should be allowed to make these decisions for themselves. If they see this as an issue and recognize these barriers, certainly we can empower them to make those decisions to ensure that equity-seeking groups are represented on the research chair boards.

I would like to end with a comparison conversation. I come from a province where there is a continuous debate on the importance of bilingualism and whether we need to take concrete efforts to protect the French language. I find those conversations insulting, and I have found many of the comments in the House today regarding this motion also insulting, from the perspective of a woman.

Those are my comments for today. Again, I hope members across the way listened to some of the lived experiences of those who have made their way to the House despite some of these barriers that exist. I look forward to their questions and comments.

• (1350)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, I get the impression that there was a very superficial or cursory reading of this bill.

Our motion is absolutely not about discrimination. We are all in favour of equity, diversity and inclusion. I would ask my colleague, who focused on women in her speech, which is great since we would all like there to be more women, what she thinks about the fact that, right now, 70% of the medical students at the Université de Montréal are women.

Should there be criteria for reducing the number of female medical students at the Université de Montréal?

[*English*]

Mrs. Jenica Atwin: Madam Speaker, that is a great example of a success story. That institution should be applauded, and perhaps we should explore what measures they took to ensure that women had adequate representation, specifically in the medical field. These are the conversations that we should be having, but I am sure it is by no accident that the environment was created and that the culture was created to foster women in those positions, in those halls and institutions.

My thanks to the member for bringing that fact to our attention.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, my thanks to the member opposite for her advocacy.

Colleagues may know that I am the first female engineer in the House of Commons and began as an engineer when only 13% of engineers were women. There was significant systemic discrimination at that time. I experienced it throughout my career. Of course, as I was in construction, that was also quite a toxic environment. I was sad to hear testimony in 2017, as the chair of the status of women committee while we were studying how to get more women into STEM, that this situation still exists.

I wonder if the member would agree that we have not made progress as we should have. Does she have any suggestions as to how we could accelerate getting to equity?

Mrs. Jenica Atwin: Madam Speaker, there is so much more that we could be doing. I certainly identify with the example she gave about being a female engineer in a space that was not necessarily fostered to promote women's inclusion.

I think about many of the women who are also here in this space. I am sure they have also faced some of the discrimination that we are talking about today. I will give a couple of examples of questions that have come my way that really reflect the misogyny that is still in our society today: whether I have earned my position in this place, whether I was offered certain things or maybe had relationships along the way, maybe I was not doing my duties at home or I was really neglecting my children, perhaps, by being in this space. These are the things we have to face when we try to enter these spaces that were not designed for us.

Business of Supply

What we need to do is to continue to have these conversations. We need to be bold. We need to be out loud. We need to show women that they belong here, they belong in engineering and they belong in construction across this country.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I wanted to express my gratitude to the member for Fredericton. I went from feeling quite frustrated and discouraged at the beginning of this debate to now feeling much more optimistic as we shift into solutions and addressing real barriers in accessing equity.

We know that the rate of women holding research chairs in Canada still falls short of the parity goal. I wonder if the member could share a little bit about how, in the seven years that the Liberals have had power, there have been lots of great words spoken but we are not seeing that translating into action. Women are still being discriminated against. Can the member please share her thoughts on how we best move forward to ensure that everyone feels welcome within our systems, including that which we are debating today?

Mrs. Jenica Atwin: Madam Speaker, the member's wonderful riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith is one that I am very familiar with.

Being a relatively new member to the Liberal caucus, it has really been kind of a fact-finding mission for me to see what great work has been done. I have also heard some of the wonderful speeches in this place and wondered if our actions are matching what we say. What I have found is that they are.

I had round tables in my riding over the past couple of weeks. I was fortunate to have ministers and parliamentary secretaries visit. We met with groups that represent women, in particular. We met with groups that represent victims of domestic violence. What they told me was that they have never seen so much support and funding. They really feel like their voices are being heard. To me, that is concrete action on the ground.

What we say in the House is critically important, but of course those actions must follow. I am really seeing that across the country, and in particular in my riding of Fredericton.

• (1355)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to mention that I will be sharing my time with the ever-charming member for Manicouagan.

This is the best time of day, right before question period, when no one is listening and we can say stupid things, although I will not do that.

I would like to begin with a reflection on the issue of positive discrimination. When research chairs are being selected, should positive discrimination be applied? I would like to come back to what positive discrimination means. Sometimes, in the workplace and in access to education, there are biases that can favour certain people. Yes, men can be favoured for certain jobs, people of different ethnic identities can be favoured for certain jobs, and we have to accept that positive discrimination is a mechanism that allows us to restore some equity.

Can that be done in the university framework and context? I do not think so, and I will explain why. First, we need to agree on something. University research means a university is involved. In my opinion, the simplest definition of a university, one that has been around since the Middle Ages, is a place where all knowledge is permitted. That is because people quickly tried to make a distinction between certain ideologies and the development of knowledge outside the confines of certain ideologies and religions. I want to start with that, since I think it is rather crucial.

I want to tell the House about some of my first loves. I was an avid reader of Michel Foucault. In a short but very interesting book called *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault says that, during any given time period, there are things that we can know and things that we cannot. He called this an episteme. According to Foucault, an episteme is a form of rationality in a given time period. Knowledge of medicine could not advance in the Middle Ages because the body was considered sacred. Anyone who dissected a body would meet the same fate, but at the hands of religious authorities, so medical knowledge could not advance.

Academia was created based on this idea of leaving every possible field open to various kinds of knowledge. I wanted to emphasize that because I have the impression that what is really going on here is simply an attempt to limit the advancement of certain kinds of knowledge by including criteria that ensure access to research chairs based on identity issues. Research chairs are usually awarded based on how applicants' peers view their projects and their work. Now, if another criterion is added that has to do with identity, the pool of applicants who can apply for research chairs will be seriously limited. Research chairs are not awarded based on the notion of resolving any flagrant inequity or the fact that there are fewer people from a particular group, such as the LGBTQ community or people of a certain faith or from a certain cultural community.

The goal of awarding research chairs is advancing knowledge. They are not earned based on any particular identity. In chemistry, physics and all of the pure sciences, knowledge is developed by people who have the skills to advance in their particular fields. As we can imagine, there is some degree of competition involved in earning these chairs, which does not really correspond to the idea of requirements around equity, diversity and inclusion.

• (1400)

The Deputy Speaker: I must interrupt the member.

When we resume debate, the member will have five minutes to finish his speech and then respond to questions and comments.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

TAMIL GENOCIDE REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Shaun Chen (Scarborough North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago, the House unanimously passed a motion recognizing May 18 as Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day in Canada.

As we mark 13 years since the end of the Sri Lankan armed conflict, let us learn from the mistakes of the past so future generations never repeat them. As we stand in solidarity with our Tamil community, let us commemorate the many lives lost and never forget them. As the pain and trauma ensues, let us continue to push for justice and accountability here in Canada and around the world.

My riding of Scarborough North is home to the headquarters of both the Canadian Tamil Congress and the National Council of Canadian Tamils. I ask members to allow me the opportunity to recognize these organizations for their tireless work at the grassroots to champion Tamil genocide recognition in Canada.

On May 18, we remember, and we commit to a world of peace.

* * *

FIESTA WEEK

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the citizens of Oshawa, after two long and difficult years, I would like to welcome everyone to celebrate our 48th annual Fiesta Week. I welcome everyone back. We encourage residents to enjoy and experience Oshawa's rich and diverse cultures. We have many pavilions that will let us appreciate different traditions, from dance to, of course, food. This year, especially, let us recognize the Ukrainian community, which will be welcoming and embracing newcomers who have travelled far from Ukraine to the safety of Oshawa.

After two years, we will also welcome back our fun-filled Fiesta Week parade on Sunday, June 19. Let us line our streets and celebrate. Once again, congratulations and a big thank you to the Oshawa Folk Arts Council for organizing this wonderful week-long party. It is their hard work that will continue make Fiesta Week such a successful and enduring celebration.

* * *

EDMONTON OILERS

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to quote Andrew Brown from CBC Calgary, "You can accomplish anything you set your mind to, unless Connor McDavid also wants that thing." I want to extend my sincerest congratulations to the Edmonton Oilers, and to my fellow Alberta Liberal, the hon. member for Edmonton Centre, for the team's victory against the Calgary Flames in the second round of the NHL playoffs.

After the hard-fought battle of Alberta, Oilers fans, including my wife, are thrilled to see their team advance to the Western Conference finals. Canadians across the country have also been inspired by the story of Ben Stelter, the 6-year-old Oilers superfan who is courageously battling brain cancer while supporting his favourite team.

Statements by Members

I hope members of the House can join Ben, Edmontonians and Oilers fans from across this great nation in supporting Canada's remaining team, and the winner of the battle of Alberta, the Edmonton Oilers.

* * *

[Translation]

2022 PATRIOTS RECOGNITION GALA

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Société nationale des Québécoises et Québécois du Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean hosted its Soirée reconnaissance des patriotes, or patriots recognition gala, this month. Three young people from my region earned the well-deserved honour of being named the next generation of patriots for 2022 for their community involvement.

I want to first congratulate Jeanne Bouchard, from Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, who was selected for her student and community involvement. She is a dedicated woman who works with different organizations and helped vulnerable people during the pandemic.

I also want to congratulate William Tremblay, who is studying policing at Collège d'Alma and was recognized for his diligence and respect for his peers. He showed leadership in representing his peers and standing up for their interests before various college bodies.

Finally, from Cégep de Saint-Félicien, there is Nathan Lejeune, who is an important ally in student life and scholastic success. He makes a positive contribution to the institution's image and lends a supportive ear to his peers, many of whom are here today on Parliament Hill.

These fine patriots, Jeanne, William and Nathan, are inspiring role models who proudly represent their generation and their region. I thank them and say bravo.

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● (1405)

JEAN-PAUL II ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the incredible students at École Jean-Paul II, a school in Val Caron, in the Nickel Belt riding, which is in Greater Sudbury.

The grade 7 and 8 students in the Club Val Coeurons organized the sale of Coco Grams during the Easter season. They raised more than \$2,000, which they recently donated to the Canadian Red Cross in support of people affected by the conflict in Ukraine.

[English]

The teamwork and generosity displayed by the students at École Jean-Paul II is inspiring. The funds raised will assist the Red Cross in purchasing food, clothing and health care for those who have been impacted by the conflict in Ukraine.

Statements by Members

My sincere thanks go out to Natalie Lamontagne, the vice-principal, and to all the staff who have supported this initiative.

[*Translation*]

Good job, Comètes. You are exemplary global citizens. We can all learn from you. Thank you. *Meegwetch*.

* * *

[*English*]

AZERBAIJAN

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today it is my honour to rise on behalf of Republic Day in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan is an amazing country, full of diversity and even contradictions. It is a country where the majority of the population is Muslim. However, it has also been a refuge for hundreds of years to thousands of folks of the Jewish religion. It is a country where, when the Soviet Union tore down churches, Muslims paid to rebuild them. It is a country that embraces renewables, but is proud of its oil and gas industry, an industry that built pipelines over mountains, through seas and across multiple jurisdictions, which literally kept the lights on in southern Europe.

Azerbaijan is a country that has much to be proud of over the last 104 years, but perhaps even more importantly it has much to contribute over the next 100 years. I wish members a happy Azerbaijan Republic Day.

* * *

STORM IN ONTARIO AND QUEBEC

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the May long weekend, my community of Ottawa Centre and many others across eastern Ontario and western Quebec experienced one of the strongest storms in living memory. What started as an emergency alert Saturday afternoon ended in tragedy, devastation and darkness for thousands of residents.

[*Translation*]

My heart breaks for those who lost loved ones during this awful storm. Unfortunately, such events are becoming all too normal.

[*English*]

In these trying circumstances, our community came together as it always does. Residents were out checking on their neighbours. Community organizations, such as the Soloway Jewish Community Centre, the Ottawa Mosque and the Parkdale Food Centre opened their doors to provide shelter, food and electricity to thousands, and our hydro workers and first responders took immediate action to repair the damage from this historic storm.

[*Translation*]

We have not yet fully recovered, but residents across the City of Ottawa really rose to the challenge.

[*English*]

I thank our city workers, our volunteers and all our neighbours for their hard work.

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the stories of Asian Canadians are unique, diverse and deserve to be heard.

As May comes to an end and we bid farewell to Asian Heritage Month, we must continue to amplify Asian voices while acknowledging the lived realities of being Asian in Canada, and learning more about the vibrancy that each language, ethnicity and tradition of Asian heritage brings to our country.

Just last week, I was pleased to attend “Here We Stay”, an event honouring Canada’s 155 years of multicultural history through the stories of 155 Chinese immigrants, all of whom have had such profound experiences. While this month of celebration may have come to an end, let us remember to celebrate their stories each and every day. From one generation to the next, they have helped build the inclusive Canada that we know and love, so I ask members to join me in thanking them now and always.

* * *

TAXATION

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, fuel prices are hitting record highs in Canada. Skyrocketing fuel costs add to the already increased cost of goods, and driving is becoming more unaffordable. For Canadians in rural communities, such as my constituents in Battlefords—Lloydminster, there is no alternative to driving to work, to school or to get everyday essentials.

The reality is that taxes remain one of the largest components of fuel prices, and the Prime Minister could provide Canadians some much-needed relief. Instead, he chose to increase the carbon tax burden. Canada is the only G7 country to have raised taxes on gas during a global energy crisis. This Prime Minister is completely out of touch with Canadians.

It is time this NDP-Liberal government stops rejecting common sense solutions, such as a GST suspension on gas prices or the elimination of the failed carbon tax. Canadians deserve a better.

Statements by Members

• (1410)

OPIOIDS

Ms. Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague across the aisle for his work on the opioid crisis. I agree on the need for robust harm reduction strategies, including supervised consumption sites, diversion away from the criminal justice system, access to dignified housing options and treatment.

However, from my years of working in this sector, I have seen the sad realities of what happens when we force a top-down national approach without taking into consideration regional differences. Each province and territory's ability to respond to this crisis differs, based on the supports and strategies they have in place. I believe we must work quickly and first ensure that the foundational elements are effectively in place across the country before we address nationally mandated decriminalization.

Too many lives have been lost and we must act, but I believe we must do the work at the community level. There is no one-size-fits-all answer to a crisis that differs so vastly across the country.

* * *

NEEDS IN THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week is National AccessAbility Week, and I have been honoured to have known many brave men and women who have spent too much of their lives confined to a wheelchair. I have always said that these people do more to get ready for their day than most people do during their day.

Today I want to highlight the circumstances that my friend Bob Blair faces. His medical needs are severe. As a quadriplegic, he requires 24-7 monitoring and has had excellent care for years, but now he faces a future without this help. Moving into a long-term care facility will not meet his needs. When the government created a pilot program to bring in foreign personal care workers, Bob welcomed the chance to have quality constant care again, but that simply is not the case.

Bob has asked me to share his plight with this House in the hope that he and others in the disability community can continue to live and function with dignity at home and not in some medical institution, forgotten and isolated away from family and friends.

* * *

UJA'S WALK WITH ISRAEL

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this weekend over 15,000 in Toronto's Jewish community gathered for UJA's Walk with Israel. It is the biggest event of its kind in Canada. Running for more than 50 years, it supports UJA projects that help vulnerable populations in Israel.

While it is one of the most successful events in the community, corresponding with Yom Yerushalayim, which commemorates the reunification of Jerusalem after the Six-Day War, it is also a sober reminder of the exceptional measures that the Jewish community has to take simply to exercise their right to freedom of assembly and expression.

As the most frequently targeted religious minority in Canada, the Jewish community, through UJA, has no choice but to expend significant charitable dollars just to provide the security measures needed for community members to stay safe at the walk. No targeted community should have to pay a security premium simply to exercise their rights as Canadians.

Sadly, this is not just the walk; it is synagogues, schools and community centres.

We have a problem in this country, and members of this House need to know it.

* * *

[Translation]

MADAWASKA—RESTIGOUCHE GRADUATES

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all high school, college and university graduates in Canada, especially those in Madawaska—Restigouche. I congratulate them on their success.

[English]

Their efforts over the past years are now rewarded. They have, through thick and thin, carried out their work with brilliance and perseverance. They have rolled up their sleeves and reached this important milestone in their lives.

[Translation]

I ask them to take the time to enjoy their accomplishments. They are now well prepared to take their next steps, which will lead to a bright future.

[English]

I hope they dare to take risks and follow their passions. I hope they take pleasure in the personal and professional opportunities offered to them. Above all, I hope they always keep an open mind and an open heart, as they will be good guides in their future.

• (1415)

[Translation]

Once again, I extend my congratulations and wish them success in their future endeavours.

Statements by Members

[English]

SHANNEN KOOSTACHIN

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to an extraordinary youth leader, the late Shannen Koostachin of Attawapiskat First Nation, who died 12 years ago tonight in a terrible highway accident in northern Ontario. Shannen was only 15 at the time, but in her short life, she launched the largest youth-driven children's rights movement in Canadian history.

Shannen had never seen a real school. Children on her reserve were being educated in deplorable conditions, but Shannen stood up and challenged the negligence of the Canadian state. "School should be a time of dreams," she said. She said that very child deserves the right to go to a safe and comfy school.

Shannen never lived long enough to see the beautiful Shannen's dream school in Attawapiskat, but since her death, youth from across Canada have carried on the Shannen's Dream campaign for equal education rights. Shannen has been recognized as one the 150 most important women in Canadian history. That is a powerful legacy for a girl who just wanted to go to a real school.

On this anniversary, we remember and miss you, Shannen. I miss you, but we know your spirit lives on.

* * *

[Translation]

CATALONIA

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, over the past few days, I had the privilege of meeting Catalonia's minister of foreign action, who came to meet with a significant number of Quebec institutions, including the Government of Quebec. We discussed the extraordinary economic advantages of developing partnerships between such prosperous and innovative territories as Catalonia and Quebec, which share some comparable characteristics.

Of course, we had the chance to talk about a people's right to self-determination, Catalonia's desire for independence, or at least the desire of a large number of Catalan citizens, and the Spanish government's shameful repression of the will of the Catalan people.

We also touched on Canada's support for Spain in this repression, and on the fact that this is hardly flattering. I promised to raise this issue in the House of Commons of Canada so that, together, we could regain a position of dignity before the Catalan people.

* * *

[English]

BROADCASTING ACT

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, everyone agrees that Canada needs a modernized Broadcasting Act that fits today's digital age. Unfortunately, Liberal Bill C-11 is another in a long line of bad Liberal bills. Bill C-11 would create more red tape for businesses and creators, put more control in the hands of the incompetent CRTC and open up a Pandora's box of Internet regulation.

If passed, Bill C-11 could give the government the power to decide what Canadians can and cannot post on their social media profiles. Bill C-11 would limit consumer choice, drive up prices, create further uncertainty for Canadian businesses and creators and limit the free expression of all Canadians. It is time for the government to scrap Bill C-11 and get back to the drawing board, once and for all.

* * *

[Translation]

HANDGUNS

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Outremont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there were over 200 shootings in Montreal last year. A few days ago, someone fired at a day care in Quebec. Gun violence is a real problem in Quebec.

Yesterday, I stood alongside the Prime Minister as he announced a total freeze on the sale and import of handguns. The market is frozen nationwide, period.

[English]

I would like to take this opportunity to thank some of the incredible advocates I have had the opportunity to work with: PolySeSouvient, the Coalition for Gun Control, the Danforth Families for Safe Communities, Dawson College, la Grand Mosquée de Québec, Ensemble avec Thomas, the National Association of Women and the Law, and many, many others. It is with an enormous sense of relief that I stand in this House of Commons to say that our government is putting an end to the sale and importation of handguns. No more.

In Canada, things will be different: People will not be able to legally purchase a handgun. That will be over 55,000 guns sold in this country off of our streets, period, for our children and for the safety of all Canadians.

● (1420)

The Deputy Speaker: Before we get to Oral Questions, I thought I would bring in a backup.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: I am almost speechless—almost. I will take a couple of minutes to thank you for that warm welcome.

[Translation]

Thank you for giving me such a warm welcome.

[English]

It is great to see you all again and it is great to be back. Please do not let me regret saying that.

I just want to thank you all for the texts, the calls, the emails, the fruit baskets, the flowers, the plants you sent me while I was away. It really made the time go faster knowing that someone was thinking of me, and that is something that I really do appreciate from each and every one of you.

[Translation]

It was so kind of you. It really helped me pass the time. Thank you for all your support while I was away.

[English]

I also want to take a second for a bit of a shout-out to some very special people, folks at Health Sciences North in Sudbury: Dr. Bittira, who was the lead surgeon, and Dr. MacDonald, who were both outstanding, and Dr. Wong, who was my cardiologist, who said “You better go see these people; otherwise, you’re not going to be around much longer.” I thank all three of them very much, as well as some North Bay doctors: Dr. Graham, who is my family doctor, and Dr. Andrews, who is a cardiologist in North Bay, who has been following up to make sure everything goes well.

Doctors do great jobs, but to someone who is lying there in the hospital, there is a certain group of people who really do an excellent job, and they are the nurses.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: That is well deserved. A special shout-out goes to Victoria, Lianne, Angela and Shannon, who made my stay as pleasant as it could be.

There are two people I really want to thank, my wife Chantal and my daughter Samantha.

[Translation]

They both stayed at my bedside. They brought me all sorts of things and made sure I did what I was supposed to do, which was not always easy.

[English]

Of course, the staff in the constituency office and the staff in the Speaker’s office did yeoman’s work to make sure that everything continued to work well. I did not get any major complaints, aside from what you guys were doing here on both sides, but other than that, overall, they took good care of constituents.

The Table officers in the Clerk’s office did outstanding work, to the point where they even signed an order making sure that I would get better, so I had to follow that order. They did an excellent job that way.

Of course, in my absence, there were some very special people here.

[Translation]

I am thinking of one person in particular, the hon. member for Joliette, who was here every day helping out and making sure that everything was going smoothly.

Oral Questions

• (1425)

[English]

Of course, there are the chair occupants: the hon. member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing and the hon. member for Brossard—Saint-Lambert, who did outstanding work.

Of course, last but not least, there is the Deputy Speaker, the hon. member for West Nova, who did outstanding work.

[Translation]

Thank you all so much.

[English]

Now let us get on with the business of Parliament.

Oral Questions, the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

TAXATION

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always good to have you back. Hopefully we give the government, and not you, a hard time today.

The Prime Minister is penalizing Canadians at the pumps on purpose. That is because he wants to end Canada’s energy sector. He is quite happy when gas prices soar. The fact is that the carbon tax does nothing but increase the cost of gas and everything else. Still, the Prime Minister wants it because he wants high gas prices and he does not care that it is hurting Canadians.

Is it not true that Canadians paying excessively high gas prices is exactly what the Prime Minister wants?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the global pandemic and the inflation caused by Vladimir Putin’s war on Ukraine have led to rising prices across the country and around the world. That is why we continue to be there to support families, with investments in child care, with increases to the CCB and with investments in supporting our seniors and young people.

When the member opposite attacks the price on pollution, she perhaps forgets that \$832 is what we send to families in Manitoba, on average, to help with the price of fuel.

*Oral Questions***PUBLIC SAFETY**

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, we saw the Liberals engage in a game of smoke and mirrors. On one hand, they are banning handguns. On the other hand, they are pushing through Bill C-5, which tells criminals not to worry; if they are convicted of a gun crime, they can just hang out at home for their sentence. This is not keeping communities safe and it is not reassuring to moms and dads who are worried about their kids.

Will the Prime Minister get serious about keeping vulnerable communities safe, scrap Bill C-5 and legislate tough penalties for gun criminals?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely true that we moved forward to present legislation that, once passed, will make it no longer legal to buy, sell, transfer or import handguns anywhere in Canada. At the same time, Bill C-5 would not stop police from charging people with gun offences or prosecutors from pursuing convictions. What it would do is make sure that criminals face serious penalties, while addressing the overrepresentation of Black Canadians and indigenous people in the criminal justice system.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am a mom and I know all of us want our kids safe in their schools and in their communities. That is why I am so frustrated with what the Liberals are doing. They are banning guns, and then when the criminals ignore their gun ban and use the guns to rob someone or commit a carjacking, the Liberals are letting gun criminals do their time at home.

How can the Prime Minister claim to be keeping people safe when he refuses to have jail time for violent criminals who ignore his useless gun bans and are hurting and terrorizing our children?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our criminal justice reform legislation turns the page on failed Conservative policies that ignored systemic racism and discrimination. What our communities need is a justice system that punishes criminals. What we do not need is a system that targets racialized people because of systemic discrimination or sends people to prison because they struggle with addiction.

This bill is another step forward to create a system that is fair and effective and keeps Canadians safe.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that violent gun crime has only gone up under the Prime Minister. Actually, it has gone up significantly since he has formed office, and the data proves this. He has failed to keep Canadians safe from gun violence in cities such as Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and Winnipeg. At the same time, he has been weak on violent crime and soft on criminals by allowing them to avoid jail time with bills like Bill C-5.

When will the Prime Minister drop his failed approach, stop putting our communities at risk and go after dangerous criminals with guns?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, over the past seven years, we have

continually moved forward on strengthening gun control in this country. That is exactly what we announced yesterday, making it no longer legal, as of the passage of that legislation, to buy, sell, import or transfer handguns in Canada. On top of that, the assault weapon ban that we brought in place two years ago is going to be matched with a mandatory buyback.

These are measures that are going to keep our communities safe, measures the Conservatives have voted against because they are against gun control.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is misleading Canadians. Bill C-5 and the other measures by the Liberal government are failing to keep our communities safe. They are putting them at risk. If they wanted to stop gun violence, they would put more resources to border agents to stop gun smuggling. They would put more resources to police to stop violent criminals with guns. They would put more resources to anti-gang community groups to divert youth from a life of crime.

That is how we stop gun violence, not useless gun bans or bills like Bill C-21 that will do nothing to stop gun violence in this country. Is that not right?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while Conservative members parrot talking points from the gun lobby, we will continue to act on keeping Canadians safe. That is exactly what we have continued to do over the past many years.

We will continue to move forward with stronger gun control at the same time as we invest in communities and invest in more tools for CBSA and RCMP to interdict guns at the border. Indeed, over the past year, we interdicted twice as many guns as we had the year before.

Our plan is working. We are going to continue to keep Canadians safe.

* * *

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, you have clearly exhausted my colleague from Joliette, but I am still extremely happy that you have returned. Welcome back.

Oral Questions

The Minister of Justice and the Prime Minister have stated that they definitely intend to appeal Bill 21 and Bill 96, an extension of Bill 101, to the Supreme Court. In other words, they are taking the issue to friendly territory with predictable results. Why is that?

Ultimately, the question for the Prime Minister is the following: Is English threatened in Quebec?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to Bill 21, we are on the side of Quebeckers who are shocked and disappointed that a young teacher can no longer practise her profession. We support and follow Quebeckers who are defending their rights in court with respect to this law that they feel is unjust.

We expect that this matter will be appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada, and, if that happens, our government is determined to contribute to the debate, given the vast implications for all Canadians across the country and the need to defend the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, his idea of contributing to the debate is giving money and perpetuating a blatant lie. Enough with this business about not practising or not being able to practise a profession. It reeks of partisanship. Quebec has been so often maligned across Canada that attacks on language and secularism in Quebec are gaining traction among Conservative Party leadership candidates.

That was the very premise of my question, which the Prime Minister did not answer. Is English at risk in Quebec?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all agree that French is at risk all across the country.

We are here to protect French in Quebec, of course, but also in minority communities outside of Quebec. In the interests of consistency, if we are protecting francophone minority communities across Quebec, then we must also be there to protect minority anglophone communities in Quebec. Our approach is consistent. We will always be there to protect minorities across the country.

This is why we have the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

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HEALTH

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have just learned that the government has approved British Columbia's request to decriminalize drugs in small amounts.

It took 27,000 overdose deaths in six years for the government to finally see reason. However, there are also families burying their loved ones in other provinces. My colleague from Courtenay—Alberni has introduced a bill that will be voted on tomorrow and that proposes a federal public health response.

Will the government stop playing with people's lives and support our bill tomorrow? It is a matter of life and death.

• (1435)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opioid crisis has severely affected the families and communities of those we have lost to overdoses.

Our approach follows other steps we have taken previously to address the opioid crisis, including investments of more than \$800 million in community-led harm reduction, treatment and prevention initiatives. We also just approved British Columbia's request to decriminalize the personal possession of small amounts of certain illicit drugs in the province.

We will continue to work with all provinces and jurisdictions to save lives and end this crisis.

[English]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has finally approved British Columbia's request to decriminalize simple possession of controlled substances after dragging its feet for months. This is an important step to stop the harms of failed drug policy, but we are dealing with a national crisis. There are thousands of families burying their loved ones outside of B.C. Provincial and local governments should not have to fill the void of federal leadership. Lives are at stake. A patchwork approach is completely irresponsible.

Will the government save lives by supporting my bill tomorrow for a national health-based approach to substance use?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes that problematic substance use is a public health issue. We are working with partners to advance a multi-faceted health-based strategy to end the overdose and toxic drug supply crisis. That is why we have approved the B.C. proposal to decriminalize personal possession of small amounts of certain illegal drugs within the province.

There is, of course, more to do, and we are taking action with a range of provinces and territories as well as other partners to end this ongoing tragedy. We know that we need to move forward on proper supports and that is what we are doing with B.C. We look forward to talking with other provinces about that as well.

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THE ECONOMY

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the government is asked about inflation and the cost of living, it continually downplays the real struggle that Canadians face while referring to the strength of the economy. However, now reports confirm what Canadians are feeling. In March, the economy grew by just 0.7%, in April the economy nearly stalled and inflation is at 30-year highs.

Oral Questions

What does the Minister of Finance have to say to Canadians who are struggling with inflation and who are now facing a slowing economy? Is relief on the way?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have to urge a bit of economic literacy among the members opposite. The reality is that in data released today, the Canadian economy grew by 3.1% on an annualized basis in the first quarter of this year. That is the highest growth rate in the G7, a very impressive performance. I want to thank Canadians for their hard work, which has led to that strength in our economy.

* * *

TAXATION

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, has the minister seen the price of gasoline lately? Of course she has not; she has a chauffeur. However, in Vancouver it is as high as \$2.35 per litre. A huge chunk of that cost is GST and the carbon tax. That is a tax on a tax.

The Conservatives have asked the Prime Minister to suspend GST on gasoline purchases. He refused. The only winner is the Liberal government, which is raking in billions in extra taxes but is refusing to share that windfall with Canadian families.

Why have the Prime Minister and the government so badly failed Canadians in their time of need?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have tremendous respect for the member for Abbotsford, but I must say that his economic analysis here is just off. The reality is that a price on pollution is the most effective way to fight climate change. The IMF, among others, has recognized the Canadian approach as an international model. That money goes back directly to Canadians. In Ontario, where I am an MP, a family of four will get \$745 back. In Alberta, it is more than \$1,000.

• (1440)

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with that answer, I suggest that it sounds like the minister is not speaking to Canadians whatsoever.

Gas prices are hitting record levels and Canadians are struggling to fill their tanks. The Prime Minister likes to point the finger elsewhere. The reality is that taxes on fuel are lining his government's pockets on the backs of hard-working Canadians. The latest carbon tax hike could not have come at a worse time and is even more punishing for constituents like mine, who live in rural Canada.

Will the Prime Minister offer Canadians some much-needed relief and finally abandon his failed carbon tax?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the question because it gives me an opportunity to remind members of the fact that the price on pollution goes back directly to Canadian families. A family of four in Saskatchewan, for example, will get \$1,100 back. In Alberta it is \$1,079. In Manitoba it is \$832. In Ontario, which I represent, it is \$745. That is real money going back into the pockets of Canadian families.

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives care about Canadian creators, but the Liberals continue to ignore the negative impacts of Bill C-11. This morning, digital creator and 47-year-old skateboarding mom Oorbee Roy told this to the committee: “not only does this bill not help me; it hurts me and actively undermines my needs.... I literally have never gotten a seat at the table, except now. As a digital creator, I'm getting a seat at the table. Representation matters.... Please don't suppress my voice.”

Will the government do the right thing and fully exempt user-generated content and remove proposed section 4.2 from Bill C-11?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about representation. Yesterday, we heard a troubling revelation at committee. An organization dedicated to opposing Bill C-11 admitted that it was paid by YouTube and TikTok, but they claimed to represent exactly that, digital creators, saying they were grassroots. That is called astroturfing. Of course, this was never revealed before, and it raises serious questions. Did the Conservatives know this when they invited that organization?

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what Conservatives know is that we will always stand up for our creative industries and fight on their behalf, so we can see Canadian creators succeed here at home and around the globe.

Yesterday at committee, communications expert Monica Auer said, “gaps in Bill C-11 will make current serious problems with the CRTC's transparency, accountability and timing even worse” and “court challenges of its implementation by the CRTC will create long delays and cost Canada and those working in its creative sectors quite dearly.”

Will the government stand up for new creative industries, admit that its strategy is flawed and fully exempt user-generated content?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are standing up for them, as we are standing up for other cultural workers, for producers, for actors, and for our technicians, which is something the Conservatives cannot do. They cannot say they are going to support Bill C-11 because it is important to tell their stories, because it is important for music, or because it is important for television. They never said that, and they never will.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals claim that user-generated content will be exempt from regulation under Bill C-11.

However, the bill states in black and white that the CRTC will have the power to regulate all content that directly or indirectly generates revenues. This means that almost all content will be regulated. Experts are against the idea.

Can the minister categorically assure us that all user-generated content will be exempt, yes or no?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have been clear on this since day one: The platforms have obligations, but the users do not.

[English]

Platforms are in; users are out.

[Translation]

It has been extremely clear since the beginning.

However, there is one thing I am wondering about. I respect my colleague very much. He comes from Quebec and knows how important Bill C-11 is, yet he refuses to support the government in its efforts to defend Quebec's culture and the French fact in television production and in music.

I am both surprised at my colleague and disappointed in him.

* * *

● (1445)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-21 on gun control is a step forward, and the Bloc Québécois will work with the minister to improve it, but nothing has been resolved today. Assault weapons have not been banned.

To this day, the mandatory buyback program remains nothing but a promise. It is not in the bill. To this day, there is no clear definition of what an assault weapon is, so new models can circumvent the rules. If Bill C-21 were passed today, assault weapons would remain in circulation.

Does the minister agree that these gaps absolutely must be addressed?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank my colleague for her offer to work together on Bill C-21. It represents a significant step forward in our work to address gun violence.

With respect to the issues that my colleague pointed out regarding the mandatory buyback, we will begin taking meaningful next steps immediately to ensure that we get these assault weapons out of communities. It is the right thing to do.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let us not lose sight of the fact that Bill C-21 does not adequately address the crux of the problem that we have in Quebec right now, which is illegal guns.

Illegal guns are coming across the border, getting into the hands of organized crime and evading oversight. There will not be any freeze or buyback of these guns. It is looking like 2022 will end up being the most violent year in Montreal's recent history.

Oral Questions

Can the minister really guarantee that the measures in Bill C-21 will be enough to stop this trend?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once my colleague has a chance to read and study Bill C-21, she will see that it includes provisions to increase sentences and penalties for organized criminals looking to smuggle guns across the border.

That is precisely why we have provided the Canada Border Services Agency and the RCMP with additional resources to stop gun trafficking. We have actually made good progress, but we have further to go, and that is exactly what we are going to do.

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister said that it was the shots fired last week at a Montreal day care that convinced him to introduce Bill C-21. However, would this bill have prevented that shooting? That is hard to believe.

Criminal gangs are simply not targeted in this bill, yet it is these gangs that are front and centre in the illegal gun trade that fuels the shootings. Will the minister finally agree to create an organized crime registry in order to help police catch known gang members?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I totally agree with my colleague that shootings are unacceptable tragedies. That is exactly why we introduced Bill C-21, to target the criminals who cause tragedy and create chaos in our communities.

This bill sets out tough new penalties for criminals and increases resources for police. We will work with the Bloc and all members of the House.

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[English]

PASSPORTS

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, “send your complaints to your MP” is the proposed solution to the outrageous passport delays by the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development.

Canadians expect service from Service Canada, yet we know that 11 of 35 passport offices have chronic lineup problems and people are waiting for hours on hold and often get disconnected after waiting. This is not service. This lack of accountability and lack of preparation is unacceptable.

When will the minister stop telling Canadians they are doing a great job and actually acknowledge the severity of this issue and serve Canadians?

Oral Questions

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have acknowledged from the beginning that this is a challenge. These volumes are unprecedented. There are passports that are up for renewal this year, as well as from the past two years, plus additional passports for people who have never requested them before.

Unlike the Conservatives, if constituents have a challenge and need support for an urgent passport, they should please contact their MP so that we can ensure they get the help they need, particularly when travel is urgent.

I am sure all members in this House would like to help those urgent cases get their passport.

• (1450)

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my office has been inundated with emails from constituents feeling frustrated by passport delays. Now we are hearing countless stories about missed trips, extra costs and hour-long wait times. Passport Canada's website still says that it only takes two weeks to process an application, but we know countless numbers of people who applied back in March who are still being told not to book summer travel. The system is failing.

What is the minister doing to fix these unacceptable delays?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me just clarify it for the member. When one reads the website, it is 10-day processing for in-person services at a specialized passport office, and 96% of applicants are getting their passports within less than 10 days when they go to a specialized passport office.

The challenge is in the mail system. As I have explained to this House before, prepandemic 80% of applications happened in person. Now it is the reverse. We are working hard to address this issue, and we will continue to do everything we can to make this process as smooth as possible.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is quite out of touch for the minister to suggest that people should just wait in line in these overnight lines to get their passports.

I spoke to Janna in my riding, who has two children under five. She cannot bring them with her to wait overnight in line. She applied in March, and her credit card was charged on April 20. She had to cancel a trip that was supposed to take place on June 13, and she still has not received her passport. She has re-booked for the end of June and she is still waiting. She cannot get a response.

What is the minister prepared to do to help Janna and those like her get their passports and not have to cancel their trips a second time?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the member of Parliament to reach out to my office. For everyone who has done that, we have been able to ensure their passport is received in time. We are experiencing challenges, but we will continue to do everything we can to address these challenges.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the wait times for passports are absolutely ludicrous. The situation is out of control. Last week, people went to passport offices with their lawn chairs.

People do not want to vacation at passport offices. They want to go on vacation somewhere in Canada or somewhere else in the world. The solution is very simple. All we need to do is get staff into the passport offices.

What is the government waiting for to get people working in the passport offices again?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know it is frustrating for Canadians who, over the past two years, have heeded the government's instructions and stayed home. They want to travel. Around the world, countries like Canada, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Sweden and France, are seeing wait times of 9 to 11 weeks. That kind of thing is happening everywhere.

We are increasing our resources to deal with the situation, but it will go on for some time because of the sheer volume.

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[*English*]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today's Auditor General's report confirms Canadian veterans are still waiting months or even years to access disability benefits and says better data is desperately needed. This has been an issue since 2014, but the government continues to fail Canadian veterans. It is completely unacceptable that veterans are forced to do without the supports and services they need because the government has not fixed the problems. It has been eight years.

What will it take for the minister to finally get Canadian veterans the help they deserve?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Auditor General for her work and welcome her four recommendations. Our investment of \$340 million has allowed us to hire hundreds of staff and speed up processes. With that, we have reduced the backlog by 50%, from 23,000 down to just over 10,600. We are on the right path and we will continue on that path to make sure veterans receive their appropriate remuneration.

Oral Questions

● (1455)

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, veterans need the government to get down that path a lot sooner.

Today, the Auditor General also said that Canadians in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis are not able to access the supports Liberals say are available to them, and made it clear that for these vulnerable Canadians the government does not even have a plan to help. A plan would look like supporting a motion to make profitable oil and gas companies pay their fair share, instead of voting against it. A plan would look like raising the GST rebate and declaring a low-income CERB repayment amnesty, instead of trying to collect debt from the poor.

When will we see a real plan from the government that includes the relief people need to feed their families and keep a roof over their head?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we welcome and accept the report from the Auditor General today. We have an initiative called “Reaching All Canadians” to try to ensure that Canadians have access to the benefits they are eligible for. We have been working with third party organizations to ensure that those who are eligible for benefits like the Canada child benefit, old age security and the guaranteed income supplement know that they can access them and that they have support in applying.

We will continue to do more, as we know that we want to reach every single Canadian who is eligible. We will keep doing that work.

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EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that the skilled trades are at the centre of Canada's economic recovery. That is why this government is investing nearly \$1 billion annually to support apprentices. I think of smart investments like the union training and innovation program, which helps kick-start lucrative careers in well-respected trades, including for Canadians from under-represented groups.

Yesterday I was privileged to witness the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion announce the launch of the new federal apprenticeship service in Halifax. Can the minister please share with the House and all Canadians the importance of this initiative?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is an important question. Skilled trade workers are essential to Canada's economy and infrastructure and to our everyday life. To ensure Canadians can seize the opportunities in the trades, we are helping create 25,000 new apprenticeships across Canada. We are investing \$247 million to help small and medium-sized businesses hire mechanics, electricians and other apprentices. We are also doubling incentives for employers who hire persons with disabilities, indigenous people and other marginalized Canadians.

We will keep working with unions and business to build a strong, skilled workforce for the future.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our country's housing crisis is at a critical point. This impacts everyone, including our soldiers. Recently, a senior B.C. officer told soldiers that they should go to Habitat for Humanity for assistance. These are people who are prepared to lay down their lives for our freedom and they are told to go to charity. It is shameful.

When will the government provide adequate housing for our soldiers who are prepared to lay down their lives for our freedoms?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, military members and their families are our top priority and we are investing \$445 million over the coming years to tackle this very important issue that the hon. member raised. In February 2021, we increased military members' rates of pay to ensure alignment with increases received by the federal public service. We also implemented an interim relocation policy to enable remote work options and to facilitate flexibility for members. We have more work to do. We will continue to seek ways to support our members and their families.

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, *Top Gun: Maverick* came out this week, but Canadian military families are not feeling the need for speed when it comes to getting military housing. They have lost that loving feeling. Families of four are being made to sleep in single PMQs. The hard deck for building homes is 6,000 homes needed for military families given the great ball of fire that is also the housing crisis, which is on a highway to the danger zone.

When will the government be a wingman and build homes for Canadian military families?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in all seriousness, we will continue to support our Canadian Armed Forces personnel posted across the country and their families. For example, the post living differential allowance is intended to help reduce financial burdens for Canadian Armed Forces personnel and their families. To ensure that the PLD allowance effectively supports CAF members and their families and addresses affordability concerns, the Department of National Defence is reviewing the policy as we speak. We will always seek to support the people who serve our country with robust compensation and with a benefits framework that works for everyone.

Oral Questions

• (1500)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister needs to look up from her talking points. These are people, men and women, who we have asked to serve our country, at home and abroad, and unbelievably they are being asked to go to Habitat for Humanity for accommodations. The Liberals have failed to provide our troops with equipment that they need. They have failed to protect our troops from sexual misconduct, and now they have failed to ensure our troops have places to live.

This is an absolute disgrace, and the minister needs to answer for it.

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that I have military members and their families as my top priority. From day one, as stated in my mandate letter, I have continued to commit to ensuring that our members have the support and resources that they need. That is why we are increasing our defence spending by 70% over a nine-year period beginning in 2017. That is why we committed another \$8 billion in defence spending. That is why \$6.1 billion of that will go to the needs of the military, and we will keep working on this issue.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, military personnel sacrifice to serve our country. They knew they would be moved, but they did not expect that they would not be able to afford to live because the government would let them down. There should be some expectation of a similar cost of living when military personnel are posted from base to base. However, that is not the case with the rates of military housing varying widely across the country. The rates at Bagotville are almost double those in Cold Lake. Both are air force bases that are home to our CF-18s.

When will the minister address this housing inequity?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put forward a few facts. After significant cuts made by the previous Conservative government, we actually are delivering results for our Canadian Armed Forces members and their families. Tax-free income for members—

The Speaker: I am going to ask the minister to stop for a second. I think everybody wants to hear the answer to that question, especially the hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake. Maybe we will let the minister start from the top so that everyone can hear the answer.

The hon. Minister of National Defence.

Hon. Anita Anand: Mr. Speaker, I will try this again. After significant cuts made by the previous Conservative government, we are delivering results for our Canadian Armed Forces.

Some of these results are the tax-free income for members deployed on international operations, close to \$200 million to improve access to health care and implement a joint suicide prevention strategy, \$6 million per year in new funding for military family resource centres, which means more child care hours, and enshrining a victims' bill of rights in the military justice system.

This is our top priority.

[Translation]

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, academic research is essential to the advancement of science, and it greatly enriches our societies. It is critical that the process for hiring research chairs be based solely on the candidates' qualifications and the nature of their research.

However, in the Canada research chairs program, Ottawa forgoes this quest for excellence and prioritizes diversity considerations. Does the minister agree that discrimination should never influence the assessment of competence?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for allowing me to speak about the investments we have made in science.

In recent years, we have seen what an important role science, technology and innovation play in finding solutions to the great challenges that humanity faces, from climate change to COVID-19. We have also seen the key role that diversity and inclusion play in scientific research.

That is why we expect the research councils to put the right policies in place to achieve this goal.

• (1505)

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois believes that research funding should be allocated based on skill. The federal government thinks it should be allocated based on diversity.

Visible minorities represent 51% of the population in Toronto and only 2% of the population in Rimouski, but both regions are subject to the same criteria.

Our universities are scrambling to recruit and reflect diversity, but we have to be realistic. Why not trust the universities and fund scientific research based on scientific capabilities?

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

We, on this side of the House, do indeed trust our universities. That is why we are making massive investments in science, research and innovation because those things are important.

My colleagues in the House want the scientific community to reflect Canada's diversity. That is why we asked the research councils to implement the right policies to ensure that scientific research represents all Canadians.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is an urgent need to take action on the labour shortage. There are solutions, but this government has lost control.

For example, a temporary foreign worker who has been coming here every year for the past 10 years has to attend an eligibility interview this year. However, he has been coming here for 10 years now. Another example that I have is a manufacturer with plants in Ontario and Quebec. It takes four times longer to get the permits in Quebec than in Ontario.

This is not Quebec's fault, and this government needs to come up with another excuse. What is the problem with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's question.

We know that immigration plays a key role in combatting the labour shortage. IRCC is prioritizing jobs in high-demand occupations. I would like to point out again that in the first quarter of this year, the department processed more than 100,000 work permit applications, which is nearly double the number processed over the same period last year.

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

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, labour shortages are an undeniable problem in our economy. Not only is there a shortage of workers, but more and more people no longer want to work because this government has created a culture of dependency that does not encourage them to work.

Since the Liberals are struggling to fast-track foreign worker applications, will this government introduce incentives that benefit the labour market?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, temporary foreign workers have played an important role in ensuring our food security, particularly during the pandemic. They deserve to be protected.

That is why we are working with the provinces to ensure that employers are prepared to welcome workers safely. We are ensuring that employers meet their program obligations through enhanced inspections.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Liberal inaction has struck again, creating an unprecedented vicious cycle for Canadian entrepreneurs who are facing a labour shortage hell.

This is yet another issue on top of the problems with EI, passports, foreign workers, permanent residency and identity theft in Canada.

What does this Prime Minister intend to do about his overall incompetence?

Oral Questions

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am smiling because I always enjoy my opposition colleague's dramatic flair. Let us applaud that lively performance.

What I can say on behalf of members on this side of the House is that our government is working very closely with Quebec to make sure workers can work.

As I made clear, we have twice as many work permit applications as last year. We will always make sure that Canadians and Quebecers can work.

* * *

TOURISM INDUSTRY

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the tourism sector has been through two extremely difficult years, and now it is time to talk about how important this sector is.

Would the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance tell the House what the government is doing to put this industry, which is crucial to Canada's economy, front and centre?

• (1510)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle for both her question and her hard work.

Yesterday, we kicked off our National Tourism Week. Canada is ready to welcome visitors and travellers from around the world.

I would also like to thank Beth Potter and the Tourism Industry Association of Canada for the incredible success of their Rendezvous Canada conference last week, their leadership role in our tourism sector and everything they do to showcase Canada internationally.

I wish everyone a happy National Tourism Week.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since 2015, the cost of living in northern Saskatchewan has skyrocketed. People travel great distances for groceries and medical appointments and to check on loved ones. There is one charging station, no public transit and there are more deer and moose trails than bike lanes in my riding. The cost of gas, groceries, home heating fuel and farm inputs, and nearly everything is getting more expensive under the Liberal-NDP coalition.

This is another attack on Saskatchewan's rural, northern and remote communities. Is that not true?

Oral Questions

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has been taking measures in order to address the cost of living increase, which we all know is caused by the war started by Russia.

I believe that the member opposite will find in this budget a number of measures that go directly to his point. There is a one-time payment for those having trouble finding affordable homes in our budget. There is a proposal to subsidize dental care in our budget. We have already reduced the taxes on middle-class families and the Conservatives voted against it. Will they vote for our budget?

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the topic of Russia, we know that during the war and conflict, women and youth are at increased risk of exploitation. The 2021 U.S. Trafficking in Persons Report notes that Ukraine has been a long-time source country for human trafficking victims. Now that millions of women and youth are fleeing Ukraine, we know that human traffickers have been targeting them.

What specific steps is the government taking to ensure that Ukrainian women and youth seeking refuge in Canada are not being trafficked and exploited?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, indeed, the question of human trafficking is an issue and, indeed, this is something that we have raised through the G7. Many of the G7 ministers have made it clear that we need to do more to counter any form of human trafficking, particularly in the context of Putin's war of choice against Ukraine. I look forward to working with my colleague on this issue and with many others within cabinet because we need to give particular attention to this.

* * *

CANADA BORDER SERVICES AGENCY

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals reduced operating hours at dozens of border crossings during COVID-19, but Canadians are travelling again and crossing the border to visit families, do business or just to get away for a few days. Forty ports of entry, 13 of which are in Manitoba, are still operating at reduced operating hours. When will the Liberals restore the full service at our border crossings?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to report that thanks to the advocacy of the members of this chamber, including on our side of the House, we have reopened the vast majority of ports of entry, which is seeing an increase in trade and travel. This is getting our economy going, and all the while we are protecting Canadians from the pandemic. We will continue to work with my hon. colleague to make even more progress as we head into the summer season so we can get our economy going even better.

HOUSING

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, welcome back.

Over the past two years, Canadians have been rocked by this pandemic, and it comes as no surprise that the harsh realities faced by our most vulnerable have been exacerbated, especially for women and children fleeing domestic violence. Far too many in this situation have nowhere to turn. Could the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion please tell this House about what our government is doing to ensure those fleeing domestic violence have the support and space they need?

● (1515)

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge for his excellent question and work on this really important file.

Last week, I was thrilled to announce \$121 million to build over 430 shelters and transitional homes in over 15 municipalities across Canada. This work is being done together with 14 provincial and territorial shelter associations. These extra shelter beds and transitional homes will ensure that women and children fleeing gender-based violence will have a safe roof over their heads. This is the national housing strategy at work.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I asked the government a very straightforward question that warranted a very straightforward answer. I did not get that. I rise again today because of the gravity of this situation. Yesterday, I found out that a third indigenous woman was murdered in Winnipeg this month. She was the mother of four. Women are dying in Winnipeg. It is ground zero for MMIWG.

Therefore, I will ask again: Will the minister confirm last week's funding announcement includes a low-barrier 24-hour safe space as requested by my community? Yes or no.

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday's news is indeed part of the ongoing tragedy in this country of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. The funding in the announcement of last week will create the infrastructure necessary to operate a facility that will be welcoming for people who are in distress. As to the member opposite's current request, which is one of many, it is clearly one that needs priority. It is something that we support, as a government.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are horrified by the recent mass shootings in the United States, and they want a government that acts to prevent tragedies before they happen. We want to believe that addressing gun violence is an urgent priority for the Liberals, but we have seen this pattern before. They will table legislation and then they do not do anything to push it forward so nothing actually changes. Is the government just trying to score political points, or is it really serious about making changes to keep people safe?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure my colleague, and I hope all members will agree, that we grieve with the communities of Buffalo. We grieve with the communities in Texas, and we will always stand with our American friends at this very difficult time.

Yesterday's announcement launched a new sweeping and transformative piece of legislation, which is the largest gun reform package in a generation. It is about taking concrete action. I assure my colleague and all members that, on this side of the House, we will work tirelessly to tackle handgun violence. We will work tirelessly to take on the illegal trafficking at the border, and we will work tirelessly until we eradicate gun violence. We will do that with all members and all Canadians.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

The House resumed from May 30 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3:17 p.m., pursuant to order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion to concur in the third report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

[English]

The question is on the amendment. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of amendment to House]

• (1530)

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

(Division No. 109)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	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
d'Entremont	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferrieri	Findlay
Généreux	Genuis
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
MacKenzie	Maguire
Martel	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
Melillo	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	O'Toole
Patzner	Paul-Hus
Perkins	Poilievre
Rayes	Redekopp
Reid	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ruff	Schmale
Shields	Shiplely
Small	Soroka
Steinley	Stewart
Strahl	Stubbs
Thomas	Tochor
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vis	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williams
Williamson	Zimmer— 114

Routine Proceedings

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bergeron	Bérubé
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chabot

Routine Proceedings

Chagger
Champagne
Chatel
Chiang
Collins (Victoria)
Coteau
Damoff
DeBellefeuille
Desilets
Dhaliwal
Diab
Drouin
Duclos
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Fillmore
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Garneau
Garrison
Gazan
Gill
Green
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Jaczek
Joly
Jowhari
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Larouche
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maloney
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mendicino
Michaud
Morrice
Murray
Ng
Normandin
Oliphant
Perron
Plamondon
Qualtrough
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sajjan
Samson
Savard-Tremblay
Schieffe
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sorbara
St-Onge
Tassi

Chahal
Champoux
Chen
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier
Dabrusin
Davies
Desbiens
Desjarlais
Dhillon
Dong
Dubourg
Duguid
El-Khoury
Fergus
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Gaheer
Garon
Gaudreau
Gerretsen
Gould
Hajdu
Hardie
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Idlout
Johns
Jones
Julian
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lametti
Lapointe
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lemire
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McGuinty
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
O'Connell
O'Regan
Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski
Robillard
Rogers
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Ste-Marie
Sudds
Taylor Roy

Thériault
Thompson
Trudel
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Villemure
Vuong
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi—205

Therrien
Trudeau
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Vignola
Virani
Weiler
Yip
Zarrillo

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.

The next question is on the main motion.

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

Mr. John Williamson: I request a division.

● (1535)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: We are requesting a recorded vote, please.

● (1545)

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

(Division No. 110)

YEAS

Members

Aboultatif
Albas
Angus
Ashton
Baldinelli
Barrett
Barsalou-Duval
Benzen
Bergeron
Bérubé
Blaikie
Blanchette-Jones
Boulerice
Brassard
Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings
Carrie
Chambers
Chong
Cooper
Dancho
Davies
Deltell
Desbiens
Desjarlais
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Ferreri
Fortin
Garrison
Gazan
Genuis

Aitchison
Allison
Arnold
Bachrach
Barlow
Barron
Beaulieu
Bergen
Berthold
Bezan
Blanchet
Block
Bragdon
Brock
Calkins
Caputo
Chabot
Champoux
Collins (Victoria)
Dalton
Davidson
DeBellefeuille
d'Entremont
Desilets
Doherty
Dreeshen
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Findlay
Garon
Gaudreau
Généreux
Gill

Routine Proceedings

Gladu
Goodridge
Gray
Hallan
Hughes
Jeneroux
Julian
Kitchen
Kram
Kurek
Kwan
Lantsman
Lawrence
Lemire
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
MacGregor
Maguire
Masse
Mazier
McLean
Melillo
Moore
Morrison
Muys
Normandin
Patzner
Perkins
Plamondon
Rayes
Reid
Roberts
Ruff
Schmale
Shipley
Singh
Soroka
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Thériault
Thomas
Trudel
Van Popta
Vidal
Viersen
Villemure
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson
Zimmer — 169

Godin
Gourde
Green
Hoback
Idlout
Johns
Kelly
Kmiec
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Lake
Larouche
Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lobb
MacKenzie
Martel
Mathysen
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McPherson
Michaud
Morantz
Motz
Nater
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Perron
Poilievre
Redekopp
Richards
Rood
Savard-Tremblay
Shields
Simard
Small
Steinley
Stewart
Stubbs
Therrien
Tochor
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien
Vignola
Vis
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams
Zarrillo

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Ali
Anandasangaree
Arya
Badawey
Baker
Beech
Bibeau
Blair
Boissonnault
Brière
Casey
Chahal
Chatel
Chiang
Cormier
Dabrusin
Dhaliwal

Alghabra
Anand
Arseneault
Atwin
Bains
Battiste
Bendayan
Bittle
Blois
Bradford
Carr
Chagger
Champagne
Chen
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Coteau
Damoff
Dhillon

Diab
Drouin
Duclos
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Fillmore
Fortier
Fraser
Fry
Garneau
Gould
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather
Hutchings
Ien
Joly
Jowhari
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McGuinty
McLeod
Mendicino
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
Oliphant
Petitpas Taylor
Qualtrough
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sorbara
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Trudeau
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Weiler
Yip
Zuberi — 153

Dong
Dubourg
Duguid
El-Khoury
Fergus
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gaheer
Gerretsen
Hajdu
Hardie
Holland
Hussen
Iacono
Jaczek
Jones
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Lalonde
Lametti
Lapointe
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
Maloney
May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Miao
Morrice
Murray
Ng
O'Connell
O'Regan
Powlowski
Robillard
Rogers
Sahota
Saks
Sari
Schiefke
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
St-Onge
Tassi
Thompson
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Virani
Wilkinson
Zahid

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[Translation]***ONLINE NEWS ACT**

The House resumed from May 30 consideration of the motion that Bill C-18, An Act respecting online communications platforms that make news content available to persons in Canada, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment to the motion at second reading of Bill C-18.

[English]

The question is on the amendment. May I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of amendment to House]

• (1600)

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:)

(Division No. 111)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	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
d'Entremont	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay
Généreux	Genius
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
MacKenzie	Maguire
Martel	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
Melillo	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	O'Toole
Patzer	Paul-Hus

Perkins
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Rood
Scheer
Shields
Small
Steinley
Strahl
Thomas
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien
Vis
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams
Zimmer— 117

Poilievre
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Ruff
Schmale
Shipley
Soroka
Stewart
Stubbs
Tochor
Van Popta
Vidal
Viersen
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Ali
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Bains
Barron
Battiste
Beech
Bergeron
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blanchet
Blois
Boulerice
Brière
Cannings
Casey
Chagger
Champagne
Chatel
Chiang
Collins (Victoria)
Coteau
Damoff
DeBellefeuille
Desilets
Dhaliwal
Diab
Drouin
Duclos
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Fillmore
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gaheer
Garon
Gaudreau
Gerretsen
Gould
Hajdu
Hardie
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Idlout
Jaczek
Alghabra
Anand
Angus
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Baker
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bendayan
Bérubé
Bittle
Blair
Blanchette-Joncas
Boissonnault
Bradford
Brunelle-Duceppe
Carr
Chabot
Chahal
Champoux
Chen
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier
Dabrusin
Davies
Desbiens
Desjarlais
Dhillon
Dong
Dubourg
Duguid
El-Khoury
Fergus
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Fry
Garneau
Garrison
Gazan
Gill
Green
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Ien
Johns

Government Orders

Joly	Jones
Jowhari	Julian
Kayabaga	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lemire	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	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod	McPherson
Mendès	Mendicino
Miao	Michaud
Miller	Morrice
Morrissey	Murray
Naqvi	Ng
Noormohamed	Normandin
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Perron
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Powlowski	Qualtrough
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sarai	Savard-Tremblay
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simard	Singh
Sorbara	Ste-Marie
St-Onge	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Thériault	Therrien
Thompson	Trudeau
Trudel	Turnbull
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vignola
Villemure	Virani
Weiler	Wilkinson
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zuberi — 206

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.

The next question is on the main motion.

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

The hon. deputy House leader.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

● (1615)

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

(Division No. 112)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bergeron	Bérubé
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Garneau
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Green
Hajdu	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Holland	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
Larouche	Lattanzio
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lemire
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)

Business of Supply

MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Masse	Mathysen	Lloyd	Lobb
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	MacKenzie	Maguire
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty	Martel	Mazier
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod	McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
McPherson	Mendès	Melillo	Moore
Mendicino	Miao	Morrison	Motz
Michaud	Miller	Muys	Nater
Morrice	Morrissey	O'Toole	Patzer
Murray	Naqvi	Paul-Hus	Perkins
Ng	Noormohamed	Poilievre	Rayes
Normandin	O'Connell	Redekopp	Reid
Oliphant	O'Regan	Rempel Garner	Richards
Perron	Petitpas Taylor	Roberts	Rood
Plamondon	Powlowski	Ruff	Scheer
Qualtrough	Robillard	Schmale	Shields
Rodriguez	Rogers	Shipley	Small
Romanado	Sahota	Soroka	Steinley
Sajjan	Saks	Stewart	Strahl
Samson	Sarai	Stubbs	Thomas
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia	Tochor	Uppal
Schiefke	Serré	Van Popta	Vecchio
Sgro	Shanahan	Vidal	Vien
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Viersen	Vis
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard	Vuong	Wagantall
Singh	Sorbara	Warkentin	Waugh
Ste-Marie	St-Onge	Webber	Williams
Sudds	Tassi	Williamson	Zimmer — 116
Taylor Roy	Thériault		
Therrien	Thompson		
Trudeau	Trudel		
Turnbull	Valdez		
Van Bynen	van Koeverden		
Vandal	Vandenbeld		
Vignola	Villemure		
Virani	Weiler		
Wilkinson	Yip		
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PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 56 minutes.

* * *

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—CANADA RESEARCH CHAIRS PROGRAM

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will pick up where I left off earlier.

To begin, I want to repeat what my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie said earlier today. According to my colleague, if the Bloc members' priority is to defend white men who want a job at a university, then we need to own that.

This makes me think of something I often accuse the Conservatives of, and that is taking a populist approach. If there can be right-wing populism, then there can also be left-wing populism. I will try to connect that to today's debate. The member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie made that comment because he was referring to something that I think is ideologically central to today's debate and that affects what we call identity politics.

NAYS

Members

Aboulttaif	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
d'Entremont	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay
Généreux	Genuis
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kitchen
Kmieć	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Lawrence

In identity politics, there is a very simple concept known as Anglo-conformity. Anglo-conformity means that western societies were built with one specific person in mind, namely the white Anglo-Saxon male. It is often said that white Anglo-Saxon males would fit into every institution in western societies and have no concern about having their identity recognized.

I agree with the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie that this is indeed the case. Often, it is necessary to make a special effort to ensure that our institutions are representative of our diversity. Although I agree with the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, we have to see whether the thinking on EDI fits in with this concept of creating a society whose institutions are more representative.

I thought of something interesting. Every member should read Max Weber's lectures on science and politics as vocations. The author makes a distinction between the role of the scientist and the role of the politician. To that end, Max Weber describes two types of ethics: the ethics of responsibility, and the ethics of conviction. I will briefly explain this.

The idea that Max Weber wants to present is that a good idea that is tainted by ideology can often have disastrous results. I agree with the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie that we must make our institutions more representative. That is certainly correct. I believe that, in the employment sector and in the public service sector, we definitely need to put in place measures to ensure that our institutions are more representative of ethnocultural diversity.

If this works in those two sectors, does it mean that this also works in the area of university research?

That is where we need to come back to the ethics of responsibility and the ethics of conviction. The ethics of responsibility encourage us to look at the negative impacts that the ideas we are trying to implement might have. Scholars often use ethics of responsibility. In politics, it is much more common to examine the ethics of conviction, which correspond with ideological purity. There must be representation because the concept of Anglo-conformity makes western societies less representative, so let us apply this to everything.

But is it possible to apply this principle to everything? I do not think so. I do not think that we should look at the research sector the same way that we look at the employment sector and the place that ethnocultural minorities hold in the public service. The research sector is very different. I would even go so far as to say that there is a correlation with the political representation system. Would it be acceptable to decide to create elected office positions for which only certain categories of individuals could run? I think members will agree that that would be an abuse of the ideology we see today in identity politics.

I would like to come back to the possible repercussions of adding conditions that have nothing to do with education to the criteria for awarding research chairs. The first one is the implication that the peer review committees that study these applications for research chairs are already insensitive to differences.

Business of Supply

• (1620)

I do not believe it. How is a research chair awarded? It is the peers—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I am sorry to interrupt the member. I did try to signal him to let him know that his time was up. He will be able to continue during the question and comment period.

The hon. member for Montcalm.

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like my colleague to build on what he was saying, because I am tremendously interested in the notion that the ethics of conviction are somewhat inappropriate in the field of research.

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, my colleague is being very kind.

This raises a question for me. For example, today's "diversity ideology" raises the following question: Are there fields of study that may now be off limits? Can a person who is non-indigenous specialize in studying indigenous communities? The definition of EDI suggests that this is not a possibility.

One thing scares me. What I wanted to say earlier is that "diversity ideology" represents a danger not unlike the one we observed in the academic world of the 1970s, when Marxism was so dominant in political science departments that all the people who had a different view were pushed aside and basically could not access funding for their research. By potentially hindering academic freedom, we run the risk of hindering knowledge, which is even more dangerous.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am very comfortable with diversity ideology and believe that our institutions should reflect the diversity and representativeness of different groups.

Does my colleague not see that there is a fundamental problem when only 6% of researchers or professors are members of visible minorities, even though visible minorities account for twice that percentage of the Quebec population? This means that change is not happening, or that it is happening much too slowly, and that more proactive measures are needed.

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, that would mean that the committees awarding research chairs have members who are insensitive to diversity.

That is what you are saying.

• (1625)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Only a small percentage of the population has access.

Mr. Mario Simard: No, the problem—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I remind members that they are not to debate each other.

I would ask the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie to wait his turn before asking another question.

The member for Jonquière.

Business of Supply

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, the problem is that science cannot be beholden to an ideology, no matter how noble that ideology may be. While I see the worth of the ideology of diversity, which I adhere to myself in many aspects of society, what we are seeing here is an attempt to dictate how university research should be conducted. That is not how this works, and if we allow it to happen, knowledge will become inaccessible, which is not how universities should be seen.

[*English*]

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am perplexed by the NDP-Liberal government placing ideology and political correctness above competency and ability. I am wondering if the member could expand a little further on his thoughts on that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, I am just as perplexed as my colleague.

Earlier I spoke about Max Weber's essay "Politics as a Vocation". Weber makes a marked distinction between the role of politics, which is to set directions for society, and the role of a vocation, which is to further knowledge. What happens with something like EDI is that politics dictates what should be studied, but that is not how it works. This can cause problems and lead to partisanship, which would be of little to no benefit to society as a whole.

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, the misfortunes of the world sometimes lie in the way we name or fail to name things. We are here to discuss research funding, chairs and the EDI criteria. The use of the acronym EDI sometimes prevents us from understanding what we are talking about. We are talking about equity, diversity and inclusion. These words have been used so indiscriminately that they have practically been stripped of their meaning. Since a word is an amalgam of sound and meaning, it does not make sense when it loses its meaning. Words are used to say anything and everything.

Today, I will try to make sense of all this, so that we can better understand. Although equity, diversity and inclusion may be buzzwords, they are important concepts.

As the member for Trois-Rivières, I am particularly interested in the subject of this motion. The president of the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, with whom I have regular discussions, keeps telling me that he is trying hard to attract the best researchers to all of his chairs, whether it be in social communications, pure sciences or green hydrogen. He keeps telling me how difficult it is to attract excellent candidates. Attracting the best candidates is a difficult thing, period. I cannot imagine that adding any kind of criteria would make his job any easier.

Let us at least try to look at this debate from another angle, despite the claim by some that this is a philosophical debate. Let us take the high road and demonstrate two things. First, for the enjoyment of everyone here, I will quote a philosopher who has always moved me, and that is Heraclitus. What he said can be summed up in four words: All things are one.

According to the "all things are one" philosophy, there can be no light without darkness, no left without right, no cold without hot. All things are one. Everything is included. According to Heracli-

tus's philosophy, inclusion is the solution to our problem. We need everyone today. That is inclusion.

Let us try to give meaning to this. Today I heard several people try to talk about or avoid talking about discrimination. Discrimination is what separates, what divides, what distinguishes between concepts. However, when discrimination is used to distinguish between concepts, it does not necessarily have a negative value, since we sometimes talk about positive discrimination.

I prefer the word "discernment" to "discrimination". Discernment is an action that involves distinguishing between two schools of thought, taking context into account. Context is very important here. Oddly enough, EDI—equity, diversity and inclusion—excludes candidates, but I will come back to that.

In life, it is justifiable to want to correct an inequality but, as many have said, we have to remember that we do not correct one inequality by creating another. Everything is one.

Instead, I will talk about striking a balance. In awarding research funds, advancing knowledge should be the only criterion that counts. As we all know, science is not about sex, gender, colour, height, origin or residence. Science is about knowledge, it is about competence. Science is, and must remain, objective.

I will, of course, be the first to say that a diversity of voices can only enrich a discussion, especially in the humanities. Having studied philosophy, I can say that, even in my career as an ethicist, the diversity of voices that one always seeks is hard to come by. When you want to take a 360-degree look at any given subject, it becomes difficult when people's views are identical. People who look alike therefore think alike.

In the quest for truth or knowledge, one must apply what is called the ethics of discussion. Curiously, this step comes after what my colleague just mentioned, that is, after the ethics of beliefs and responsibilities. The ethics of discussion is the validation of our own ideas by a larger, more diverse group, a group that has another point of view. There is richness in diversity.

To get a research grant, first and foremost you have to master a vernacular. That is difficult. You must be well versed in the language, conform to the dictates of the research supervisor, get published in English and so on. The research environment is difficult for everyone. By the way, the requirement that the researcher publish in English is also a form of silent discrimination against francophones that dares not speak its name.

History clearly shows that there is an imbalance, a degree of discrimination against visible minorities, but, as I said, two wrongs do not make a right. Unfortunately, throughout history, minority groups, including francophones in Canada, have experienced negative discrimination. We need to acknowledge that, but, again, two wrongs do not make a right.

If there is discrimination, we need to tackle the reasons for it, not punish candidates who could be eligible for research funding.

• (1630)

Although diverse points of view can enrich the scientific conversation, diversity is not a prerequisite for doing good science.

The Canada research chairs program does not see it that way. According to its criteria, one cannot be a competent scientist unless one meets the diversity criteria. That statement is so outrageous that it would be laughable were it not so serious. If we examine the many criteria set out by the program, we can draw only one conclusion: The criteria are numerous, spurious and even Kafkaesque. The Canada research chairs program is based on an unrealistic vision. It is like trying to build an airplane that is supposed to fly under water.

Second, let us get out of our parliamentary bubble and our big-city bubbles and expand our horizons. Long ago, the Quebec government developed a network of 10 regional universities: the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, the Université du Québec à Rimouski, the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue, the Université du Québec à Montréal, the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, the Université du Québec en Outaouais, and so on. This network was set up to develop the regions of Quebec. By comparing these universities, we can see that there are significant demographic differences within the network. I urge my colleagues to believe me when I say this: the demographics of Montreal are not comparable to those of Rimouski.

If we go further, none of these regions is comparable to the Canadian population statistics cited by the Canada research chairs program. There too, Quebec is different.

What will the Université du Québec à Rimouski need to do if the minority referred to by the criteria is simply nowhere to be found in the region served by the university?

The “Canadian” criteria in the research chair guidelines do not match the demographics of Quebec. There is a glaring injustice here, in addition to a demonstrable inequity.

I will say for the third time that diversity usually enriches a discussion, but it still has to be present in the regions in question.

By asking the government to review the criteria for awarding grants to research chairs, we are simply asking it to let science be what it is, which is objective. We are asking the government to let universities be what they are, which is independent. Furthermore, the program ignores the autonomy of universities. Basically, non-scientists are being entrusted with the task of allocating funds to scientists, even though these non-scientists sometimes know very little about the process, apart from the diversity criteria.

The Canada research chairs program should be content to act as a facilitator for scientific advances, advances that are based on the skills and qualifications of candidates. It should not be telling universities what to do. This is an infringement on the jurisdiction of universities and Quebec, and that is unacceptable. Through its directives, the federal government is once again interfering in matters that are none of its concern and meddling where it is not wanted.

Business of Supply

Through our motion, we are calling on the government to review its guidelines on equity, diversity and inclusion with a focus on the first, equity, which is the first word in the acronym, EDI. It is important to distinguish between equity or equality, for they are not the same thing. When it is properly understood, equity is a criterion that encompasses and transcends diversity and inclusion. Equity is a fair assessment of what each party is entitled to. If we add a little Aristotle and take a philosophical view, I would even say that it is a fair assessment of what each party is entitled to, as much as humanly possible. That should be the guideline used when allocating funding. Its very meaning transcends the convoluted EDI criteria used in the Canada research chairs program.

A word of caution is needed. It is important to remember that certain groups, for any number of legitimate reasons, tend to be drawn to certain disciplines over others. We have to be careful to replace discrimination with colonialism. Discrimination of any kind has no place in our society, and neither does blind, prescriptive virtue.

• (1635)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened to the member opposite. I do not necessarily share the same concerns in many ways, but the focus of my question is in regard to women specifically.

Women make up more than 50% of the population in Quebec. Would he not see that as a reason in itself to have policies to encourage and have women represented as much as possible, in getting up to that 50%?

Does he not see that as something we should be striving to achieve?

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure: Madam Speaker, I believe that those criteria already exist. However, one thing is certain: We must promote access for members of groups, such as women, but I do not believe that we need go so far as to ban and exclude people, because that is not the case.

As I stated in my speech, there are certain groups that, for reasons of their own, are simply not present in an area of activity. We must be careful when we push for something.

However, I agree with the member. We must foster access, but I believe that universities do a good job in that regard. Having experience with universities and research chairs, I believe that people are making a real effort.

Business of Supply

[English]

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have to say that I am just furious, and disappointed, hearing the arguments from my colleagues today. We are talking about initiatives and policies that correct the under-representation of marginalized groups of people, and the Bloc wants to take away those policies. It wants to continue to marginalize and continue to push for the under-representation of these groups. I heard the member speak a bit about how some groups do not want to go into certain fields. I really think I would caution him in his assumption. We, as members of the House, should be working to increase diversity and increase equality in our institutions.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure: Madam Speaker, I believe that my colleague has been blinded by the veil of diversity.

There are some groups that would not want to go into certain sectors, and it would be paternalistic to force them to do so.

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, Quebec is proud of its equal access employment programs, which applies to our universities. These programs make reference to diversity, for example, for women and persons with disabilities.

Affirmative action policies are already applied in hiring processes within health care facilities, municipalities and universities, in the case of equivalent qualifications. That is to our credit. I do not know how it works elsewhere, but that is how it works in Quebec.

Our motion is not designed to exclude. It is designed to ensure that the rules and criteria for research chairs imposed by the federal government are inclusive. It is serious to impose criteria that do not even reflect our universities' academic freedom.

Does my colleague agree?

• (1640)

Mr. René Villemure: Madam Speaker, I completely agree, but I would like to add something. Earlier, I spoke a lot about demographics, which are a merciless art because they let us know who turns how old and when.

If a certain minority is not present in a given region, what happens then? According to the current regulations and provisions, in such cases, the university would lose its research funding. That does not make any sense.

I want to reiterate, as all of my colleagues have done, that we want to be inclusive and make things easier. We believe that a better way to achieve that than what was proposed is to trust the university first and foremost, consider equal opportunity programs, give serious thought to equality, and provide an assessment that is as fair as possible of what each person is entitled to.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order.

It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Foreign Affairs; the hon. member for Saanich—

Gulf Islands, The Environment; the hon. member for Vancouver East, Housing.

[English]

Resuming debate, 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 will be sharing my time with my friend and colleague, the member for Waterloo.

I want to address the Bloc's opposition day motion. I am somewhat surprised by the position it is taking on this issue. I thought it would have been a little more progressive to be open-minded to what I believe is a policy that has been fairly effective over the years. We should be looking at ways in which we can enhance opportunities for minority groups and women, who make up a majority of the population in Canada. This is often not reflected in many different sectors in our society.

I was very proud of the Prime Minister when we took office in 2015. He made a very clear statement about women in politics, and 50% of the cabinet is made up of women. We have a healthier, more progressive government as a direct result of this. Women play very strong leadership roles within our caucus, and in particular in our cabinet. Whether we talk about the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the Minister of Foreign Affairs or the former minister of justice, we have done some incredible work in the past number of years. It is quite encouraging when we see women leading in many different ways. I do not think it is an issue of trying to find qualified women. The qualifications are there. We have to ensure that barriers are being taken down.

I represent the riding of Winnipeg North where, and I will give some ballpark percentages, just under 40% of people are of Filipino heritage. We have about 20% indigenous. If we factor in other communities, such as my Indo-Canadian community and so forth, we get a sense of why the issue of equality and taking down systemic barriers is so critically important to me as the member of Parliament for Winnipeg North.

For many years, we have talked about issues such as systemic barriers that are in place, and trying to get credentials recognized. We have Ambassador Robles here from the Philippines, and he has been raising the issue with members of Parliament in regard to getting credentials recognized here in Canada so, for example, nurses can be practising here. There are some gender issues related to that.

When we talk about the importance of diversity, we say that one of our greatest strengths in Canada is our diversity. If we look over a group, or neglect to take the actions necessary to support inclusion and ensure that people are provided the opportunities to take on many important roles in our society, we do a disservice to the whole issue of diversity. We should be taking ownership of it, promoting it and encouraging its development in all aspects in different sectors of our society.

In terms of science and research and the importance of the Canada research chairs program, let there be no doubt that we have before us a government that understands the importance of research and science. We have invested literally hundreds of millions of dollars. If we look at the research chairs position, we are talking about tens of millions of dollars allocated annually and providing well over 2,000 opportunities.

• (1645)

Our post-secondary facilities are capable of attracting the best people in the world to ensure we are getting the research and development based on science that will enable Canada to succeed into the future. I truly believe that it is so critically important that our institutions, whether they are academic or other forms of public, especially those with public dollars, or those in the private sector, be reflective of our nation. If we make that effort in our institutions, we will have a healthier nation.

I remember Dr. Romy Magsino from Manitoba, a person of Filipino heritage who went on to play a very prominent role at the University of Manitoba in the department of education as its dean. Through that, Romy inspired many within the community. There is no doubt he had the expertise and the talents and so forth, but he inspired many others, including minorities who go beyond the Filipino heritage community, and I think that does a great deal.

What message do we send if we are attaching significant amounts of public dollars to an area, such as the chairs of our research, and we are not encouraging and promoting that diversity? I think it is absolutely critical for our youth to see that first hand. That can be very inspiring. We see mentorship programs grow from that. I think there is so much more to do, in making and taking the sacrifices necessary in order to be able to have the diversity that reflects our overall population in Canada.

I look at the University of Manitoba, and it is one of many post-secondary facilities that has greatly benefited by the federal government taking an interest in supporting research here in Canada. Through those dollars, our post-secondary institutions are better able to retain and ultimately educate some of the smartest people in the world, and the research they have done has led to incredible inventions.

A number of years ago, the University of Manitoba played a critical role in the development of agriculture with canola, and I take a look at the role canola has in the world today compared to 30 years ago. The University of Manitoba and the research that is done at our universities are what enables much of the exportation and transferring of knowledge to many different industries.

On that particular point, when we talk about investing, we recognize that our post-secondary institutions have a leading role, but often we will see partnerships. It is just not the public sector that invests in research and science. I look at agreements with places such as Red River College and Magellan Aerospace. We will see classrooms from a college being put into private sector institutions to advance research and technology.

Business of Supply

• (1650)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to come back to what my colleague from Winnipeg North said in order to set the record straight. Quebec is the place and the society with the most accessible school system in North America. That is the first thing.

Does the member for Winnipeg North understand that Quebec is a caring society? Does he not realize that, when it comes to social justice, Canada could find better things to do than to impose dysfunctional criteria on Quebec's universities?

I would like to hear his thoughts on some other things.

We are talking about diversity, but there is a great diversity of opinions. In April, three members expressed their misgivings about the funding criteria for research chairs in Canada. They were the member for Louis-Hébert, the member for Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation and the member for Mount Royal. Where are they today?

Does my colleague from Winnipeg North agree with his party's censure of these colleagues who disagree with the research funding criteria?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, Quebec is a beautiful province with a great deal of diversity. One can talk about rural communities to Quebec City, which is a beautiful city. We had a caucus many years ago in Quebec City. I have had the opportunity to visit. There is so much rich heritage there.

We have Quebec City and the rural areas. There is so much diversity. Montreal is like a world city, and it is very diverse. The province of Quebec, like the province of Manitoba, should cherish the diversity that is there and support it. One of the ways we support it is to have good government policy that enables full participation in all sectors.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I always like to hear about the University of Manitoba. It is where I went to school.

I would note that the member for Winnipeg North and the member for Kingston and the Islands both get a lot of time in the House. I would encourage them, at some point, to cede some time to equity-seeking groups and marginalized groups in their communities.

I did want to visit the topic of people with disabilities. We know that too many of these roles are not being filled by people in equity-seeking groups, and certainly, people with disabilities have even more barriers and challenges getting access to academic grants. Does the government have any affirmative action initiatives to make sure that persons with disabilities are able to equally access grants, research and funding in this country?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, first, the member might recognize that I said in my first comment that I would be sharing my time with my colleague and friend, the member for Waterloo.

Business of Supply

In regard to enabling people to participate, whether it is gaining education or dealing with issues such as disabilities, not only have we taken budgetary actions to support that, but we have also initiated legislative actions. I would reference the member to have some dialogue with the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion. I am sure she would be more than happy to share some of the initiatives her department has been taking.

• (1655)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member for Winnipeg North's comments on the importance of equity to achieve equality. We know that many times we have not necessarily had the diversity of our country reflected. I heard him speak about the University of Winnipeg.

I am very proud of the University of Waterloo, as well as Wilfrid Laurier University, institutions that are leading the charge because we are embracing diversity and bringing in policies that are working for more Canadians. Inclusion is important, and I would like to hear the member's comments.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I have really been impressed with the University of Winnipeg in recent years. We have seen a very progressive move toward indigenous studies, from right at the top with the president of the university to the way in which it is opening to the entire student body. There is so much our universities can do to support the diversity of Canada.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any standing order, Special Order, or usual practice of the House, following Private Members' Business on Wednesday, June 1, 2022, a motion to concur in the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, presented on Monday, May 30, 2022, be deemed moved and seconded, and, at the conclusion of the 3 hours provided for debate or when no member rises to speak, whichever is earlier, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be deemed put and a recorded division be deemed requested and deferred until Thursday, June 2, 2022, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions, and that during the debate, no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those opposed to the hon. parliamentary secretary moving the motion will please say nay.

It is agreed.

[English]

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

(Motion agreed to)

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—CANADA RESEARCH CHAIRS PROGRAM

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am happy today to participate in the debate on the Bloc Québécois motion in relation to the Canada research chairs program and to have the opportunity to discuss the government's commitment to achieving a more equitable, diverse and inclusive Canadian research enterprise.

The Government of Canada is proud to support science and research from coast to coast to coast. Canada's highly skilled and talented researchers are world-renowned for their leading scientific breakthroughs, discovering bold, innovative approaches and contributing to solving our world's toughest problems. Returning our country to evidence-based decision-making is one of the main reasons I chose to run as a Liberal candidate in the riding of Waterloo.

The government invests over \$4 billion annually in academic research through the federal research granting agencies and the Canada Foundation for Innovation. Through these investments, we are committed to cultivating a rich and diverse research ecosystem that welcomes researchers from across the globe who choose a Canadian institution to call home.

Research demonstrates that diversity within the research ecosystem helps drive research excellence and strengthens its quality, social relevance and impact. If we want Canada to achieve its greatest potential in research, we need the rich diversity of Canada and all its intersectionalities to be reflected in our research institutions. It is critical that no researchers, especially those from under-represented groups such as women, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and racialized communities, face systemic barriers in accessing support for their work. Moreover, to retain this excellent talent in Canada, individuals need to be supported, valued and included.

Our country needs to benefit, to gain from this talent, these skills. Our country loses when we leave these populations on the sidelines. We know that such systemic barriers persist within academia, and within Canada's research ecosystem more broadly. There is well-documented evidence of the challenges these groups face, including unconscious or implicit biases in hiring, tenure, advancement, promotion, and peer review; wage gaps; precarious work; and institutional practices and policies that perpetuate disadvantages and contribute to a climate that is not inclusive.

For Canada to tap into its full potential for research excellence, these barriers must be eliminated so that all researchers can participate fully. That is why the Government of Canada has made concerted efforts to support systemic change and build capacity within Canada's post-secondary research enterprise to foster equity, diversity and inclusion. Canada's granting agencies are implementing an ambitious tri-agency equity, diversity, and inclusion action plan to ensure fair access to research support and promote equitable participation in the research system.

We recognize that systemic change is hard work and institutions need support in their efforts to drive transformational change in the research environment if they are to succeed. Through "Dimensions: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Canada", a pilot initiative that is among the world-leading programs promoting equity, diversity and inclusion in higher education, we are encouraging institutions to take part in a transformation to increase equity, diversity and inclusion and help drive deeper cultural change within the research ecosystem.

As well, the pilot equity, diversity and inclusion institutional capacity-building grants have provided over \$10 million to support post-secondary institutions in identifying and eliminating barriers faced by under-represented groups. These grants are supporting institutions as they adapt and implement organizational and systemic change, informed by evidence and meaningful engagement with impacted groups.

The tri-agency research support fund also provides support to institutions for projects related to equity, diversity and faculty renewal through the program's incremental project grants stream. In 2021-22, the program supported 29 such projects, totalling over \$6 million.

Earlier this year, the government provided \$19.2 million through the race, gender and diversity initiative to support 46 community-based and community-led research partnerships pertaining to the causes and persistence of systemic racism and discrimination, grounded in the lived experience of disadvantaged groups.

● (1700)

The Canada research chairs program is a flagship funding program that supports some of the world's brightest scholars and scientists. This program is a catalyst for amplifying new voices, insights and groundbreaking discoveries that respond to society's economic, social and health needs, and that help us make better sense of the world we live in.

Given the program's mandate to support research excellence, it is imperative that all excellent researchers have access to these prestigious positions. Since the program was first launched in 2000, it has had a history of continued under-representation of women, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and racialized communities, demonstrating that the barriers for individuals from these groups are systemic and persistent. To suggest that these individuals are not qualified is ridiculous and, frankly, disheartening.

The government has taken a variety of measures to address these barriers within the program and encourage institutions to do better. Some of these measures stem from a legally binding settlement agreement reached in 2006, and its addendum in 2019, pertaining to

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human rights complaints about equity within the program. The program uses institutional equity targets, considered a best practice by the Canadian Human Rights Commission, as a tool to address systemic barriers to participation. It also requires most institutions to develop robust action plans that will enable meaningful progress towards addressing the disadvantages experienced by under-represented and underserved groups. These measures help ensure that the program meets its objective of attracting and retaining a diverse cadre of world-class researchers at Canadian post-secondary institutions to reinforce excellence in research.

The emphasis on equity, diversity and inclusion within the Canada research chairs program is delivering results. In the most recent group of new and renewed chairs, announced in January 2022, 53% were women, almost 30% were racialized individuals, close to 3% were indigenous and almost 6% were persons with disabilities. These outstanding scholars are poised to make critical contributions in diverse research areas, such as photonic devices, health economics, substance use, artificial intelligence, ocean sustainability, northern wildlife biology and hydrological modelling and analysis, among many others.

Today, women make up 41% of all appointed chairs, up from less than 25% in 2009, when the first equity targets were set. In the same period, the representation of racialized communities in the program has almost doubled, to 23%, that of persons with disabilities has increased more than fivefold, to almost 6%, and that of indigenous peoples has increased more than eightfold, to just over 3%. This strong progress is the result of collaborative efforts on the part of the participating institutions and the government.

I would like to acknowledge the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University for their leadership and efforts in advancing a more equitable, diverse and inclusive research community and ecosystem.

These actions are helping to ensure that all of our best and brightest researchers have fair access to the support they need in their pursuit of scientific discovery that will lead Canada to a more equitable, more prosperous and consciously more inclusive Canada. This is part of the importance of ensuring that the decision-making table is more reflective and representative of Canada's diversity, because that will ensure better outcomes for even more Canadians.

I think we can all agree that we can do better. The COVID-19 pandemic once again highlighted, exposed and brought to the forefront the inequities that exist within our society. One way to ensure that we are responding to these is by making sure that the decision-making table, Canada's researchers included, is better representative of our diversity.

I am thankful for the time, and I look forward to comments and questions.

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• (1705)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Waterloo for her speech. I also thank her for making an effort to actually discuss. She did not simply try to look for the underlying intent of the Bloc Québécois's opposition day, as if opposition days were named as such because other parties simply needed to oppose them rather than try to participate in what my colleague called the ethics of discussion earlier.

That being said, I imagine my colleague heard my colleague from Mirabel's speech this morning, as she is taking part in the debate this afternoon. He explained how difficult it is to go out and find good people, even if you want to look around the globe, given the many pitfalls you have to overcome, such as the ability to pay these individuals.

Is my colleague aware that Quebec has equal access employment programs? Despite my young age, those equal access employment programs have been in place throughout my teaching career. Does she understand that Quebec has a recruitment problem that is not necessarily related to the criteria she wants to apply all across Canada?

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Madam Speaker, I would first like to thank my colleague for his comments.

I think that the topic we are discussing today is a very important one. Even though it is hard to find more diversity and candidates, we need to keep trying. Saying that we are not going to do it because it is hard is not an excuse that I can understand.

I know that we can do better and that we can create more inclusive spaces. I would like us to continue working together to find qualified candidates, because I know that they are out there.

• (1710)

[*English*]

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, this motion seems to be based on a faulty understanding of who gets appointed. There is an assumption that when affirmative action policies are in place, it means that a less qualified candidate is put forward. In fact, what it actually means is that we get a larger pool of qualified candidates and that we are removing barriers for those people who have traditionally been marginalized.

I would love to hear the member's comments on that.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Madam Speaker, I have been watching the member for Victoria engage in this debate throughout the day. I really appreciate the approach she is taking of recognizing that we need to do better, as well as the fact that this is actually much more of a conversation about how quickly, for example, if we see a woman such as myself or herself be appointed, we see the headlines become that it is not merit-based.

We are qualified individuals. We are educated. To suggest that when we have more diversity and intersectionalities represented, candidates are all of a sudden less qualified I personally think is, first of all, ridiculous and also disheartening, hence why I mentioned it in my comments. I know we have very qualified people who have been overlooked for far too long. We are creating sys-

tems that work for more Canadians, for more talent, and that is why dismantling the systemic issues is instrumental.

I would like to assure the member that I will keep fighting to ensure that we do better.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Waterloo for her powerful speech. In particular, she mentioned the progress that Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Waterloo in our community are making. I wonder if she would be open to elaborating more on the impact it has had as they have made progress with respect to equity, diversity and inclusion.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Madam Speaker, the member for Kitchener Centre and I come from the same region, and it has been impressive to see that we have post-secondary institutions that are recognizing that the best natural renewable resource we have in our community is our people; it is the talent. That is why it is important that we continue to invest in them. Both the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University have continued to push themselves. To an earlier comment in regard to having a challenging time finding qualified talent, what the universities in Waterloo demonstrate is that the talent does exist and we can find it if we work hard enough to try to secure it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak on this opposition day today. I would like to start by saying that I will be sharing my time with my esteemed colleague from Shefford. I believe that this is the first time in two and a half years that I have said this at the beginning of my speech.

The debate that we are having today is an important one. I will start by saying that I have enjoyed the last few speeches. I have been listening to the debate for most of the day, and I only missed a few bits here and there. Many have said that they were disappointed with the topic and with the Bloc Québécois, but these are the words of people who have few arguments. I myself was disappointed to hear people say that they were disappointed.

Let us talk frankly about this fundamental topic.

I will start by sending a message to all women, to all visible minorities, to all first nations people, to all people with disabilities, and to any other group that may be under-represented. I would tell them that they are qualified and that they can do whatever they want in life and apply anywhere.

The Bloc Québécois's message today does not run counter to that. The message of the Bloc Québécois is that these groups are overwhelmingly under-represented in a large proportion of our institutions and that we must ensure that they have a proper place. Therefore, we are in favour of affirmative action. It is important for me to specify that because I do not want to later be accused of wanting to protect the power of 50-year-old white men. That is not what we are doing, and we are very much in favour of affirmative action.

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The problem arises when we start to prohibit individuals from applying for a specific job. Regardless of differing opinions, I think that is very serious and a line that should not be crossed. That is the issue we are discussing today.

When you start saying that certain people cannot apply if they do not have specific physical or cultural characteristics, regardless of skills, that is a major problem. I am not saying that minorities are not competent; that is not my intention at all. What I am saying is that you cannot prohibit people from applying, and that is fundamental.

When problems arise in this world, we see a kind of pendulum effect. We can go back in time to observe this phenomenon. I would like to share an example that has a lot in common with the subject at hand: child-rearing philosophies. The 1980s and 1990s were an era of child-kings and parents who did not dare place any restrictions on their children.

Nowadays, we understand that was not necessarily a good thing. Previously, parents were too harsh, and then the pendulum swung the other way and they wanted to be their child's best friend. Eventually people realized that going too far in the other direction was bad, so things settled somewhere in the middle. Lots and lots of books were written about the importance of saying no, setting limits and so on. I wanted to share that to explain the idea of the pendulum.

We now find ourselves in the same situation with respect to the representation of minorities and other groups in jobs, including research chairs. These groups are currently under-represented, and we need to address that. I think we should bring the pendulum back to the centre without going too far in the opposite direction by excluding other people. I hope people will understand what I am saying and that their questions will not be accusatory.

How do we increase the representation of groups? Some of my colleagues referred to the equal access program in Quebec. I also experienced this when I was a teacher for a school board. I think that the Commission scolaire de l'industrie in Joliette was one of the first places where such a program was established in Quebec. In the 1990s, following a complaint from an individual, it was determined that women were clearly under-represented in management positions.

• (1715)

We set up a program that said that, if candidates had equal or similar skills, then we would favour female candidates. Equal skills can be difficult to establish, so it had to be suitable and equivalent skills. The program worked very well. Of course, this was not something that happened in one or two years; it took a number of years for the program to work. However, if we look at the situation today, women are much better represented in management positions.

We cannot, as a central state, wave a magic wand and say that tomorrow morning everyone will be fairly represented. The current ratios stem from a long and heavy history.

At the same time, we also cannot tell people who were hired a long time ago that they no longer meet the criteria, so they are go-

ing to be fired and replaced by someone from a diverse background. I am being sarcastic, but I think my point is clear. That is what bothers me. As I have pointed out in several questions earlier today, and I think it has been raised other times as well, what continues to surprise me is that I have not heard from anyone from the political parties that oppose our Bloc motion who has bothered to answer that question. If anyone is willing to chat with me during question period, I invite them to say whether they are comfortable telling people that they are not in the right category so they do not have access to that, even though we claim to be the country where everything is possible. We have a fundamental problem and this is important.

Perhaps there are government members who also want to call us out. My colleague from Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques raised an important and interesting question about three government members who expressed doubts about the fact that applicants from certain ethnic groups were being rejected. Coincidentally, we have not heard from those three members today. It is all a bit surreal. If anyone has an answer for me, I would really like to hear it.

The other part of my speech has to do with the one-size-fits-all nature of the measures. The previous speaker used the phrase "coast to coast to coast". The government considers everyone to be equal and the same everywhere, but it is unrealistic to require this to be done at the same speed everywhere, and it is not representative of the targeted communities. Several times today, people gave the example of Rimouski, where 2% of the people are members of visible minorities. It will be very difficult to have 20% of the staff come from those minorities when they represent only 2% of the population. That is a challenge, but that does not mean that we must not try, that we must not put measures in place or that we must not require this university to make every effort to seek candidates from outside the region and the country to fill these positions. The problem is that the government is telling that university that if it fails, then it will not get any money. That is where we run up against the great and powerful, all-knowing federal government. If the government institutes one-size-fits-all measures across the country, does that mean that since Quebec represents 23% of Canada, then 23% of the research chair holders across Canada need to be francophone? I am being sarcastic again. That is not what we are asking for. People will think that is ridiculous, but we are being asked to do the reverse.

I want to reiterate that we believe diversity is important and that we need these voices in our research institutions, in particular. Measures must be put in place, but problems cannot always be solved with a wave of a magic wand. It can sometimes take time to restore balance, but you cannot correct an injustice by committing a new one.

• (1720)

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I listened to the speech by the member for Berthier—Maskinongé, and although we do agree on a lot of things, that is not the case today.

Does my colleague understand that he and I, as white men, do not face certain systemic barriers? If so, does he agree that more needs to be done to remove these systemic barriers?

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Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague from the Green Party for his question and commend him for his excellent French.

I absolutely understand that, and I thought it was clear in my speech. I acknowledge this reality. A 50-year-old white man who says that he understands cannot truly understand since he has not experienced these difficulties. He should say that he can appreciate these difficulties.

I am saying that we do need to take measures to make the ratios fairer and more equitable, to better reflect society. However, I do not think that discrimination and prohibiting people from applying for a job is the way to go about that. I think it needs to be done in other ways.

We agree on almost everything. I simply do not want to fix one injustice by committing another. It will be more progressive.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member mentioned that he recognizes that there has been discrimination in the past, but he says that we cannot swing the pendulum too far the other way. I am surprised. Since women, people from racialized communities and indigenous peoples are still under-represented, does he think the pendulum has swung too far back now?

• (1725)

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I am very grateful to my colleague from Victoria for her excellent question, because it will allow me to clarify matters.

I said earlier that we are going too far with this approach. I did not say that the proportion of under-represented people was too high. What I said was that, when introducing new measures, we should avoid discriminating against a new group of people on the pretext that the previous group has long suffered discrimination. I do not know if my answer is clear.

The aim is to correct historical under-representation, but it must be done properly, and universities must be allowed to recruit properly by insisting on higher thresholds. However, no one should ever be prohibited from applying for a job because that person has the wrong skin colour. That would swing the pendulum too far the other way.

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, these are such important issues we are discussing in the debate today. I often reflect on the words of Martin Luther King Jr., who said the ideal that we seek as a society is one in which people are judged not based on the colour of their skin, but on the content of their character. We have to recognize that there are historical and ongoing instances of injustice and discrimination that people face, while at the same time working toward an ideal in which people are seen fundamentally on the basis of the content of their character and what they offer so that we are not placing so much focus on issues of race and identity in our discussion that they overwhelm other points of discussion.

I wonder if the member has thoughts on how we can address injustices while also moving toward the ideal that Martin Luther King Jr. described.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, actually, that is what I try to do every day. I will give an unrelated example. It still happens quite frequently that I learn that someone I know belongs to the LGBTQ+ community. I did not know, even if I have known these people for a long time. Why did I not know? Because it was none of my business and because I do not pay attention to these things. It is the same when I meet someone who is Black, Asian or white: I see a human being. Ideally, of course, that is the way it should be.

However, measures meant to restore equity are necessary. I want to make that very clear to my colleague. I am not against measures aimed at increasing the representation of under-represented groups. I think they are needed because there has been an extremely long and harmful history of injustice. I simply do not want to do the opposite and discriminate against another group.

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé for agreeing to share his time with me.

I am pleased to speak to the Bloc Québécois motion concerning post-secondary studies and research chairs, even though this is a jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces.

As the critic for status of women, I am perfectly aware that this group is still under-represented and that more work needs to be done. However, the debate we would like to have is not about the concept of positive discrimination in general, but about the specific policy of the Canada research chairs program, and its requirements and practices concerning equity, diversity and inclusion. We are not against equity. We are not against diversity. We are not against inclusion. I am pleased to note that once again, Quebec is working to raise awareness of such matters.

Today I will be speaking about what is already being done in Quebec, I will come back to Ottawa's paternalistic approach, and I will conclude by speaking about the importance of being proactive, especially in the case of women, but also in the case of indigenous peoples, people with disabilities and minorities.

First, we must speak about what is already being done in Quebec.

The right way to promote equality, diversity and inclusion would instead be to apply a preferential hiring policy, meaning that for equally qualified candidates, preference would be given to certain people. That is what many Quebec universities have already done with respect to women, and it has worked well.

We are not directly opposed to all current, future or possible policies aimed at promoting equity, diversity and inclusion, especially since these exist in Quebec. We are starting a debate on the matter, a societal debate which has not yet taken place, but which is necessary and desirable.

I do want to say that in Quebec, there are also CEGEPs. Today, we are talking a lot about universities and research chairs, but we must not forget about CEGEPs.

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There is no university in the riding of Shefford, but there is an excellent CEGEP in Granby. It may be training future researchers. We must not forget them in the post-secondary education continuum, whether it is for pre-university studies or technical courses. That is why I was delighted to present female science students with certificates to recognize their academic excellence as part of Hooked on School Days. I also talked with Yvan O'Connor, the director of the Granby CEGEP, who told me about his institution's projects and development and the problems related to foreign student visas.

If the federal government wants to contribute to education, it should work on matters under its jurisdiction. For example, it could provide adequate funding for science, which it is not doing at the moment.

We are opposed to a federal policy that is specific, ill-conceived and tainted by ideology. It creates paradoxical situations, anomalies or inequities. Moreover, it represents federal interference in an area under Quebec and provincial jurisdiction.

Section 93 of the Constitution Act, 1867, expressly confers jurisdiction over education on the provinces. It is generally known and accepted that education is a Quebec matter. Quebec's universities belong to Quebecers, and they are funded through taxes paid by Quebecers.

In fact, it is a direct intrusion into provincial jurisdiction, because the influence of the Canada research chairs program goes beyond simply funding research. In fact, it acts as a professor hiring program. The federal government is dictating hiring conditions to universities. This is unacceptable. The program must be reviewed.

The federal government can use its spending power to finance research, but it cannot, in any way, use this approach to change the way Quebec's universities function. Yet, that is what is happening because of the excessive constraints imposed by the Canada research chairs program, particularly because of its unreasonable equity, diversity and inclusion requirements.

In addition, through the requirements it imposes on its research funding programs, the federal government is undermining the autonomy of universities. There is no excuse for the government dictating the conditions for hiring professors. If the government wishes to appropriate the ability to spend on education, it must do so with no strings attached.

It is unacceptable for the federal government to impose targets on Quebec universities under threat of sanctions. Quebec universities are perfectly free to develop programs to address diversity and inclusion without having the federal government dictate the terms and conditions under threat of having part of their funding withheld. Federally imposed requirements are unacceptable and illegitimate impediments to their independence.

It is possible to have a policy that fosters hiring from certain groups of equal qualifications. That is true and it is already being done for women in some Quebec university departments, for example. However, to apply an equal opportunities policy, you must have candidates who are available and interested.

The federal EDI policy on academic research funding is an ideological drift that creates absurd situations, and it must be abolished.

If we want the academic workforce to be more diverse and representative of the Canadian population, the solution is not to impose arbitrary quotas at the time of hiring, because the most important criteria should be the excellence of academic records and the value of scientific research projects.

The solution should be proactive instead, so that at the time of hiring, the pool of candidates is already more diverse and representative of the general population.

• (1730)

We are therefore being asked to collectively reflect on how we can find positive measures that will promote equal opportunities by stimulating interest in the arts, science and all spheres of society. In all cases, this will be a Quebec discussion, as education is at the heart of our social model.

The federal government's responsibility is to stop interfering in the management of Quebec universities and to improve the granting agencies' research grants for students. Yes, quotas create certain effects. They are unequal. To put it bluntly, the CRC program's current policy prevents some researchers from applying for research chair positions because they are not part of the designated groups. They are automatically excluded, despite their qualifications, even if that means some chairs remain vacant.

The unequal effects of the hiring targets for the four designated groups, namely women, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and visible minorities, came under public scrutiny when Laval University posted an ad for a job in the biology department in the winter of 2022. There was also an interesting column by Jean-François Lisée, who denounced the incongruity of setting targets using the Canadian average.

With its Université du Québec network, Quebec made the choice to set up universities in the regions. That way, knowledge is not concentrated in the major centres, and this contributes to the social vitality of our regions. The current CRC policy requires our universities to recruit not only outside their walls, but well outside the regions in which they are established. The CRC policy directly hinders Quebec's vision. This is very important to me because it hurts our communities.

The federal government's position is rigid and ideologically driven. What is more, it constitutes interference in provincial jurisdictions. It is also an attack on the autonomy of universities. The federal government should review its research funding policy and allow the universities to determine their own hiring policies.

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In Quebec, these criteria are evaluated based on the efforts made by the candidate to promote EDI, not on hiring quotas that exclude qualified researchers. We must not forget the important issue of university autonomy. These requirements prove that the federal policy does not respect the autonomy and independence of universities. The federal government's approach is extremely authoritarian and high-handed.

I would also add that, in the context of a labour shortage, it can take time to renew this pool, as requested by the federal government, given that many years of study are required for this process. That is the quandary faced by universities when they are required to fill positions with people from designated groups, except for women. Setting aside the issue of hiring quotas and the curious fact that women, indigenous people, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities are put in the same boat, this temporary excitement among elected officials and the media gives us an opportunity to again point out a fundamental fact about universities and their autonomy. We should remember that this is not about discussing the legitimacy of certain appointments from specific groups, because, in the case of women, that has been happening for more than 20 years. Instead, we are noting that the requirements imposed by the federal program are not being condemned by universities as an illegitimate and unacceptable restriction on their autonomy.

However, is this not a striking case of the denial of their management autonomy? In other words, these prejudices will be eliminated not by excluding certain people, but by improving selection processes. For example, universities could anonymize CVs or establish standard exams for a position. This is being discussed as a means of promoting the hiring of women.

These are points to ponder, because, beyond the debates on these exclusive criteria, I would like us to have a calm, healthy debate on proactive measures we can take. What barriers need to be broken down? Why are women still under-represented as entrepreneurs? Why are there still fewer women in politics? Why do we have to work harder to recruit female research chairs, especially in economics?

I was reading about that this summer in H el ene P erivier's excellent book about feminist economics, *L' conomie f eministe*. I highly recommend it. At the end of the day, I want little girls like my little Naomie to aspire to do the work they want to do, no matter what they choose.

Let us give them the choice. Let us give our universities the choice to operate the way they want.

• (1735)

[English]

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed my colleague's speech, and I think a good point was raised at the end about an anonymous process. I think that works in some fields.

We are not at a point where diversity inclusion targets are being met, and in many of the speeches, I have heard that because there were historical injustices, we should not be committing a reverse injustice. Well, I would argue that these injustices, with the lack of diversity in research institutions and universities, are not just histor-

ical injustices, but continue today. There still exists racial discrimination in the workforce. That is a reality and a fact in Canada.

I have heard we need to do better, but without setting goals and targets and requiring institutions and corporations to meet them, I feel we will make backward progress. I want to know what the member feels about that. We will not make progress on inclusion and having more women in the workforce if we do not set targets for ourselves.

I would like to hear what the member has to say.

[Translation]

Ms. Andr eanne Larouche: Madam Speaker, actually, listening to today's speeches, I get the impression that we are searching for a cosmetic fix to a problem. We have so much work to do to deal with the causes, and imposing these targets and quotas is not the appropriate way to deal with the problem.

I will give my colleague an example. During the pandemic, the numbers showed that women were impeded in their research, that they were particularly affected by the pandemic and that this was detrimental to their academic work. Would imposing targets and quotas have solved the problem? I do not think so.

We really have to get to the root of the problem. Why were these women affected by the pandemic, why does the mental load still fall on them today, and why are they even more stuck at home, which has an effect on their work? What can we do to improve their work-life balance? These are the kinds of questions I want to raise today.

In my speech, I spoke about the quandary that quotas create for universities. I also explained that these things are already being done in Quebec anyway. I think that we need to be addressing this issue on a larger scale. We need to be proactive. I do not think that setting criteria and targets will necessarily help fix the many problems.

• (1740)

Mr. Luc Th eriac (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her excellent and well-articulated speech. I enjoyed it.

After listening to the speeches earlier today, I want to remind members that there is one people in Canada that is particularly susceptible to discrimination, the people my grandparents called French-Canadians in Lower Canada, now known as Quebec. We were discriminated against because of our language. There was even a time when some institutions did not think that we were smart enough to work for Hydro-Qu ebec or hold senior civil engineering positions.

As my colleague from Th er se-De Blainville pointed out earlier, the big unions, which were early proponents of equality of opportunity, responded to this sentiment. That is why women, members of visible minorities and other minorities are prioritized when they are equally qualified. Quebec has made a lot of progress in this arena, and this principle is now a given.

Does my colleague think that the government is going too far and that it should simply apply this old philosophy in universities, which are looking for qualifications?

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Madam Speaker, while listening to my colleague from Montcalm, I realized that in my speech, I dealt too quickly with Ottawa's paternalism and with the fact that it does not recognize our distinctiveness as a nation, our feelings and our desire to achieve equal opportunity for all.

Once again, we are told by know-it-all Ottawa that we are not doing things correctly and that it will impose new conditions, as it does everywhere, as if we were incapable of managing our own schools, our own health care system—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mend s): We must resume debate. The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise today to speak to a very sensitive subject, but it is a very important subject.

I want to note that I will be splitting my time.

Different members of the House have different experiences with the issue of racism. Quite obviously it is not something that I experience myself, but I think that for those of us who have close personal relationships or perhaps are married to someone from a racialized background, our eyes get opened to certain things in the context of those relationships that deepen our sense of commitment to addressing them.

This is a very important conversation we are having about how we can address issues of injustice and racism while also ensuring that our systems and institutions are protecting access in an equitable way.

I want to just read the motion coming from the Bloc. The motion says:

That:

- (a) the House denounce all forms of discrimination;
- (b) in the opinion of the House,
 - (i) research is necessary for the advancement of science and society in general,
 - (ii) access to the Canada Research Chairs Program must be based on the candidates' skills and qualifications; and
- (c) the House call on the government to review the program's criteria to ensure that grants are awarded based on science and not based on identity criteria or unrelated to the purpose of the research.

Essentially, what this motion is saying is that it condemns discrimination. It takes the view that research chair grants should be awarded on the basis of science and not on the basis of the identity criteria of the individuals involved.

On the face of it, and I do not think I have ever said this about a proposal from the Bloc before, it seems eminently reasonable and desirable that the decisions made in awarding positions or research grants be based not on identity criteria, but on the work and the products individuals are putting forward. This motion expresses an

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ideal that we would generally agree that we should work to as a society. It is an ideal that recognizes the equal dignity and value of all individuals, and an ideal that seeks to support and give opportunity to individuals without reference to identity markers that are not the criteria of the position.

Again, on the face of it, this is a reasonable motion that emphasizes an opposition to discrimination and a desire to move towards equality.

To dig further into it, in terms of saying that the criteria for awarding positions should not be identity markers but should be related to the work being done and a person's experience and so forth, I think it is important to acknowledge the reality of systemic racism in many of our institutions. There is the reality that people from particular backgrounds can often face barriers that are not facial barriers or officially intended as barriers but that nonetheless are unseen barriers that exist and prevent people from receiving access to certain positions.

We can see that expressed in the fact that there can be under-representation in certain spaces and overrepresentation in certain spaces. We need to acknowledge the reality of systemic racism, but the question that today's debate has been focusing on is what our response is to that recognition. Some members would say that when we have instances of discrimination, things such as binding quotas are the way to guarantee that equality.

I think a better approach, actually, rather than the one recommended, is to dig into a question of cause. It is to ask the question of why certain individuals face these barriers, and to try to discern the origins of those barriers. Maybe an example that is illustrative is of a meeting taking place. A group holds a meeting on a regular basis and it is saying it has an under-representation of people with disabilities, yet the only way to access the meeting space is to go up stairs. There is no ramp and no elevator.

• (1745)

In that hypothetical situation, when people are having a meeting and wonder why there is no representation of people with mobility issues, it is obvious that it is because there is a barrier preventing people from accessing that space. These are the kinds of questions we have to ask: Are there barriers that prevent people from accessing certain spaces that we are not paying sufficient attention to?

Can we solve that problem by introducing a quota or a regulatory requirement? A better way to say it is, can we try to understand what that cause is and address that cause directly? In the case of the hypothetical example I am using we would ask if we could put in a ramp, make renovations or hold the meeting in a different place so that it was more accessible.

Let us acknowledge the reality that there is a problem of systemic racism. Let us acknowledge that the equal treatment of groups or individuals who face barriers does not necessarily lead to equity. We need to recognize when there is not an intentional differential treatment, but in effect a differential treatment because of the barriers that exist that are particularly applied, or are applied in a particular way, to some communities as opposed to others, which still requires us to try to understand and examine the root causes.

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I do not see anything in the motion the Bloc has put forward that is inconsistent with the question of trying to confront issues of systemic discrimination and barriers as they exist. What I think this motion is saying, on the other hand, is this. If we have positions where we say that only people of certain backgrounds can apply, or there is a mandatory level of representation that has to exist, that is not confronting the issues of what the barriers are. It is not confronting the broader problems. I would say as well that when we put in those kinds of requirements, the individuals who get those positions as a result of those requirements obviously benefit, but they do not address the broader social issues that I think are creating challenges for more people across the board.

I want to identify another issue, which is the question of how we define some of these equity categories. On the issue of race, for example, we have a North American way of understanding what particular racial groups are, yet they are defined differently in different societies. What are considered different races in some parts of the world are different from what are considered different races in North America. Of course, there are individuals who are from a broad range of different backgrounds where it would not be obvious for someone to know what category they fit into, so some of these equity programs I think risk essentializing this categorization. That raises questions and problems, such as how we define exactly who counts as being in one particular racial group or another. In some cases, the way to resolve this, or the way around this potential problem, is to say it is a question of how an individual identifies.

In the case of my children, their father is white and their mother is East Indian, so will they have access to certain programs if there is a policy of setting aside certain positions? I do not know. I guess it would be up to them to decide or define. Fundamentally, I do not want my children to grow up in a world where they are defined by someone else's arbitrary sense, or their own need to choose whether they are part of a particular category. I would prefer for us to be a society in which people are able to make choices about their own identification.

I am out of time already. Maybe I will be able to develop more of these thoughts in response to questions.

• (1750)

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I wanted to question my colleague, whom I have gotten the chance to work with in some capacities. I would say some of those capacities are my colleague's passion for protecting religious freedoms and religious rights in Canada, so I have a lot of respect for him in that regard. I am wondering if I can get his comments and feedback, because I have some concerns.

I know, personally, highly qualified and well-trained people who used to live in Quebec who have moved to Ontario in recent times due to the change in laws in Quebec. Could Quebec, as I fear, face a smaller capacity or population of diversity in that province, and therefore find it even harder to be able to fill positions of diversity?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I think my hon. friend is maybe dancing around Quebec's Bill 21 a bit, so if that is the question, I have been on the record repeatedly saying that I strongly disagree with Bill 21.

My own province of Alberta has certainly been blessed by francophone immigration. We see many people coming to Alberta from all over the world, and I think our province has been well served not only by a policy that says people are free to practice their faith while working in the public service, but we have tended to have a very open policy in terms of school choice, and allowing different minority faith and language programs to be represented within our education system. I think that has been a great source of strength for us as a province, and it has been about diversity, choice and freedom, and part of the result of that is that anglophones, francophones and people from other language groups are choosing to come to our province in large numbers.

• (1755)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, speaking from my own university experience, especially on the research side, it is an extremely competitive environment.

Never—or hardly ever—would a university turn down a candidate with high research potential who will publish and make the university look good regardless of that candidate's skin colour or ethnic origin.

My sense is that the Liberals and the NDP think our motion presupposes that, in the absence of federal criteria, universities would engage in discriminatory hiring practices.

I think that is deeply insulting to the research community in Quebec and Canada, a community made up of highly educated people who are very much in favour of diversity.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks of that. Is that kind of thinking across the way an insult to our institutes of higher learning?

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, respectfully, the point I would make on this is a bit more subtle. It is to say that there are barriers that people face that are not necessarily the result of the intention of somebody to discriminate. There may be issues of unconscious bias or there may be structural issues that lead to an effect of discrimination without there being an intent to discriminate, but my point is also that the solution to that problem is not saying we should slap a band-aid on and have quotas. My solution to that problem is saying we should do everything we can to understand what the root causes of those barriers are and try to remedy them. That is important not only for those who would otherwise benefit from a quota, but for everybody society-wide, if we could try to understand and confront those root causes.

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Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the mention of unconscious bias by the member. He is asking about the underlying root problems. There is a lot of research about that and unconscious bias, and there is actually something called the Matilda effect in the science community that I would encourage the member to look at, if he has not.

My question is around who is adjudicating and deciding. We have a lot of talk in industry about meritocracy, skills, knowledge and ability, but really it is about who is adjudicating and deciding who has skills, knowledge and ability.

Could the member talk just a bit about this myth: the fallacy around meritocracy, what he thinks about who adjudicates, and what impact that has on who gets chosen?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I think meritocracy is an ideal. We want to live in a society where everybody is judged based on merit, but we have to also acknowledge that we are inevitably going to be imperfect in living out that ideal of meritocracy. That is why we need to try to understand and respond to various issues. It is not that meritocracy is not desirable. Of course it is, but we should not presume that we are living it out perfectly. We should continually be working toward it.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, as always, it is an honour to rise in this place and speak to the issues that are facing Canadians. I appreciate the opportunity to listen to this debate over the course of the last number of hours. I certainly appreciate the fact that the House is able to address some of the serious issues that face our nation, such as things like discrimination and racism, while also touching on, as this motion does, the quality of Canada's research and ensuring that there are processes that are not only condemning and denouncing racism, but also talking about how research and academia is able to be conducted fairly.

I would simply note and share first what I think would be valuable, which is a story, and this is a very recent story. Just a number of hours ago, I had a chance to speak with a group of young people who are in town for the National Prayer Breakfast, an event that the Prime Minister attended and spoke at this morning, along with the Leader of the Opposition and other representation from across government. It is certainly very powerful, as a Christian, to see our nation come together in prayer. It was a very powerful time this morning.

This group of young people I spoke with a few short hours ago are a part of a program that is associated with the National Prayer Breakfast, which brings young leaders together from across Canada. I will summarize what was said because I certainly would not want the stories they shared to come back and impact the individuals who shared them. This group of individuals, people of colour, from eastern Canada shared some of their experiences. One woman in particular talked about the clear difference between words, programs, quotas and the nice ideas of ensuring that there is equality, and actual acceptance and opportunity in the workplace.

This individual works for a level of government and implored me to ensure I do what I can to encourage action so there is equity of opportunity, so it is not simply a program where an HR individual or public servant in the field of HR, when conducting initial hiring

or doing assessments, simply checks off boxes, but that they address some of the root causes of some of the discrimination that exists. This individual, over the course of our conversation, shared how although in a workplace that talks the talk, it does not necessarily walk the walk, even though there are things such as quotas.

My overall message, as I look at this and in ensuring that we address some of the significant issues surrounding the discrimination that does exist in this country, is to ensure that we do not simply talk or have a band-aid solution, as my colleague aptly referenced. We do not simply put a band-aid on it and say there has to be a certain number of people with a certain designation, whether it be race or another factor, while not addressing the root of what is causing the challenges. It could be systemic, implicit bias or whatever the case may be. On behalf of this young woman, a public servant working for a level of government, let us not look at band-aid solutions.

● (1800)

Let us address the real and root causes of discrimination. As Conservatives, we talk a lot about freedom. We also acknowledge that when it comes to the idea of freedom and we have a conversation about trying to get somebody ahead by holding somebody back, we see that ultimately there is a loser. My encouragement is that we ensure we can create an economy and a public service where everybody is given that equity, that equal opportunity to ensure that we can have a diverse workforce representative of Canada and ensure that some of these significant challenges are addressed.

I would like to mention some accusations I have heard often and heard today about the Conservative Party and about the Bloc Québécois. Certainly when it comes to the Conservative Party, I am proud to be part of a party that has a strong history of seeing individuals empowered. There has been one female prime minister in this country. That prime minister was a Conservative. I am proud of that legacy. There have been a number of leaders of our party who have also been women. The current interim leader of the opposition has shared on numerous occasions how proud she is that she was selected, not based on her gender but because she was the most qualified for the job.

Certainly, I find it ironic that there are those who come from privileged positions who would suggest that somehow those who have made it to the top, who were chosen, are somehow less valuable when they are given those positions. There are many examples and many firsts that this party has had in terms of ethnicities, individuals who have taken their place in the chamber, who have served in cabinet positions or who have been a first for those ethnic communities in our country. I am very, very proud to be part of a party that has seen those firsts in this country. As well, various Conservative former prime ministers have appointed some minorities to be senators who have done incredible work.

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Just to come full circle here, I would note that there is a very relevant study that the ethics committee, which I am honoured to be a member of, is currently undertaking about racial bias in facial recognition technology. As the previous speaker mentioned, some barriers do exist. I know that as my time is short, I cannot get into some of the details and, quite frankly, reveal what could very aptly be described as systemic racism. In some cases, it is very, very overt, which is backed up by the numbers. There is a very troubling trend in addressing the realities that exist for certain communities and people of colour in this country.

The motion today, I believe, is quite reasonable. It denounces discrimination. It talks about research, its necessity and that it should be based on those who are most qualified. I am paraphrasing, but it ensures that the government does not use exclusive criteria to hold certain people back while trying to advance the cause of others. I would simply repeat what was shared by the individual I referenced earlier: Let us not look for a band-aid solution. Let us not simply talk.

• (1805)

Instead of things like quotas and some of the details of the story that I will not get into out of respect for the privacy of this individual, let us ensure that in an effort that is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We are going to run out of time for questions.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Brampton North.

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will ask my colleague what he thinks would be a good solution.

He called this a band-aid solution. My fear is that if we do not set some type of goal, we will never really get there. I am a little skeptical about the idea that without requirements or criteria in place, all provinces would improve their institutions and make sure that people do not have barriers, because we have seen for so long that institutions and corporations do not necessarily take that initiative unless there is some reason to do so. I think this could be a motivating factor for them to do so.

What does the member have to say?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, forgive me, but I would simply say that I am very skeptical that a heavy-handed approach from a government based in the capital city of an incredibly large and diverse country like Canada would be the solution to the challenges that are faced.

There are 1,000 solutions to the very significant challenges that exist in empowering young people. When it comes to my political involvement, whether it be personally as a young person or now as I endeavour to ensure that young women and diverse communities are given every opportunity possible, not because they are a certain gender or ethnicity but because they are passionate about this country, I want to ensure they have all the opportunities that should be afforded to Canadians to give them the ability to succeed in our country.

Forgive me if I return the skepticism. To suggest that a heavy-handed approach by our government, which has been shown to perpetrate some of the worst acts of discrimination in world history—

• (1810)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It being 6:11 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

[*Translation*]

The question is on the motion. May I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

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. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Speaker, I am very proud and honoured to request a recorded division on the motion.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 1, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[*English*]

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I believe if you seek it, you would find unanimous consent to see the clock at the time for Private Members' Business so that we can resume with the business of the House.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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[*Translation*]

BUILDING A GREEN PRAIRIE ECONOMY ACT

The House resumed from March 4, consideration of the motion that Bill C-235, An Act respecting the building of a green economy in the Prairies, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-235.

This is an interesting bill. The bill presented by my colleague from Winnipeg South Centre basically tells his government to better organize its actions in the prairie provinces. I salute his courage. He knows that his government does not have an action plan to effectively combat the effects of climate change. He also knows that financial investments must be redirected. He is therefore calling on the ministers of his government, starting with the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the Minister of Transport, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Natural Resources and any minister responsible for the economic development of any of the prairie provinces. The message is clear. In other words, the member is telling the government to get its act together.

Many reports have been written over the past 20 years. Many governments have come and gone, and action has yet to be taken. I understand the frustration of my colleagues in the House. The Bloc Québécois has said so, and we have voted on this issue many times. We must be rigorous and act intelligently when it comes to the environment.

Not a day goes by without there being an article about climate change, and even climate catastrophe. Climate change amplifies the natural risks we already face, like floods, storms, heatwaves, droughts, and so on. This causes increasingly frequent and more extreme disasters.

For some 30 years now, here, in the House, members of the Bloc Québécois have been informing their colleagues of the consequences of the decisions that governments put off until later. In that vein, I applaud my former colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, who was ahead of his time on these issues. The important thing is that we need to be ready to deal with the current and future impacts of climate change. This seemed necessary to us, and it still does. We are right in the middle of a global realization that is leading to changes in consumer preferences, innovation, economic activity, competitive advantages and wealth creation, among other things.

The member's bill represents a solution for communities that feel the need to change course immediately. Consumers are increasingly demanding goods and services with a small environmental footprint. Climate-smart innovations are only marginal solutions. They are becoming a huge opportunity for the global market and creating quality jobs. With these changes, sound environmental stewardship is becoming increasingly associated with market access and becoming a key source of sustainable competitive advantages.

We cannot stall any longer. There is no doubt that we need to propose real action to fight climate change. Obviously, serious measures need to be considered, and they are especially crucial in the provinces referred to in this bill, particularly because they are amongst the biggest emitters of greenhouse gases. It would be hard to oppose a bill that establishes a framework to compel the western provinces to get in line and calls on the government to report to Parliament and to be accountable. I simply must point out my usual concern that provincial jurisdictions must be respected.

I believe this bill is an opportunity to shed light on the money that the oil industry is currently receiving and to keep track of the projects. The sponsor of this bill knows that an economy based on

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oil and gas development is not sustainable in the long term, that these provinces are facing decline unless they diversify their economies and begin a greener energy shift. The sooner they start, the less painful it will be. There is no doubt that Quebec has made tremendous efforts. Its industry is in the process of making an industrial shift towards electrification and the development of a green industry.

It is important to remember that huge sums of money have been invested in the oil companies. In fact, the western provinces benefit greatly from the federal government's investments. Is our colleague from Winnipeg South Centre illustrating that the money is not being used to help the western provinces make a real green shift? As the old saying goes, you have to follow the money. It is so obvious that this money is not going to communities and businesses that want to make the necessary energy transition and change their habits.

There are many measures that are part of the solutions for growing a green economy. The western provinces have a much longer way to go because they are determined to hold on to an economy from bygone industrial days. I agree with my colleague, the member for Winnipeg South Centre, on the fact that the different governments, whether federal, provincial or territorial, must play an important role.

• (1815)

I was talking about investments in the electrification of transportation. In Quebec and even Ontario to some extent, the federal government could invest in trade corridors and approve a number of signature projects that focus on a green economy, by providing a supply of green fuel or even supporting projects that promote electricity produced in Quebec.

The various ports on the Great Lakes and along the St. Lawrence River represent an unavoidable link in the supply chains of several industries, so this is certainly a strategic investment that provides a distinct advantage for businesses in every industry whose products, both inputs and end products, come through these places. I commend the leadership of the Port of Montreal on that.

The government will have to finance the development of the electrification of heavy vehicles and contribute to converting fleets of trucks and equipment, such as vehicles used for moving containers to their destination. The electrification of modes of transportation for Canada Post could be a good example, as could the installation of electric charging stations everywhere, in every village in Quebec.

When the federal government does that, then every business and SME will benefit from the economic spinoffs from these strategic investments.

Automation plays a part in making this industrial shift more effective, but also in countering the labour shortage that is affecting many industries.

I want to point out the importance of corporate social labelling.

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In an era when consumers are increasingly critical and aware of the efforts that businesses should be making to use safer methods and protect the environment, it is not surprising that businesses are focusing more and more on all the links in the supply chain. That is why it is important to keep investing in businesses that strive to be better citizens for our planet. Businesses that cultivate their social label will have a distinct advantage in this green economy.

With regard to green financing, can Quebec grow as a result of its financial services moving to invest in greener businesses, those working to reduce their carbon emissions? Most definitely. My colleague from Mirabel spoke about this when we studied this bill, and he could talk about it for hours because he has studied the impact on Quebec.

Let us consider what Canada's banks are currently doing. For years, they have had a big stake in oil. Canada's big five banks have invested \$694 billion in fossil fuels, \$477 billion in loans and \$217 billion in warrants.

We now know that 88% of the total went to oil and gas companies. The rest, \$85 billion, went to coal. We need to start redirecting the financial sector's investments to greener, more sustainable and more promising sectors.

If we redirect a portion of the public's savings or the financial sector's investments towards renewable energies, low- or zero-emission sectors, change-resistant infrastructure to reduce climate risk, and emerging technologies rather than hydrocarbons that are doomed for demise, hundreds of billions of dollars will be made available and can be used to boost the action plan set out in Bill C-235.

I also want to talk about local investments and economic diversification in rural areas.

I would like to give an example of some proactive work done by my office to enable an entire region to better coordinate its bio-food production. Abitibi—Témiscamingue is a region of Quebec that is further north and far from any major centres, so I understand when another MP wants to better equip his communities that are far from a major urban centre.

Global warming inspires all kinds of ideas about possibilities for better land use. Our region in particular has all kinds of potential for the coming years thanks to critical minerals in the ground and the fact that it is potentially the second-largest organic agriculture land mass.

The member talked about developing a plan that requires coordination and getting people involved so the economy serves them, and of course getting everyone on the same page from the get-go is hardly a waste of time. Doing so saves the proponent from constantly going back to the drawing board because the initial proposal lacks social acceptability. That is one of the promising aspects of this bill.

We have to consider the predominant role businesses play in our communities and do more to help resource processing start-ups. That will make regions like my colleague's and my own, Abitibi—Témiscamingue, more attractive. A territorial innovation fund oper-

ated by and for regions working toward the same goal makes a lot of sense.

In closing, the government made lots of promises, but it is not keeping them. Our hope is that grassroots provincial initiatives will get the support they need from our communities.

• (1820)

The Bloc Québécois has long called for an end to fossil fuel subsidies, and welcomes any measures aimed at reorienting investments toward businesses that are switching to green energy. While we are at it, why not sell Trans Mountain and invest the money into developing the Prairies—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
The hon. member for Victoria.

[*English*]

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, first I want to thank the member for Winnipeg South Centre for choosing to table a bill focusing on building a low-carbon economy. This bill would require the Minister of Industry to consult about, prepare a plan for, and report on a strategy to create a green economy on the prairies. While this bill is a welcome step in the right direction, ultimately we need bolder, more concrete action if we are to truly meet the urgency and scale of the climate crisis.

My New Democrat colleagues and I support efforts to better coordinate climate action, but we expect the government to move ahead on more concrete initiatives and far sooner than the timeline proposed in this bill. The climate emergency is here now, and Canadians need their government to take real action to reduce emissions and support workers in the transition. From coast to coast to coast, we have seen the impacts of the climate crisis: devastating floods, wildfires and record-breaking heat waves. Canadians cannot afford any more delays.

I think of the work of Seth Klein, who reminds us that we need to move at a speed and scale not seen since the Second World War. The Climate Emergency Unit reminds us that we mobilized then and we can mobilize now, sound the alarm, jump-start the needed transition and transform our economy to tackle the greatest existential crisis of our time.

For every sector of society, every level of government and every one of us, this is about protecting our communities. It is about protecting our future. It is about protecting everything we hold dear. This is our opportunity to meet the biggest challenge of our time, and it is now or never.

While young people, the UN Secretary-General, our own environment commissioner and the world's top scientists are calling on us as elected officials to take real action, the unfortunate truth is that the Liberal government continues to fail to answer this call. In the words of Seth Klein, "The uncomfortable conclusion is this: Canada's approach to climate is a hot mess of incoherence and contradictions, and it is fundamentally at odds with what the IPCC demands of us."

However, I do welcome Bill C-235 and any initiative that works to secure a green and prosperous future. I especially welcome the parts of the bill that push for identifying innovative public transport solutions for small cities and communities; the parts that push for fostering job creation and retraining for a zero-emission green economy in regions that rely on traditional energy industries; the parts that push for developing natural infrastructure projects and using new sources of clean energy; the parts that push for integrating clean energy into agriculture, forestry, manufacturing, transportation and tourism; the parts that push for establishing programs and projects that stimulate a green economy; and last but perhaps most important, the parts that push for infrastructure projects that facilitate tackling the climate crisis.

While I welcome this bill, it is important to note that the member who tabled it, as a Liberal MP and especially as a former minister in Trudeau's cabinet, is accountable and responsible for the situation—

An hon. member: The member referred to the Prime Minister by name.

• (1825)

Ms. Laurel Collins: My apologies, Madam Speaker.

As a former minister in the Prime Minister's cabinet, he is responsible for the situation that we find ourselves in and for the Liberal government's inaction. There is a continued pattern of saying the right thing but doing the opposite, of talking about climate leadership while handing out billions to big oil and gas, of declaring a climate emergency while buying and building a pipeline, of promising to reduce emissions while approving Bay du Nord, of saying that they believe in climate change while ignoring the science.

What we need is a green new deal, a just transition for workers. What we need are massive investments in green infrastructure, in retrofits, in supports for workers, and we need a real plan with good family-sustaining jobs for the communities that are most impacted. While communities are paying the price for the government's inaction, the biggest polluters, the biggest oil and gas companies, continue to make record profits while collecting billions in fossil fuel subsidies. We need to stop giving our public money to the corporations that are fuelling the climate crisis. We need to redirect those funds into climate solutions now—not sometime down the road, not in a few years, but now. It is not about the environment versus the economy, not a trade-off between jobs and climate solutions. Climate solutions are job creators.

Unfortunately, when the Liberal government talks about balancing the economy and the environment, what it means is increasing oil and gas production while making promises about meeting the targets that it keeps missing. The climate crisis is here now. We are

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already seeing the impacts. We need to drastically reduce our emissions and we need action that aligns with limiting global warming to 1.5°C if we have any hope of avoiding the most catastrophic outcome.

Instead, the government continues to leave Canadians with an uncertain future and continues to fail workers, particularly those in the oil and gas sector. A green economy should mean good, sustainable jobs, not more boom-and-bust economies. It should be creating employment in the sectors that tackle the climate crisis, in the sectors that tackle the biodiversity crisis. It means cleaning up our environment and reducing our emissions, and doing it in a way that supports workers.

We need a well-managed and inclusive transition to a zero-carbon economy, and that transition must be in line with the needs of the communities most impacted. An inclusive transition means ensuring that first nations, Inuit and Métis people are not only at the table but supported in leading the conversation. We need a transition that addresses the needs of women, of racialized communities, of young people, of newcomers.

To quote Blue-Green Canada, "We must find solutions so our economy is just, green, inclusive and fair." Denial is no longer possible. Delay is no longer an option. Canadians want ambitious action on the climate emergency. A climate-safe and more just future is possible; we just need a government with the political will to make it happen.

• (1830)

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. friend and colleague, the member for Winnipeg South Centre, for his passionate work to bring forward this proposed legislation.

As a member from the prairies, I am proud to stand in full support of Bill C-235. In a time of significant change, a strong prairies region is critical for a strong nation and our postpandemic economy. The bill is about recognizing our innovations and ensuring that we make smart investments that are good for prairies communities, good for the Canadian economy and good for the planet.

It is about building on the prairies' economic strengths and increasing sustainability in sectors such as energy, agriculture, forestry, transportation, manufacturing, technology and tourism. It is about seizing the opportunity to maintain our leadership as a source of food and energy for the world through wise stewardship of our natural resources and sustainable development for the future. It is about long-term infrastructure projects that anticipate and adapt to the effects of climate change. It is about protecting and developing our natural resources and building a clean economy that will provide the good-paying, middle-class jobs of today and of tomorrow.

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Bill C-235 represents a new way of doing business as a nation, and we are already heading in the right direction. Since 2015, our government has invested more than \$100 billion to help fight climate change and protect the environment. We are helping companies and communities on the prairies capitalize on opportunities in the transition to clean technologies and a low-carbon economy.

For example, in Calgary last January, my friend and colleague, the minister responsible for PrairiesCan, announced more than \$3 million to support innovation in Alberta's clean-tech sector. That includes a new energy transition centre in downtown Calgary, a world-leading centre of expertise that pairs industry and the University of Calgary to help small and medium-sized businesses develop new technologies to meet the growing global demand for environmentally friendly energy projects and processes, clean-tech benefits from our existing energy expertise, a talented workforce and emerging capabilities in the energy transition.

As we shift gears into the future, carbon capture, utilization and storage, or CCUS, will play an essential role in a prosperous net-zero economy. In this year's budget, we propose an investment tax credit for CCUS to secure Canada's place as a leader in CCUS and support the Canadian innovators and engineers advancing this technology.

Decarbonizing our economy is a long-term piece of work, and hydrogen fuels are poised to play a key role. The expanding global hydrogen market is estimated to be worth \$2.5 trillion within the next three decades. Investing in it during these early days is why our government developed the hydrogen strategy for Canada.

Alberta is a natural for this. It has the natural gas reserves to feed it. It has the right people and talent grown in our energy sector to participate in it. Edmonton is positioned to be at the epicentre of the new hydrogen economy. For example, our government is supporting C-Fer Technologies to upgrade its testing facility. Our investment means that more businesses can develop and refine their products and technologies to ensure they are suitable for use with hydrogen and capitalize on future growth. This is just one example of the ongoing transition and how the prairies can be a world leader in the net-zero economy.

Indigenous communities on the prairies have long understood the need for sustainability. For example, the Birdtail Sioux Dakota Nation is a joint venture partner in the Birtle transmission project to flow up to 250 megawatts of Manitoba hydro power, clean power, to the SaskPower grid.

Two years ago, Fisher River Cree Nation launched Manitoba's largest solar generation project, built entirely by indigenous employees with financial support in the way of \$1 million from our government. Now other indigenous communities are reaching out to Fisher River for advice on starting their own solar farms and cutting their reliance on diesel generators in the north.

• (1835)

Building a green prairies economy is also about using our know-how to build sustainable things that people need, and I am proud to say that this government has supported the electrification of Manitoba's heavy vehicle manufacturing industry. As an example, in the great city of Winnipeg, where I am from, the not-for-profit Vehicle

Technology Centre is working with local companies to design and build zero-emission urban and intercity buses, fire trucks, recreational vehicles and agricultural and mining equipment.

In conclusion, the bill before us would develop a framework for local co-operation and engagement in the implementation of federal programs across various sectors to build a sustainable green economy for the prairie provinces. I know that my hon. friend is proud of the work that he and other colleagues played to bring PrairiesCan into being to work with others to meet the unique needs of more prairie communities, and I thank them for that.

On the prairies, we know the value of collaboration. It is how our ancestors made it through bitter winters and turned survival into success. A common thread running through my meetings with indigenous, business and community leaders is the hope of greater co-operation as we address the challenges ahead of us. We make progress when municipal governments, indigenous governments, communities and provinces, local community organizations, learning institutions and private sector companies large and small work together. Together, and recognizing that this is not an easy thing, we can stimulate a green prairie economy. This bill will create a new, collaborative plan for the prairies, a game plan to meet the challenges we face and achieve our ambitions.

Finally, I am proud that this bill is an opportunity to stand up for prairie workers and communities as we continue to build a green economy that works for everyone.

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise this evening to speak to Bill C-235, an act respecting the building of a green economy in the prairies. I am always eager to speak to any legislation that will impact the prairies, so I want to thank my hon. colleague from Manitoba for his interest in our province and in the Canadian prairies.

The fact that this bill was introduced as a private member's bill and not as a government bill shows the lack of priority the government continues to display toward the Canadian prairies. I sincerely hope that more members, such as my colleague from Winnipeg South Centre, call on the government to support the Canadians who proudly call the prairies their home.

Bill C-235 is an attempt to increase local collaboration and build a green economy in the prairie provinces. I applaud the intent of the legislation. However, I cannot help but notice the lack of focus on agriculture.

Private Members' Business

I have always said that Canadian agriculture should be part of the solution and not treated as part of the problem. When it comes to the environment, Canadian farmers are world leaders in environmental leadership, and their record proves it. They are some of the most sustainable stewards of the natural landscape across our country, and their efforts to preserve and conserve the environment should not go unrecognized. Any plan to build a green economy must include Canadian agriculture, especially in the prairie provinces.

This is why I find clause 5 of Bill C-235 so disturbing. Clause 5 states that the Minister of Industry must “prepare a report on the progress and effectiveness of the framework, setting out the Minister’s conclusions and recommendations” on this green economy.

The legislation states that the minister must collaborate with “the Minister of the Environment, the Minister of Transport, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Natural Resources and any minister responsible for economic development in the Prairie provinces”. However, it abruptly stops short of including the Minister of Agriculture.

How can a plan for the Canadian prairies not have the minister responsible for agriculture at the table? Agriculture is an economic pillar for the Canadian prairies. Any plan to grow a green economy must include agriculture. If this bill makes it to committee, I urge members of this House to amend it so that Canadian agriculture is included. The Minister of Industry should be mandated to consult with the Minister of Agriculture on any plan to green the economy, especially in the Canadian prairies. I believe that including this would dramatically improve the bill.

Additionally, the absence of agriculture is shown in subclause 3(2) of Bill C-235, which is focused on consultation. Subclause 3(2) would require the minister to consult with the provincial government representatives responsible for transportation, environment, and employment, but does not require the minister to consult with the provincial agriculture representatives.

Canadian farmers and ranchers deserve a seat at the table. Bill C-235 could easily be improved by including agriculture in the provincial consultation process.

I should also note that I have a lot of questions about the metrics that will be used to determine the outcomes of Bill C-235. Subclause 3(3) of the legislation states, “The framework must include measures that promote economic sustainability and growth and employment in the Prairie provinces”. However, how the government will measure these targeted outcomes appears to be unknown.

The bill also requires the Minister of Industry to prepare a report on the progress and effectiveness of the framework. However, how the minister will determine what is considered effective is also unknown.

My constituents know that I have never believed in the Ottawa-knows-best attitude. Unfortunately, I fear that this bill may only fuel this approach by adding a new layer of red tape and regulation to economic development at a time when we should be reducing it.

I find it interesting that Bill C-235 is a bill focused on improving the environment within specific provincial boundaries because it

was only a few years ago when the Liberal government rejected Manitoba’s very own green plan, which was specifically designed to meet the needs of the province. I strongly believe that a one-size-fits-all approach will never work for environmental policy, and I hope that the government will one day acknowledge this too.

I do applaud the fact that the bill would give priority to making use of new sources of energy, including nuclear. As a member of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, I have heard loud and clear that we will never meet our climate goals if we do not embrace nuclear energy. The government must grow Canada’s nuclear industry, and I am pleased to see the member for Winnipeg South Centre acknowledge that.

● (1840)

In conclusion, I support the spirit of Bill C-235 to improve local engagement in building a greener economy, and I thank my colleague for focusing on a region that we both proudly call home. However, I have major concerns with the blatant neglect of Canadian agriculture in the bill. Simply put, there would be no prairie economy without agriculture, and Bill C-235 fails to acknowledge this in its current form.

I hope that my remarks and suggested changes regarding this legislation are considered by members during its consideration in committee. I am always happy to work with any member of the House to grow Canadian agriculture and grow the Canadian prairies.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, it was with great interest that I read the bill introduced by our colleague from Winnipeg South Centre, which calls on the government to work with key stakeholders to develop an action plan to move the prairies toward a greener economy.

It may not be easy, but western Canada must move away from fossil fuels. Everyone acknowledges the pressing need for an energy transition away from oil, except perhaps some of our colleagues, who, unfortunately, have occasionally tried to take advantage of the crisis in Ukraine to promote Canadian oil and gas.

However, the challenge will be enormous, given the forces involved. The sponsor of this bill is well aware of this, having served as natural resources minister from 2015 to 2018. If the challenge is great, it is primarily because of the power and scale of the oil lobbies. Everyone is aware of this. These behemoths hoard talent and put pressure on wages and costs. They hinder the creation and growth of innovative SMEs, which are trying to develop sectors that would diversify the economy of this region.

Private Members' Business

The energy revolution is inevitable, however. It will happen. That is a fact, no matter what fantasies some people may still have about green oil. A total transformation of the existing framework requires support from all economic stakeholders, in both the political and financial sectors. Unfortunately, the financial sector is not currently making much of an effort or much progress. Many banks talk a good game, promising to move away from fossil fuels and commit to Ottawa's goal of net-zero emissions by 2050. That is the latest objective announced, and the plan is still in development.

However, investments in the oil industry jumped from \$122 billion in 2016 to \$160 billion in 2019. Investments did drop in 2020 as a result of the pandemic, but the five largest Canadian banks are still among the top 25 largest investors in fossil fuels—

• (1845)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but I would ask him to take his phone off his desk because the vibrations are bothering the interpreters.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Madam Speaker, I apologize. I would also like to take a moment to sincerely apologize to the interpreters.

I was saying that the five largest Canadian banks are all still on the list of the world's top 25 investors in fossil fuels. Knowing that today's investments will be used to increase tomorrow's production, I will be polite and simply say that we are not exactly positioning ourselves to meet our environmental objectives.

We hear about carbon capture and storage, but these measures will have little effect on reducing emissions. These strategies will never replace a real shift to renewable energy. The strategy of “let's increase production, then we'll increase capture” is simply doomed to fail.

Remember that one of the objectives of the Paris Agreement, signed by Ottawa, is to use financial flows to promote the development of an economy that has low greenhouse gas emissions and is resilient to climate change. I encourage my government colleagues to finally adopt a policy to implement this objective, in case they have forgotten about it. It is Parliament's responsibility to send a clear signal and to support the green shift, which must be accelerated. Canada is asleep at the wheel, make no mistake about it.

In 2019, an expert panel, jointly created by the departments of Finance and the Environment, stated that this transition would not be possible without real change in financial models, and pointed in particular to the urgency of reorienting investments toward greener sectors. Instead of offering a real strategy to move away from oil, the government talks about supporting this industry into a low-emission future; in short, it wants to continue pumping oil while trying to do as little damage as possible. The time for such nonsense is over.

To meet the goals of the Paris Agreement, we need to immediately stop financing the development of new oil and gas projects. These are not my words, but those of the International Energy Agency, which cannot be accused of being ideologically anti-oil. We must urgently reorient these investments toward the sectors of

the future. However, as I said before, to do that, stakeholders from all sectors must seriously do their part.

That is why the Bloc Québécois is pretty open to supporting Bill C-235, currently before us, since several federal ministers would be required to work in partnership with the provinces and the private sector to bring in an action plan to develop a green and modern economy in the Prairies. This is a step in the right direction. As they are developing the action plan, I invite the ministers to consult the Bloc Québécois' proposals, where they might find the inspiration that they have quite clearly been lacking so far, unfortunately.

Getting back to the bill, it talks about transparency regarding climate risks. We need to leverage savings by making green RRSPs more tax efficient than RRSPs that include investments in fossil fuels, in order to free up a huge amount of capital to finance the green shift. Billions of dollars need to be freed up. Public funds will be a crucial aspect, but they will be insufficient. We absolutely must invite the financial sector to take up this challenge.

In the shift we are proposing, some see only costs, complications and bureaucracy. However, the economic benefits of a green transition are numerous, first of all by allowing the development of cutting-edge technologies and industries. As we know, Quebec is full of forward-thinking creators. The green transition will be lucrative. Investors will therefore have access to more dynamic and promising assets, rather than assets whose performance is condemned to plunge, as well as to a more stable financial sector.

We are certainly facing a huge task, but this is a historic opportunity to lead a strong and radical, but beneficial and incredibly motivating, transformation. Many of my colleagues here certainly claim that they entered politics to change the world. We have heard that many times. Now is the time to be on the side of the visionaries and agents of progress.

• (1850)

I will close by thanking the sponsor of this bill for trying to put a bit of pressure on his government. That takes courage. I assure him of our support in this matter. We will vote in favour of this bill, and we will co-operate with all initiatives and all attempts to facilitate the urgent and inevitable transition to renewable energy.

[English]

Hon. Jim Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have to say that whatever happens to this bill, tomorrow or beyond, from my perspective it has already performed a wonderful piece of service because we have been witnessing, over the past hour or so, a debate in the Parliament of Canada about the future of the Prairie economy that resonates not only with people who live on the prairie, but also with people from Quebec, British Columbia and all over the country. To be able to focus the parliamentary mind on the future of prairie Canada, in the context of all of the regions of this diverse, disparate and magnificent country, is so satisfying.

I could take some of the quotes from all of the members who spoke today and say they might have been speaking for me and for the intent of the bill. For instance, “Better coordination on the Prairies”, said the member for Abitibi-Témiscamingue. “Solutions for communities who want action”, he said, and “Access to markets.” “Lasting sustainable action.” “The federal government has an important role to play in the development of a sustainable economy on the prairie, as it has for every region of the country.” There was then a very interesting set of ideas on green finance.

This is exactly the kind of debate and the framework that is envisioned in this bill, not in 45 minutes of discussion on the floor of the Parliament of Canada, but in hundreds of discussions, in city councils, within the councils of provincial decision-making, with the indigenous communities and in the private sector, which is going to have to take the lead.

I also welcomed comments from the member for Victoria about supporting workers in transition. Of course, we can talk about economic development all we want and about wealth creation, but if the very basis and motivation of that creation is not the creation of good jobs for our people, then it is a bit empty and does not lead to where we want to be, which is prosperity that is rooted in sustainability right across the region.

I love her expression “a green new deal”. Maybe I like it so much because I am just reading a biography of FDR at this moment. There is incredible vision. Other members have spoken about it being time for visionary politics. The vision FDR had in 1933, and throughout his presidency, really created an entire new social structure and way of doing business in the United States and is instructive for all of us. For this debate to talk about a “new green deal” is one of the reasons why it was introduced in the first place.

I would say to my friend, the member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, that I think we should talk at committee about the importance of agriculture in the Prairies. I am sure that there will be ways of ensuring the bill not only refers to agriculture, as it should, but also the role of agriculture in the new Prairie economy, because people sometimes forget that in that region of the country we are growing what the world wants and needs, not the least of which is protein: It is food and sustainable sources of what it takes to sustain life itself.

When people ask me what I think the impact of this bill might be, I say that it has a wide range. It could be from absolutely zero, to changing the way we do business as a nation, or something in between, which is more likely. What it requires is what has been referred to by everybody who has spoken in this debate, which is an understanding that those of us in public office, or in positions of community leadership are at the table with indigenous communities, those in universities and on the cutting edge of research in value-added agriculture, and those in the life sciences where there is so much leadership in Prairie Canada.

I want to thank members for their support. Sometimes that support was expressed as an admiration for the spirit of the bill and in other cases even clause-by-clause language has been used to express its aspiration.

Adjournment Proceedings

I look forward to moving this bill on to a vote and to committee, and I thank my colleagues very much for engaging in a debate about a green Prairie economy.

• (1855)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The question is on the motion.

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

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I would ask for a recorded division, please.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 1, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, last Tuesday, May 24, was the global day of prayer for China. It was also Cardinal Joseph Zen's day in court in Hong Kong on charges of “conspiracy to collude with foreign forces” for his work with a fund established to provide legal aid to democracy protesters facing prosecution. These charges are arbitrary and political. Cardinal Bo, the Myanmar president of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, said it best: “In any system where the rule of law exists, providing assistance to help people facing prosecution meet their legal fees is a proper and accepted right. How can it be a crime to help accused persons have legal defense and representation?”

The night after his court appearance, Cardinal Zen offered mass. He prayed for Christians in mainland China who were facing persecution at the hands of the Chinese Communist Party.

Religious communities in China have been facing persecution since the CCP took power, from strict laws restricting religious practice and the arbitrary detention of believers, to altering holy texts, to efforts to co-opt and control religious bodies. Under the premise of public health restrictions, now the Chinese government has cracked down on people's right to leave their home for any reason, including for religious worship.

Adjournment Proceedings

The last time I asked the parliamentary secretary about this matter, he told me that as his government engages in Canada's relationship with China, "there are no more important issues than Canadian values and Canadian rights". He did not, however, specifically address the arrest of Cardinal Zen or the cases of those arrested along with him. Sometimes it is easier for the government to talk about talking about human rights than to actually talk about human rights directly, so I hope that tonight we will hear clear and specific support for Cardinal Zen and condemnation of his arrest.

Cardinal Zen embodies virtues that Canadians of all backgrounds hold dear. He is a fearless advocate not only for religious freedom in China, but also for political freedom. He has been a champion of the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong for decades and an unwavering defender of truth, freedom and justice. Freedom of speech, freedom of religion, democratic rights and political rights are all concepts that Canadians, of course, hold in high esteem.

The situation in Hong Kong has been deteriorating since 1997, but the past three years have shown us the lengths that the CCP will go in order to suppress dissenting voices, which is in violation of the explicit commitments that it made in the context of the handover. Cardinal Zen embodies values that Canadians hold dear and that the CCP seeks to quash. This 90-year-old is still deemed a threat to the CPP. He continues to inspire and give hope to Hong Kongers during some of their darkest days.

It was an honour for me to meet Cardinal Zen in 2017, along with Jimmy Lai, Anson Chan, Martin Lee, Joshua Wong and many of Hong Kong's other heroes. They continue to inspire me every day.

Tonight, I hope to hear the government express its clear support for Cardinal Zen, Denise Ho and others facing arbitrary detention, and hope to see it clearly stand up for human rights in Hong Kong and beyond.

• (1900)

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in recent years, Canada has observed a dramatic decline in the human rights and fundamental freedoms enjoyed by the people of Hong Kong.

Canada first raised its concerns in November 2018, when it provided a recommendation to "Ensure the right of Hong Kong people to take part in government, without distinction of any kind" as part of the universal periodic review of China conducted under the auspices of the UN Human Rights Council.

Since then, the situation in Hong Kong has continued to worsen.

On June 30, 2020, the Chinese central government imposed its national security law on Hong Kong without the engagement of its own institutions. The chilling effects of the new law and the growing restrictions on freedom of speech and freedom of assembly have been felt across civil society, academic institutions, business and media, leading to a rise in unrest and protests on the streets of Hong Kong.

The lack of clear definitions in that law and the language about its potential extraterritorial application to persons outside of Hong

Kong have also raised alarm bells about the increasing reach of the Chinese central government beyond its borders.

In response to these troubling developments, on July 3, 2020, Canada undertook a series of measures to address these concerns. These included: suspending the Canada-Hong Kong extradition agreement, stopping exports of sensitive items and updating our travel advice and advisories for Hong Kong.

In addition, on November 12, 2020, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada announced new immigration measures aimed at youth from Hong Kong by offering a new open work permit and broadening their pathways to Canadian permanent residency.

On February 4, 2021, IRCC then announced that Hong Kong residents would be able to apply for new open work permits beginning on February 8.

The Government of Canada later implemented two further pathways to permanent residence for young Hong Kong residents in June 2021.

Canada has never shied away from expressing clear views about human rights in China and expressing our support for Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy under the basic law and the one country, two systems framework.

Most recently, on May 9, 2022, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, together with G7 counterparts, issued a joint statement underscoring grave concern over the selection process for the chief executive in Hong Kong. This process was a stark departure from the basic law's intent of election by universal suffrage and further erodes the ability of Hong Kong residents to be legitimately represented.

We are under no illusions that authorities in China share our assessment about the worsening situation in Hong Kong, which is why we are fully committed to working with our international partners and standing together with those who are seeking support. Canada and Hong Kong have long-standing people-to-people ties going back over 100 years, contributing to the diverse fabric of our country. The upcoming 25th anniversary of the handover of Hong Kong on July 1 will be an important moment for reflection about the future of the city and its people.

We reserve the right to respond to any future developments as we deem necessary.

• (1905)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, respectfully, it was not a trick question. I asked the member about the arbitrary detention of a religious leader and in another case the arbitrary detention of a Canadian citizen.

Adjournment Proceedings

The member talked on and on, reading a response about how the government has allegedly never shied away from talking about human rights, yet he failed to address the specific cases that I asked about. We have to look no further than the response that was just read to see evidence of the government shying away from talking about human rights.

I want to ask the member to have the courage to deviate from the paper that he has been given and to actually speak about the cases of Cardinal Zen of Denise Ho, people who are trying to speak about democracy and human rights and who face imprisonment in violation of the basic law because of their advocacy. Could the member name those names and address the cases?

Mr. Maninder Sidhu: Madam Speaker, as I have said, Canada has never shied away from standing up for human rights in China or from urging the Chinese government to uphold international standards, norms and values.

Our voice, alongside those of our partners, has been heard. A growing coalition of countries around the world has joined our calls for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Hong Kong. Canada will continue to work with international partners to persuade China to live up to its international obligations.

We reserve the right to respond to any future developments as we deem necessary.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I rise tonight in adjournment proceedings to pursue a question I asked on March 28 during question period at two o'clock in the afternoon the day before we were expecting the emissions reduction plan from the federal government.

My question to the minister was about what we were to make of the fact that there would be an announcement on March 29, knowing that by April 4 there would be a new IPCC report that could well make the emissions reduction plan outdated and require immediate overhaul. Not surprisingly, the parliamentary secretary who responded felt that we were really on track, but the parliamentary secretary did say that we will need to do more.

With the three minutes I have remaining in my opening statement for tonight's adjournment proceedings, I will be brutally honest about the science and where we stand. There is no sugar-coating this. It is not easy. I do not say these things because I want people to be afraid or because I want people to despair, but I desperately want people to wake up, particularly the people who have the power to make the decisions over whether my children and grandchildren will survive on a livable, habitable planet, or endure unthinkable deprivations from climate breakdown.

What we did not know when I asked that question on March 28 was what the third working group of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change would say in its sixth assessment report, and it advanced the clock. It advanced our timetable more than I had expected. It shook me, and I have been working on the climate issue since 1986, when I was with Environment Canada.

What the IPCC said was that to hold to 1.5°C, which is the target of the Paris Agreement, and at most we must try to, at the very

least, stay as far below a 2°C possible global average temperature increase above what it was before the beginning of the industrial revolution. They are hard concepts to get our heads around and long to describe. What the IPCC said on April 4 makes the government's plan from March 29 completely useless. Doing better, doing more and trying hard means nothing if we miss the main point.

The main point is this: The IPCC now says that we must ensure that between 2020 and, at the latest, before 2025, all around the world we must ensure that we stop addition and start subtraction. It is math; it is a carbon budget. We cannot go up anymore. We must peak and go down, and go down rapidly, such that by 2030 we would globally be emitting about half of the greenhouse gases that we did in 2010, or else. This is the part that gets hard. If we do not do that, we run the risk of hitting tipping points in the atmosphere that we cannot predict, which could lead to unstoppable, self-accelerating global warming.

At the very least, we can look at what is happening right now to us, including here in Ottawa, with a very dangerous storm that killed 11 people. People did not see that coming. That is when we are at 1.1°C global average temperature increase. The heat dome in British Columbia killed 600 people in four days was also at 1.1°C. We have had wildfires and floods. We see what is happening at 1.1°C global average temperature increase and we are pretending that we have it under control, as we stand at the very edge of too late, and because it is not too—

• (1910)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my friend and hon. colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands. I agree with her that the recent IPCC report is a stark reminder of the impact of climate change. As climate impacts intensify, it is only becoming more obvious that moving to a clean net-zero economy is critical to protecting the well-being of Canadians and communities and securing Canada's economic future.

At COP26, Canada announced that it would take additional action to significantly reduce GHG emissions from the oil and gas sector by setting emission caps. At COP26, Canada also joined over 100 countries in signing the global methane pledge to reduce global anthropogenic methane emissions by 30% by 2030. Canada will lead the way on oil and gas methane by going beyond our current target of 40% to 45% reduction by 2025 to reduce emissions by 75% by 2030.

Adjournment Proceedings

As countries and businesses around the world move rapidly toward net-zero emissions, more ambition is needed today to ensure that Canada is not left behind and can secure a foothold in the low-carbon future.

In 2021, as the hon. member knows, the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act became law. The act enshrines Canada's commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, establishes Canada's 2030 target as the first key milestone for this path and ensures a transparent and accountable process in meeting our climate objectives.

The 2030 emissions reduction plan, or the ERP, was established on March 29 and is the first of many to come under the act. The ERP is about more than achieving incremental GHG emission reductions to reach Canada's 2030 target; it is also about putting in place foundational measures to ensure that Canada's future not only is carbon-neutral, but makes energy alternatives more affordable and creates new, sustainable job opportunities for workers. The ERP includes a suite of new mitigation measures and strategies, building on the foundation set by the pan-Canadian framework and the 2020 strengthened climate plan and considering the best available science, indigenous knowledge and the advice of the net-zero advisory body.

Achieving Canada's climate objectives will be a whole-of-economy and whole-of-society effort. Every economic sector has a role to play and a responsibility to reduce emissions, but the pathway to achieving emission reductions will look different for each. The 2030 ERP takes into account this reality, sets out guideposts for each sector to further reduce emissions, and highlights the measures and strategies toward emission reductions of 40% below 2005 levels.

Finally, the hon. member will know that the emissions reduction plan includes \$9.1 billion of new federal investments, on top of the \$100 billion that has already been invested since 2015, very important investments indeed in climate action.

• (1915)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, with one minute left, let me be very clear with my friend, the parliamentary secretary. Net zero by 2050 is fraud. Net zero by 2050 is fraud in the absence of the targets I mentioned earlier: peaking well before 2025, dropping in half by 2030, not adding, only subtracting.

Approving Bay du Nord is adding. Building the TMX pipeline is adding. Having an emissions reduction plan that says that by 2030 Canada's production of oil and gas will go up by 21% is adding. What is it adding? It is adding to the almost certainty that my grandchildren will not be on a livable world because too many people thought it was too hard to do what must be done. I will not give up on the government doing the right thing, because the Liberals must know better. They must know better than what they are doing.

Mr. Terry Duguid: Madam Speaker, with respect, we are subtracting by investing in nature and natural climate solutions to deliver additional emission reductions and making significant new investments to support a sustainable future for Canadian farmers. Further, the Government of Canada is driving down carbon pollution from the oil and gas sector with an emissions cap. Following consultations, the cap will be designed to lower emissions at a pace

and scale needed to achieve net zero by 2050 and put Canada in a position to achieve Canada's climate goals and seize new economic opportunities.

HOUSING

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, Canada is faced with a housing crisis and we have to address this issue, which in no small part was a result of the federal Liberal government walking away from the national housing program in 1993. Soon after that, we saw the financialization of the housing market take root. This is when corporations and wealthy investors make big money by putting people out of homes. They buy up rental housing units, often older buildings, renovate everyone and jack up the rent. This is what the financialization of housing means, and it has to stop.

REITs alone have grown from owning zero residential units in apartment buildings in 1996 to nearly 200,000 in the year 2020. In total, the largest 25 financial landlords held about 330,000 suites last year, which is nearly 20% of the country's private purpose-built stock of rental apartments. According to researcher Steve Pomeroy, for every one affordable housing unit created by government funding, 15 become unaffordable due to the financialization of rental housing.

Right here in Ottawa, we are seeing 300 tenants at Manor Village be renovicted by their corporate landlord. The fallout is on the residents, who find themselves without a home. A senior named Peggy has lived there for 30 years. She is a fixed-income senior. People like Peggy are at the mercy of huge corporations and wealthy investors who are fuelling the housing crisis. Rich investors should not be allowed to buy up affordable rental units, force existing tenants out of their homes and jack up the rent to unaffordable levels.

Canadians need the government to fix the mess it helped to create. The reality is that, left unchecked, the government cannot possibly build affordable housing units as fast as wealthy investors can buy them, hike up the prices and use the housing market to make money off of Canadians. For decades, Liberals and Conservatives have created a rigged system where wealthy investors profit and Canadians pay the price.

That is why the NDP is calling on the government to take immediate action to stop corporate landlords and REITs from treating our housing market like a stock market. New Democrats are calling on the government to stop the financialization of housing by putting in place a moratorium on the acquisition of affordable homes by REITs and other corporate landlords. We are also calling on the Liberals to put in place an acquisition fund to allow non-profits or land trust organizations to purchase rental buildings when they come on the market.

Changes must be made on how REITs are taxed, as well. The government is essentially giving massive tax breaks to wealthy investors: seven of the largest apartment-owning REITs in Canada have saved a combined \$1.5 billion through federal tax loopholes. The government must close these loopholes.

Amendments should be made to the Income Tax Act to require landlords to disclose in their tax filings the rent they received pre- and post-renovations and to pay a proportional surtax if the rent is excessive. Attacking the Bank of Canada, as the Conservative leader front-runner wants to do, is not going to fix the financialization of the housing crisis. A meagre foreign-owner tax will not do it either, but a moratorium on purchases—

- (1920)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion.

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Vancouver East for her advocacy on affordable housing. This is an issue of great concern for our government, so I am glad to have the opportunity to explain how we are addressing it through our 10-year and over \$72-billion national housing strategy.

This plan is creating housing to suit every need in Canada, from shelter and transitional housing to community housing to market rentals, and is helping to keep the dream of home ownership within reach of young families. Most of this strategy's program focuses on our most vulnerable populations. This includes the rapid housing initiative, which is already creating over 10,000 deeply affordable units for the most vulnerable. This includes 88 new units opened in the member's city of Vancouver in March, thanks to a \$30-million federal investment.

We are not stopping there. Through budget 2022, we are extending the RHI to create an additional 6,000 units. At the same time, we also need to address the issue of housing affordability for middle-income Canadians. In many of our cities, the people who work hard to keep communities running can no longer afford to live in them. Many teachers, nurses, store clerks and construction workers find it impossible to live, work and make ends meet in their urban centres. Even smaller cities and towns outside major urban hubs are seeing costs rise as more and more families leave the big cities. This is unacceptable. It threatens the well-being of middle-class citizens and their families.

The rental construction financing initiative that my colleague mentioned helps those who do not qualify for assisted housing but still cannot afford the escalating prices of market rent. It encourages

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a stable supply of rental housing for middle-class families in expensive housing markets. This includes many of the people who are essential workers and who have played an invaluable role in our communities, especially throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

The program provides low-cost construction loans for 10-year terms. This gives developers stable, predictable funding in the early stages of development. In my colleague's riding of Vancouver East, it has created more than 400 units of rental housing, all near public transit, workplaces and community services.

However, we recognize there is more to do to improve affordability. That is why, through budget 2022, we announced that the RCFI will target a goal of having at least 40% of the units it supports provide rent equal to or lower than 80% of the average market rent in local communities going forward.

We will not rest until we ensure that every Canadian has a safe and affordable place to call home.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, in question period on March 21, I asked the government why 90% of the funding under the rental construction financing initiative went to for-profit developers and why the units being built often ended up being 30% to 120% above the average market rent. I called on the government to change the requirements to ensure that housing units built under this program are substantially below market rent, and reforms were included in the agreement the NDP entered into with the Liberals.

I am glad the confidence and supply agreement has significantly reformed the RCFI, including changing the eligibility for the program to under 80% of average market rent and allowing for loans to be forgiven when rent is below this minimum threshold. The change also includes an increase in the percentage of units per building that need to meet that criteria, from 20% to 40%. By way of comparison, let us say no changes were made. Rent based on the Liberals' affordability definition under the old RCFI was \$2,294 in Vancouver per month. Under the new agreement—

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• (1925)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Madam Speaker, our government is fully committed to making housing more affordable for Canadians, whatever their housing needs. While our focus is on the most vulnerable populations, Canadians can count on us to be there to support the middle-class families that are working hard to keep our cities running. This is what builds inclusive, resilient communities where everyone has a chance to thrive.

I encourage all members of the House to work with their communities to make the most of the national housing strategy and all the programs it has to offer, as well as the over \$4 billion we are investing in housing through budget 2022.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:27 p.m.)

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