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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, June 1, 2022

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1400)

[*English*]

The Speaker: Before we begin, we have some angelic voices up in the Speaker's Gallery today. With the summer adjournment approaching, I would like to thank the pages for their extraordinary work this year.

Voices: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: Normally, on the first Wednesday in June, the House of Commons pages sing the national anthem at the beginning of the sitting. However, these past two years have been exceptional for everyone, including this year's group of pages.

[*English*]

Although they are not able to sing grouped together on the floor of the House this year, the pages will lead the anthem from the Speaker's Gallery to safely maintain tradition.

[*Pages sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, last week I was in Warsaw. While there I spoke with an Afghan refugee couple, he a journalist and she a teacher, as well as a female former supreme court justice. They are all priority targets for the Taliban. They were rescued from certain death and evacuated from Kabul by the Polish Air Forces.

Since August of 2021, Poland has provided them with money and housing. However, after 10 months of waiting for them to be resettled in Canada, Poland has done all it can. That country needs to focus on the 3.6 million Ukrainians who have crossed its borders.

Repeated efforts to obtain assistance from Canada's embassy in Poland, GAC and IRCC have proven useless. What good are

Canada's special immigration measures for Afghans if they do not work and only amount to "Hey, here's a bunch of websites. Don't expect any help."

What a disgrace. People's lives are at stake. Canada made a commitment. I call upon the government to honour our nation's word.

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• (1405)

UKRAINE

Hon. Jim Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I recently joined the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Northern Affairs, my Manitoba colleagues and Premier Heather Stefanson to greet 350 Ukrainian adults and children and their pets as they arrived in Winnipeg.

We greeted them like family, which is not an exaggeration. More than 120,000 Manitobans are of Ukrainian descent, including members of my own family. Each of them received a warm Manitoba welcome.

However, those moments of warm embrace were bittersweet. Thoughts of beloved family, friends and homeland left behind were ever-present. Vladimir Putin is solely to blame for the chaos, for displacing millions of people and taking thousands of lives. He has waged an illegal war on a democratic nation and is terrorizing civilians and razing cities.

Ukraine is a significant ally to NATO, and as a member of the alliance, Canada will continue to support its defence through humanitarian aid and military equipment for as long as necessary. Canada will always be a steadfast supporter of Ukraine and host its people with warmth, dignity and respect.

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LEADERSHIP IN BARRIE—SPRINGWATER—ORO-MEDONTE

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I am especially proud to rise in recognition of two outstanding leaders in Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte who will be starting their much-deserved retirement soon.

Statements by Members

Janice Skot led the Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre for 17 years as president and CEO. She had an oversized role in making the RVH a regional leader in health care in Simcoe County and led an exceptional team that guided our health care community throughout many challenging times.

Dr. MaryLynn West-Moynes served as the president and CEO of Georgian College for the better part of 10 years. In her time there, she led the growth of an educational institute that attracts talented students and staff from across Ontario and the world. Students who settle in Barrie stimulate our economy and enrich our community.

I want to wish Ms. Skot and Ms. West-Moynes the very best in their much deserved retirement. I would also like to welcome the new CEO and presidents: Gail Hunt for RVH and Kevin Weaver for Georgian College.

I know Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte's future is bright with such talented and competent people in important leadership roles.

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MAULANA NASEEM MAHDI SAHID

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today in memory of a great man, Maulana Naseem Mahdi Sahid, a dear friend of mine for over 30 years. He left this world last week.

Naseem was a loyal and trusting friend that I, my husband Sam and the rest of our family are honoured to have known. He was born in Pakistan, arriving in Canada in May of 1985 as head of the Canada Jamaat, and served as well in many other countries.

I first met him in Toronto, where he was already a well-respecting and loving *mubaligh*. He impacted thousands of families and left quite the footprint through things such as the Baitul Islam Mosque, Peace Village and the Ahmadiyya Abode of Peace. He was a champion of interfaith harmony.

Naseem believed that at the core of everything was love and peace and that by working together we could achieve this for the world. He did not believe in just co-existing; he believed in existing as one. I will never forget the work he has done, the love he has shown and the many things he has done for all of us as Canadians.

Naseem's legacy of love and community remains, and I thank him for sharing it with me and every other person who was blessed enough to have encountered him. Rest in peace, dear friend, until we meet again.

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[*Translation*]

350TH ANNIVERSARY OF VERCHÈRES

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in 1672, Intendant Talon granted the seigneurie of Verchères to François Jarret, an officer with the Carignan-Salières regiment.

This little village along the St. Lawrence River saw history being made when 14-year-old Madeleine heroically protected the village from Iroquois attacks. Some even say she saved New France.

Years later, patriot Ludger Duvernay, who was also born in Verchères, founded the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste and organized the first celebration of Quebec's national holiday. We also have another son of Verchères, former premier Bernard Landry, to thank for National Patriots Day.

When we think of Verchères, we also think of its famous row-boats and its dedicated artisans who work hard to keep the knowledge of their predecessors alive.

In 2002, Verchères became a wonderful, idyllic village that people could not help falling in love with. That is why I want to wish everyone from Verchères a happy 350th anniversary.

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● (1410)

WORLD MILK DAY

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is World Milk Day. It is an opportunity to thank our dairy farmers, processors and producers who work hard to supply our country with delicious milk.

Our farmers give their all every day to provide us with healthy, quality dairy products. The products are made with care, safely and in an increasingly eco-friendly way.

The Canadian dairy industry is known the world over for its superior quality. Dairy products are an important part of our food experience and a mainstay of our economy. The industry is an economic driver in rural municipalities, including mine, and contributes to our dynamic land use.

We are proud not only of the calibre of our dairy industry, but also of its environmental innovation. Our dairy sector is a world leader, and the hard work of our farmers, producers and processors should be celebrated. I wish them all a happy World Milk Day.

* * *

WORLD MILK DAY

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honour of World Milk Day, which is celebrated every year on June 1.

I want to thank all of our 10,000 dairy farms and our 500-plus processing plants in Canada.

These men and women wake up at dawn every day, put on their work boots and do an incredible job to feed Canadians by providing quality products that make us proud.

There are several such businesses in my riding that consistently provide products that are among the best, the healthiest and the most nutritious in the world. Not only do these farmers produce the best products in the world, but they also play an important role in helping Canada meet its environmental objectives.

On behalf of all of my colleagues in Parliament, I thank them for their hard work. We will continue to support our agricultural sector, which is the economic engine that will put our economy back on its feet.

On this World Milk Day, I encourage all my colleagues to raise a glass of milk in honour of the Canadians in our dairy industry, who work very hard for all of us.

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[*English*]

FILIPINO HERITAGE MONTH

Mrs. Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, *mabuhay*, and welcome back.

I am excited to rise in the House today to kick off Filipino Heritage Month for the month of June. I would like to thank my colleague from Scarborough Centre and every MP in the House who supported Motion No. 155 to make this happen.

From coast to coast, Filipino Canadians will be celebrating in June by having flag-raising ceremonies, Independence Day festivals and celebrations throughout the month.

From the original settlers in New Westminster, B.C., 130 years ago to the now one million Filipinos across Canada today, I want to acknowledge the tremendous contributions of Filipino Canadians in making their mark in Canada.

I would like to give special thanks to my husband Chris, my kids Kyle and Cassidy, my mother- and father-in-law and the Filipino interns for joining us in Ottawa today.

Maraming salamat! Maligayang Buwan ng Pamanang Pilipino. Thanks very much, and happy Filipino Heritage Month.

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NATIONAL INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH

Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, June marks National Indigenous History Month. My constituents, including Anne Hines, the minister of Roncesvalles United Church, care deeply about understanding indigenous contributions to our community. When Anne considered what her congregation could do to support indigenous reconciliation, she looked no further than Phil Cote.

Phil belongs to the Moose Deer Point first nation and is a celebrated Anishinabe artist. Anne commissioned him to create a soaring indigenous mural, some 60 feet high and 70 feet wide, that now adorns an entire wall of the church.

The mural is the first of its kind in a church in Canada. The significance is clear, given the historical role of the church in administering the residential school system. Now all those who enter

Statements by Members

Toronto's Roncesvalles United Church are struck by this towering work of art and the creation story it depicts.

As opposed to working to take the Indian out of the child, Roncesvalles United is now celebrating the indigenous presence that surrounds all of us.

The path toward reconciliation is a shared one. Thanks, Phil Cote and Anne Hines, for demonstrating that for all of us.

Chi-meegwetch.

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● (1415)

PITT MEADOWS

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Pitt Meadows is one of the prettiest spots on our planet and is a wonderful place to raise a family. It is on the traditional land of the Katzie, and is nestled between the coast mountains and the Pitt River and Fraser River. It has a small-town feel even though it is in metro Vancouver.

Residents enjoy chatting or strolling along the dikes, perhaps after grabbing a coffee at the Stomping Grounds Café and Bistro or an ice cream from the Sweet Tooth Creamery. If people are looking for a wonderful place to golf or to get married, there is nowhere better than Swanest, which is not far from Pitt Lake, the largest freshwater tidal lake in the world, where people can view eagles, swans, herons and seals.

Business is booming. This month, a new airport terminal is opening, as well as a Vancouver aviation school. This Saturday, residents will line up by the thousands for Pitt Meadows' 81st annual parade. It is a great time to connect and it will be a blast.

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ITALIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, happy Italian Heritage Month, a time to recognize, celebrate and honour the immeasurable contributions of Italian Canadians while showcasing the rich Italian culture, heritage and gastronomy.

[*Member spoke in Italian*]

[*English*]

The Quiet Immigrant project, titled *le femmine forti*, is a tribute to the brave Italian women who immigrated to Canada after World War II. Through sheer strength of character, with neither fanfare nor complaint, they wove their way into Canada's social fabric. These are our *nonnas*, our mothers, wives and our daughters, including mine—Eliana, Natalia and Leia—who will carry the rich Italian Canadian legacy for years to come.

[*Member spoke in Italian*]

[*English*]

Statements by Members

This Italian Heritage Month, join me in sharing and celebrating the stories of these brave Italian women.

[Member spoke in Italian]

[English]

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JURY SERVICE

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, jury service often comes at a considerable sacrifice. Many jurors go through difficult trials and are exposed to horrific evidence, yet they are unable to talk about what is often the most stressful aspect of jury service, the deliberation process, due to the jury secrecy rule.

Yesterday, the justice committee voted unanimously to send Bill S-206, of which I am the House of Commons sponsor, back to the House for third reading. The bill carves out a narrow exception to the jury secrecy rule so that former jurors can disclose all aspects of their jury service to a medical professional bound by confidentiality so that former jurors can get the help that they deserve.

Jurors play an indispensable role in the administration of justice. We owe it to them to see that this bill finally crosses the finish line and is passed into law.

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CANADIAN HERITAGE

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Mr. Speaker, despite the many flaws in Bill C-11, the Liberals continue to force this legislation through Parliament.

Last week, the CEO of Canada's most successful YouTube channel told the heritage committee that Bill C-11 is not an ill-intentioned piece of legislation, but it is a bad piece of legislation. It has been written by those who do not understand the industry that they are attempting to regulate.

Artists and creators who work in digital media have been clear: Modernization does not mean taking an outdated, 30-year-old regulatory system and simply applying it to today's technology. While the Liberals claim there is now an exemption for user-generated content, this legislation clearly allows the CRTC to regulate any content that generates revenue, directly or indirectly. That means that virtually all content can be regulated by the CRTC.

It is clear: Bill C-11 is flawed, and it must be scrapped.

* * *

[Translation]

MARITZA FERRADA-VIDELA

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this being National AccessAbility Week, I would like to highlight one woman's exceptional contribution.

This immigrant woman dedicated over 35 years of her life to developing respite services for families with children with intellectual disabilities. She mobilized parents and built a community support network, and she enlisted the support of funding organizations and

elected officials at all levels of government. The woman I am talking about is Maritza Ferrada-Videla. She is my mother.

She played an exemplary leadership role in ensuring the inclusion of families with children with disabilities. I am deeply moved and very proud to salute her courage, her determination and her resiliency in fighting for human dignity, and today I wish her a well-deserved retirement.

My mother is and will continue to be a source of inspiration and quiet strength that sustains my presence here in the House every day.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone who, like her, is working to build a more equitable and inclusive society.

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● (1420)

[English]

INTERNATIONAL SEX WORKERS' DAY

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, June 2 is International Sex Workers' Day: a day to celebrate sex workers, to honour their work and to push for better working conditions.

Women, men, queer, trans and non-binary sex workers are workers. They are members of our communities and deserve dignity and respect, and not stigma. Stigma leads to barriers in accessing health care, to isolation and to dangerous working conditions.

Our laws, while claiming to protect sex workers, actually cause more harm by making it harder to report violence and screen potential clients.

We need to end the stigma and listen to the voices of sex workers, who are calling for decriminalization and calling on MPs to stop conflating sex work with human trafficking, because it makes it harder to keep people safe.

Instead, let us support the sex work community. One amazing organization doing just that is Peers Victoria Resources Society. It is an organization by sex workers, for sex workers.

On June 2, let us celebrate sex workers and end the stigma. Sex work is work.

[Translation]

WORLD MILK DAY

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, June 1, we are celebrating World Milk Day. This year, again, I want to acknowledge the contribution of dairy farmers who take care of their herds and put high-quality milk on our tables, as well as precious milk products such as butter, yoghurt and cheese.

Today, milk was delivered to the lobby. It was a good opportunity to raise a glass to the health of our local farmers, which we did with pleasure, because milk and milk products are healthy and nutritious food.

Dairy farmers and farmers of other supply-managed products fared better than others during the pandemic. That is just more proof that they have an effective system. We need to quickly pass version 2.0 of our bill that seeks to protect supply management from any further breaches in future free trade negotiations.

Long live our dairy production here at home.

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[English]

VACCINE MANDATES

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I recently travelled to Israel on a parliamentary mission to learn about the conflict, but something else that really stood out to me was how the country has moved on from COVID. It was immediately noticeable when we got off the plane: no masks, no public health warnings and no distancing or divisive vaccine mandates. In Israel, people are living joyously in a post-COVID world.

As soon as we boarded the flight home to Canada, all COVID restrictions and mandates returned, and I felt the anxiety and stress of the past two years. I realized the terrible impact Canadian restrictions continue to have on our psyches and how desperately people need a return to normal. The current Liberal government will not allow it. The Liberals voted against our motions on travel restrictions and mandates, even though other highly advanced vaccinated countries, with leading scientific and medical experts, have done so.

It does not have to be this way. All Canadians can live freely once again. I have seen it with my own eyes. It is time for Canada to move on too.

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BIRD FRIENDLY CITY

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the City of Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue in my riding of Lac-Saint-Louis is for the birds. Sainte-Anne's is the proud recipient of Nature Canada's Bird Friendly City designation. It is only the 13th city in Canada to qualify.

This designation is the result of the city's long-standing commitment to conserving and enhancing its natural environment with our feathered friends top of mind.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

The bird-friendly measures implemented by the City and its partners over the years include eliminating the use of harmful pesticides, promoting organic gardening and mobilizing citizens through education and awareness.

[English]

Congratulations to Mayor Paola Hawa; Councillor Ryan Young, who has long spearheaded bird-friendly initiatives; the McGill Bird Observatory; and Morgan Arboretum on making it possible for Sainte-Anne's to obtain this well-deserved honour and recognition.

ORAL QUESTIONS

● (1425)

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have failed when it comes to making life more affordable for Canadians.

Canadians are worse off today than they were six years ago with out-of-control gas, grocery, rent and housing costs. What does the Prime Minister do? He does nothing except blame everyone else. Inflation is the fault of COVID and for high gas prices, he blames Putin. That is a cop-out.

What is the Liberal government going to do to reduce the prices of things like fuel and groceries, and when is it finally going to do it?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite talks about six years ago. One of the very first things we did when we got into office was lower taxes for the middle class by raising them on the wealthiest 1%.

We then moved forward with a Canada child benefit that delivers hundreds of dollars a month to Canadians, tax free, while not sending cheques to millionaire families as the Conservatives did before us.

We have now indexed to inflation the Canada child benefit, so as of next month that will rise for families across the country to help them keep up with the cost of living, as we continue to invest in supports for families—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a news flash for the Prime Minister. Canadians cannot keep up with the cost of living. They desperately need a break on these high costs.

Oral Questions

While some provinces are taking action to relieve the pressure on Canadians, the Liberals are actually cheering on high gas prices and raking in the extra cash. On top of tax increases that came on April 1, we are now seeing interest rates rise, which will cost Canadians more, but the Prime Minister continues to deny the reality.

Why will he not take some responsibility and do something to reduce the cost of food, gas and housing?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every step of the way the government has had Canadians' backs, and we will continue to have their backs through these difficult times.

We know we are continuing to lower Canadians' cellphone bills. We did that by 25%, as promised. We committed to working with provinces and territories to cut child care fees in half this year. Families are already seeing real savings as a result. We committed to raising the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour, and it increased again on April 1. Also, by delivering an enhanced Canada worker benefit, more families will benefit from that support.

We will continue to be there to support families across the country.

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JUSTICE

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the cost of everything is going up, and the Prime Minister seems to be in denial about it.

Do members know what else is going up under these Liberals? It is violent crime, and that is because the Liberals are soft on crime. Their soft-on-crime approach means that places such as Winnipeg, Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal are becoming more dangerous with violent crimes increasing under their watch. Criminals who terrorize vulnerable communities should not get just a slap on the wrist and house arrest or bail. They should be behind bars.

Why will the Prime Minister not start standing up for victims, do something to protect the innocent and make sure that violent criminals are put in jail and stay in jail?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 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.

Our reforms turned the page on failed Conservative Party policies that contributed to the overrepresentation of Black and indigenous people in our criminal justice system. At the same time, through our new legislation, we are increasing maximum penalties from 10 to 14 years for firearms-related offences, including smuggling and trafficking. We are there to support Canadians and to keep Canadians safe.

* * *

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister keeps repeating talking points that border on

misinformation and that definitely show a lack of compassion, both for victims of crime and for Canadians who are paying more and more for everything.

To satisfy his insatiable appetite for spending, the Prime Minister is happy to let Canadians pay millions of dollars more every day in taxes because everything costs more. Why will the Prime Minister not stand up, take responsibility, and cut taxes for Canadians to give them a bit of a break?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, comments like that from the Conservatives would have a bit more credibility if they had not voted against our very first measure to cut taxes for the middle class and raise them for the wealthy.

We continued our work by creating a Canada child benefit that helps families who need it most with hundreds of dollars per month and is indexed to inflation and the cost of living. We are there to support people, and we will continue to be there to invest in meaningful ways to help the middle class, while the Conservatives do nothing but criticize and engage in partisan attacks.

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● (1430)

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, how is it partisan to ask the government to spend a little time thinking about how difficult it is for Canadian families to stretch their budget to get to the end of the month? Canadians need help now, not in six months or a year. The Prime Minister must act now.

However, he never even saw it coming, and there was nothing in the last budget to help Canadian families get through the impending recession. Once again, today we learned of a third increase in the rate of inflation. What will the Prime Minister do instead of just spouting rhetoric?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in concrete terms, the investments made by this government will ensure that families will save thousands of dollars in child care costs, and, in Quebec, the number of day care spaces increased as a result of federal investments.

We will continue to be there to invest and to help families. The Canada child benefit is indexed, which means that there will be more money in the pockets of families that need it every month. We continue to be there to support families facing hardship because of the war in Ukraine and the pandemic recovery.

*Oral Questions***JUSTICE**

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister said that he wanted to challenge Quebec's legislation on the secularization of the state "given the vast implications for all Canadians across the country". However, there are no implications for Canada. That is pure nonsense.

This concerns Quebecers and Quebecers alone. Quebec's state secularism law is the will of Quebecers, was passed by Quebec members of Quebec's National Assembly and applies only in Quebec. I think it is quite clear. Canadians have nothing to do with it. It is none of their business. What does the Prime Minister not understand about that?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am certain I must have misheard. Surely the hon. member did not mean to suggest that all those who disagree and who are challenging this law before the courts in Quebec are not true Quebecers.

We will always stand alongside anyone in Canada who wants to defend their fundamental rights, those rights protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. If this does end up before the Supreme Court, the government will be there to defend minority rights, as it always has.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers want to reinforce state secularism where we live, in Quebec. That is for us to decide.

Quebeckers are not telling Canadians what to do in Canada. If the people of Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, want the state and religion to go hand in hand, that is not our problem. They can go ahead and tattoo "In God We Trust" on their faces if they want. We could not care less. It is none of our business.

Quebeckers want state secularism. That is what we voted for. Why would Quebecers allow Canadians to force religion back into our state affairs?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out to the hon. member that his "where we live" is also where I live. I am a Quebecker, and I have every right to make sure that the rights of all Quebeckers get the same respect as those of people elsewhere in the country.

The federal government's job is to make sure that the rights of Canadians across the country are upheld and protected. If this law ends up in the Supreme Court, we will be there to defend and protect the fundamental rights of all Quebeckers and all Canadians.

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[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since 2016, 27,000 Canadians have lost their life to a toxic drug supply. Experts agree that a criminal approach will not save lives and we need a health care-based approach. Now, the Prime Minister has agreed to take a health care-based approach by decriminalizing personal possession in B.C., but if that approach is good in B.C., why will the Prime Minister not support our bill to bring a health care approach for the rest of Canada to save lives across our country?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to take a health care approach across the country, which is exactly the approach one needs to take, one needs to work with the people who actually direct the health care in every different province. That means working with provinces. It means working with municipalities. It means working with frontline workers, and that is exactly what we have done in moving forward with B.C. responsibly to make sure there is a framework around it. Unfortunately, it is not a simple solution like that proposed by the NDP. It is a complex solution that actually goes at the heart of the problem that we are moving forward on, and that is the right way to keep Canadians safe.

● (1435)

[Translation]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since 2016, we have lost 25,000 people in this country to a toxic drug supply.

As we know, we cannot continue to take the same approach and expect different results. We need to do something to help people. The Prime Minister has agreed to take a different approach in British Columbia.

If that approach is good for British Columbia, why is that not the case for the rest of Canada? Why is that not good for Montreal, for example? Why will the Prime Minister not support our bill, which will save lives?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we did indeed decide to work with the Province of British Columbia and the municipalities to move forward with a science-based approach.

However, the Parliament of Canada cannot simply issue an order to do the same thing in other parts of the country without partnerships and without the co-operation of local jurisdictions.

The approach proposed by the NDP would be irresponsible. Responsible leadership means working with partners to move forward, as we are doing in British Columbia. Yes, we are open to doing the same elsewhere, but partnerships are needed to make this happen.

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[English]

JUSTICE

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Mr. Speaker, three RCMP officers were killed in Moncton. Six worshippers were killed inside a Quebec City mosque. Two grandparents and their grandson were murdered in Calgary in 2017. Their killers were given jail sentences of 40 years or more, but the Supreme Court has now capped sentences for mass murderers at 25 years. The Prime Minister likes to say that he has Canadians' backs. Will he stand up for the families of these victims?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our thoughts are with the families and survivors of the hate-filled Islamophobic attacks at the Quebec City mosque and the other killings across the country. At the Supreme Court, we argued in support of a sentencing judge's discretion to impose a longer period of parole ineligibility where appropriate. We know this court decision was painful for many.

We want to be clear: Nothing in the decision changes the fact that all people convicted of murder receive a mandatory life sentence. Just as we did in January 2017, we will stand with the families, survivors and communities and everyone impacted by such violence.

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Mr. Speaker, thoughts are not enough. This decision means that the person who killed three RCMP officers in Moncton will now be eligible for full parole at age 49. The Supreme Court ruling hands this issue back to Parliament for this Parliament and the current government to do something about it. Will the government and the Prime Minister act to ensure that families will not have to go through the retraumatization every two years of parole hearings to ensure that their loved one's killer remains behind bars?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, allow me to be clear once again: Nothing in the Supreme Court decision changes the fact that all people convicted of murder receive a mandatory life sentence.

At the Supreme Court, we argued in support of a sentencing judge's discretion to impose a longer period of parole ineligibility where appropriate, but we will continue to stand with Canadians. We will continue to stand with the victims and survivors of these terrible killings.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court of Canada's ruling on consecutive parole sentences takes the side of serial killers and mass murderers instead of victims. What is cruel and unusual punishment is individuals losing their innocent loved ones to heinous crimes and then having to sit through years of detailed parole hearings, only adding to the trauma. Why is the Prime Minister not taking the necessary steps to ensure victims are put first?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we are also doing is taking the necessary steps to make sure there are fewer victims of mass killings by, for example, banning military-style assault weapons in this country, something Conservative politicians continue to stand against. They want to make those guns used at École Polytechnique and those guns used in other mass killings legal again, which we will continue to stand against. Not only that, but we are now moving forward on an initiative that will make it illegal to buy, sell, transfer or import handguns anywhere in Canada.

• (1440)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is disinformation, and the Prime Minister knows that they were already banned in the seventies.

Those with consecutive sentences have only committed the most horrifying of crimes, yet the Supreme Court wants these criminals to have the opportunity to be in society again. Canada's worst crim-

inals should be locked behind bars and not free to walk the streets, so when will the Prime Minister start standing with victims and commit to ensuring that criminals serve sentences that reflect the severity of their crimes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps a more appropriate question is, when will the Conservative Party stop standing with the NRA and start standing with Canadians, so there are fewer victims of violent crimes and fewer victims of mass murders?

That is why we moved forward with a ban on military-style assault weapons in this country, and it is now illegal to buy, sell or use a military-style assault weapon in this country. On top of that, we are moving forward to make it illegal to buy, sell or import handguns anywhere in this country. The Conservative Party stands against that. Canadians should ask them why.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, section 33.1 of the Criminal Code states that the defence of extreme intoxication is not available when an act includes an assault, but just recently the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that section 33.1 of the Criminal Code violates sections 7 and 11 of the Charter of Rights.

What part of this protects victims?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government is unwavering in our commitment to ensuring that our criminal justice system keeps communities safe, respects victims and holds offenders to account, all while upholding charter rights. We are carefully reviewing the decision to determine its effect on victims, as well as the criminal law. We have taken action to strengthen sexual assault laws to ensure that victims are treated with the utmost respect and are protected. This is critical to fostering greater confidence of survivors of sexual assault and gender-based violence, as well as the broader Canadian public, in our justice system.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, time is not on the victims' side right now, so hopefully we hurry up.

Because of the Supreme Court ruling allowing the defence of extreme intoxication, women have shared their fears about coming forward to local agencies and advocates. We are hearing from young women who are concerned about this decision and asking if this is really possible. It is. There needs to be action. There need to be resolutions. Victims' voices have been lost.

When will the Prime Minister do something about it and fix this?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been acting on strengthening our criminal system's response to sexual assault for years now. We passed legislation that requires judges to obtain the necessary training to understand the complex nature of sexual assault and the myths that all too often surround it—

The Speaker: I am going to have to interrupt the Right Hon. Prime Minister.

I am trying to hear the answer, and I am sure the hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London wants to hear the answer as well, so I am going to ask everyone to tone it down a bit. There are a couple of members out there who have very strong voices, and I admire them, but please try to restrain them while somebody else is speaking.

The Right Hon. Prime Minister, right from the top, please.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, we have been acting and will consistently act to support survivors of sexual assault and make sure the justice system responds to them better. We passed legislation that requires judges to obtain the necessary training to understand the complex nature of sexual assault and the myths that too often surround it. Budget 2021 included \$85.3 million over five years to ensure access to free legal advice and legal representation for survivors of sexual assault and intimate partner violence. We have also made over \$12 million in funding available through the victims fund for projects designed to improve the criminal justice system's response to sexual assault against adults, and there is more to do.

• (1445)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, not only does the Prime Minister want to challenge Quebec's Bill 21, but the Liberals are even planning to use the case to put Quebec under federal control.

On Friday, his colleague from Mount Royal said that the notwithstanding clause should be completely abolished and that this article has no place in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and should never be used. He wants to take away the only constitutional recourse Quebec has to protect our societal choices from the dictates of the federal government or federally appointed judges.

Will the Prime Minister correct him and reiterate that the notwithstanding clause is important?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think that it is important that everyone remember that, when a legislative assembly or parliament chooses to suspend the basic rights of some of its citizens, we need to give that consideration and special attention.

We know that every Quebecker and Canadian wants their fundamental protections under the charter to be upheld. When a government chooses to set aside those fundamental protections, we have to give that some serious consideration, and that is exactly what we are pointing out.

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, cases like Bill 21 are the very reason why the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms includes a notwithstanding clause.

It is there specifically to prevent Canadian institutions from unilaterally overturning the democratic rights of Quebec and the provinces. It is there specifically to prevent the Prime Minister from blocking Bill 21 and imposing his own vision of state secularism, the vision of a guy who believes that members should pray in Parliament every day.

Will the Prime Minister leave the notwithstanding clause alone or will he place Quebec under federal control?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois may be ready to attack one of our country's fundamental freedoms, freedom of conscience, but I know that the federal government will be there to defend fundamental freedoms such as gender equality and the protection of minorities, including official language minorities across the country.

We will always ensure that the fundamental rights of all Canadians, whether they live in Quebec or elsewhere in Canada, are protected. That is what Canadians expect from this government.

[*English*]

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, gun violence has gone up significantly over the past seven years of the Liberal government. That is a fact. It is also fact that most guns used in violent crime are smuggled in from the United States. Gun smugglers and gun traffickers are responsible for the murder of innocent Canadians in our cities, such as Toronto, Montreal, Regina and Edmonton.

Why is the Liberal Prime Minister removing mandatory jail time for people who smuggle guns into Canada under Bill C-5? Why is he letting them off the hook?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are actually increasing the penalty from 10 years to 14 years for the illegal smuggling of guns. The concern that the Conservative Party seems to have around guns gives me hope that perhaps, finally, they will agree to support our ban on military-style assault weapons. Perhaps they will actually support putting a freeze on the importation, transfer, sale or purchase of handguns in this country.

It is great to hear the Conservatives concerned about gun violence. Now maybe they will step up and strengthen gun control instead of weakening it.

*Oral Questions***JUSTICE**

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the Prime Minister's Bill C-5 will severely threaten the safety of families, children, mothers and vulnerable communities, because Bill C-5 would allow criminals who commit serious and deadly gun crimes to serve house arrest rather than go to jail, meaning these dangerous criminals will be kept in the communities they have terrorized, which will disproportionately impact Black and indigenous communities. It is sick.

Why is the Prime Minister prioritizing dangerous criminals with guns over the safety of our communities?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course we are doing no such thing. We are looking at the systemic discrimination and racism that exist in our justice system, which unfairly, particularly under the previous Conservative government's tough-on-crime approach, penalizes Black and indigenous Canadians.

This is why we will continue to move forward in a responsible way to make sure that criminals are punished, that penalties are brought in and that our communities are kept safe, including by preventing more Canadians from becoming victims of gun violence by strengthening gun control. Why will the Conservatives not stand with us on that?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Anie Samson, the former vice-chair of the City of Montreal's executive committee and now the head of public safety, said, "There is concern about the fate of our criminals in prison, when at the same time there are hundreds of families mourning the loss of a loved one."

If the Liberals continue with their reckless strategy, even massive injections of money from the provinces to crack down on guns will be ineffective. If Bill C-5 is passed, Canadian communities will no doubt see an increase in violence.

Will the Prime Minister take responsibility for that?

• (1450)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are improving our justice systems to ensure there is less systemic discrimination and racism against indigenous communities and Black Canadians.

We will continue instituting better gun controls to ensure there are fewer victims of violence. I cannot believe that Conservative members from Quebec are still rising in support of relaxing gun control and blocking our attempts to restrict handguns or even military-style assault weapons.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is trying to play both sides.

We are talking about Bill C-5 and he is talking about Bill C-21, but what is clear is that Quebecker Anie Samson told the committee that "a criminal who uses an illegal firearm, regardless of their [ethnic] origin, is still a criminal. It would be incomprehensible to let criminals use firearms to kill, rob or threaten people without worry-

ing about having to face the same consequences as other criminals".

The Prime Minister, with the complicity of the NDP and the Bloc Québécois, would rather play petty politics than keep Canadian communities safe.

Does the Prime Minister realize the negative impact that Bill C-5 will have?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the legislative measures set out in Bill C-5 do nothing to stop police from charging people or prosecutors from pursuing convictions. What these measures do is ensure that criminals face serious penalties while addressing the overrepresentation of Black Canadians and indigenous peoples in the criminal justice system.

I know Anie Samson, the former mayor of my borough, very well, and I can safely say that she is also concerned about the plight of Black and indigenous youth who find themselves unfairly caught up in our criminal justice system.

The Speaker: Before we continue, I want to remind members in the front row that, when they talk, the Prime Minister's microphone picks up what they are saying. I know they are not doing it on purpose, but I just want to tell them that they are disrupting the proceedings.

[*English*]

The hon. member for London—Fanshawe.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, two days ago the Justice Arbour report came out and the Liberals are already failing to take it seriously. Today's news that the government will bring back Canada's top military police officer, despite his being asked to apologize for his mishandling of a sexual assault case, is appalling. We have heard over and over again that there needs to be a culture change in Canada's armed forces. This is not it.

For seven years, the Prime Minister has protected toxic men in positions of power. When will the "feminist" Prime Minister finally do what is right for women?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking Madam Justice Louise Arbour for her extraordinary work and for her excellent report, which we accept. We know that transformational change is necessary for our defence institutions and we are taking steps to build a military and defence team where everyone feels safe, protected and respected.

We have accepted the report, and work is already under way on a number of her recommendations. We are committed to completing this important work for the sake of all the women and men who choose to serve in the Canadian Armed Forces. They deserve forces that are up to the level they demand.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have to say that a culture change is going to take much better answers coming from the top than that.

Canadians certainly did not cause inflation, but they are paying for it. They are paying for it at the grocery store and now they are paying for it with another interest rate hike by the Bank of Canada. While there are things outside the government's control, there are things that it can do. Even Boris Johnson has seen fit to bring in a windfall tax on oil and gas companies making a ton of money on the backs of people during this period of inflation. That is money the government could use to double the GST credit and raise the Canada child benefit by \$500.

Will the Prime Minister get up and commit to these things, instead of talking about what he did in 2016?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we continue to move forward on supports for families and supports for Canadians, including during this difficult time. The war in Ukraine and the supply chain disruptions caused by this pandemic are contributing to global inflation, which Canadians are feeling. People are struggling with the cost of groceries and people are struggling with the cost of gas. I spoke with a number of families in Saskatoon just last week that thanked me for the fact that the amounts they are paying for child care have significantly dropped already, more than enough to compensate for some of the extra charges.

We are delivering supports for families across the country. We will continue to be there for Canadians every step of the way.

* * *

● (1455)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that a dangerous situation can quickly turn deadly when a firearm is present. Canadians deserve to feel safe from gun violence. Unfortunately, Conservative politicians are more focused on fulfilling their promises to the gun lobby than actually keeping our communities safe.

On our side, I know we are taking real action to tackle this issue. Can the Prime Minister update the House on the concrete steps this government is taking to protect Canadians from gun violence?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Brampton South for her hard work and for her advocacy in her community.

This week, we presented the most ambitious move to strengthen gun control in a generation and introduced many provisions to protect our society's most vulnerable, such as allowing judges to pro-

Oral Questions

tect the identity of those who raise a flag and giving law enforcement more tools to intercept guns coming over our borders and to get them off our streets. While Conservative politicians want to allow dangerous weapons back into our communities, we are capping handgun ownership and moving Canada forward.

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TAXATION

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with today's interest rate hike, more and more households will have less to pay for rising fuel and grocery costs. Other G7 countries are trying to help with skyrocketing gas prices, but the Prime Minister is making things worse. His big spending has been called inflationary by the Parliamentary Budget Officer and his carbon tax has been called inflationary by the Governor of the Bank of Canada.

The Conservatives have proposed a temporary cut to GST at the pumps to help Canadians. Will the Prime Minister finally quit his worn out talking points and finally give the middle class and those striving to join it a break?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite well knows but will not share with his constituents or any Canadians, the price on pollution actually returns more money to the average Canadian family than it costs in many places where it has been brought in. We are talking about over \$1,000 a year for families in Saskatchewan and Alberta and \$800 or so in Manitoba.

We will continue to make sure we are supporting Canadians, even as we move beyond our reliance on fossil fuels. This is something we know the world is asking for and Canadians are asking for, and we are leading on it despite Conservative—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, inflation is always some else's problem to solve, not the Prime Minister's, and leadership is everything. Germany has given a \$16-billion break on fuel taxes. The United States has opened up the strategic reserve. The Prime Minister has asked Canadians to forgive him for not thinking about monetary policy, but inflation is hitting them hard and we are seeing zero leadership from him.

The Conservatives are not asking the Prime Minister to pay for his own meals, to pay for his own gas and to pay for his own housing. Will he act today and give Canadians a break at the pumps so they can pay for theirs?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know the current challenges around the cost of living are hitting Canadian families hard, which is why we are continuing to step up on supports for them, whether it is supports for seniors, supports for families through the Canada child benefit, with increases linked to inflation, or moving forward on historic child care deals that are saving Canadian families across the country thousands of dollars this year because of reduced costs.

We are going to continue to support Canadians during this difficult time because we know they need it.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's goal to make everything more expensive is punishing Canadians at the grocery store. My constituency survey on inflationary grocery prices had this response from a resident: "When is it going to stop? How much more do you think people can afford to spend on set incomes!" Another said that with the cost of food now so high, they cannot afford medicine anymore.

When is the Prime Minister going to wake up to how his made-in-Canada inflation is putting basic necessities out of reach for so many people?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know the global inflation caused first by the pandemic and second by Vladimir Putin's illegal war in Ukraine is putting pressure on families, including with high gas prices. Canadians deserve support, which is what we are giving, but the Conservatives have opposed policies that put money back into Canadians' pockets. They voted against cutting taxes for the middle class, they voted against cutting child care fees in half this year and they voted against more support for families, seniors and students. They are also opposing our price on pollution, which means they are opposing giving more money to eight out of 10 Canadian families. We will be—

• (1500)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Kelowna—Lake Country.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is incredibly sad that the Prime Minister is so out of touch with what people are going through. However, it is not only individuals; it is small businesses as well. The total number of insolvencies in Canada in March 2022 compared with March 2021 was 33.1%. The Liberals' comments that business is back to pre-pandemic levels and that it is all sunny ways for everyone are false.

When will the Prime Minister just acknowledge that everything is more expensive, that people are struggling, that he blames everything on everyone else and that he really has no solutions?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the past two years of the pandemic, we have been there for small businesses, with help in the way of CEBA loans, the Canada emergency wage subsidy and direct support for families. We were able to continue to ensure that small businesses would be able to hold through the darkest times of this pandemic.

Unfortunately, this pandemic continues, and with it we see record inflation around the world. We see a rise in the cost of fuel and groceries. That is why we continue to be there to support families that are squeezed by this, by investing in them and making sure we are making the kinds of investments that support them without adding further inflationary pressures. That is what we will continue to do.

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[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, once again, yesterday, the Prime Minister refused to give Quebec the immigration powers it is asking for. He justified it by saying that it was "because protecting French and francophone immigration is very important". Of course it is important. That is exactly why Quebec wants to be responsible for all its immigration. Quebec's future as a nation, where French is the common and official language, hinges on protecting French and francophone immigration.

Does anyone here seriously believe that the federal government is in a better position than Quebec to provide this protection?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a Quebecker, I know that the federal government has an important role to play in protecting French, not only in Quebec, but also throughout the country. It is precisely for the sake of those French-speaking communities across the country that we must continue to work to ensure francophone immigrants settle everywhere in the country.

As far as Quebec is concerned, we are very happy to work hand in hand with the Quebec government to increase francophone immigration. If that is what the Quebec government wants, we are there to work in partnership with it. Our government is there as a partner to protect the French language and increase Quebec's population.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let us recap. The Prime Minister says that he will challenge Bill 21 and that Canada must be able to dictate Quebec's vision on state secularism. He then says that he wants to limit the scope of the notwithstanding clause to ensure that Quebeckers will never again have the right to adopt legislation that upsets Canada. He is saying that Quebec will never get the immigration powers it is calling for so that it can better integrate newcomers.

At this point, what does the Prime Minister have to say to the Quebeckers who want to make their own democratic choices? Is the only option independence?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think my esteemed colleague in the Bloc Québécois skipped a step. All Quebeckers are also Canadians, and as Prime Minister of all Canadians, I have a responsibility to protect every individual's fundamental rights. This is something that I will always do, knowing that protecting my beautiful French language is a central priority for our government and for myself, as a Quebecker.

Therefore, yes, we will assume our responsibility of protecting the fundamental rights of Quebeckers, who are also Canadians.

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[English]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the heritage minister was not able to answer any of my questions on Monday, so I am hoping that perhaps the Prime Minister might be able to assist me today.

The heritage minister has claimed repeatedly that Bill C-11 does not capture user-generated content, but the chair of the CRTC, Mr. Scott, has said that, in fact, user-generated content is captured within Bill C-11.

Both of these men cannot be correct. I am wondering if the Prime Minister could clarify this for the sake of Canadians watching today: Should they believe his minister, or should they believe the chair of the CRTC?

• (1505)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear that Bill C-11 applies to platforms, not to users.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my riding is home to two great online content creators. Julia Westlin and David Michaud get millions of views on YouTube and are known throughout the world. They make a living from their art.

Under Bill C-11, as it now stands, the CRTC could regulate their content, which would have a major impact on their livelihoods.

Can the Prime Minister categorically assure us that the content that is generated by all social media users, including Julia and David, will be exempt from this bill, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to acknowledge the work of Julia and David and say that their content will be protected. We are here to ensure that platforms protect Canadian content and that our content generators, our creators, are supported. That is what the Conservatives still do not understand. We, on this side of the House, will always stand with creators and artists. As for the Conservatives, we are all too familiar with their track record.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just because the Prime Minister says something does necessarily make it true. The bill states in black and white that the CRTC can regulate any content that directly or indirectly generates revenues, which includes content created by artists who do not ask for any subsidies and who want to live off their art. It is not the Conservatives but rather experts in the field who have raised red flags.

I repeat my simple question for the Prime Minister. Will he exempt all creators who post online and on social media from this act, yes or no?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yes, individual creators are protected under this legislation. It is the platforms that we are targeting.

Let us not forget that we have been able to protect Quebec and Canadian culture by making Canadian creators more discoverable on platforms, including radio, TV and now the Internet.

We want to ensure that Canadian creators are seen, heard and appreciated. That is exactly what Bill C-11 does, and that is what the Conservatives still do not seem to understand.

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TOURISM INDUSTRY

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with summer just around the corner, people around the world are starting to plan their summer vacation.

As we know, measures at the borders are being eased and Canada is getting ready to welcome the world.

Can the Prime Minister tell us what the government is doing to promote Canada on the world stage so as to encourage people to come enjoy our country from coast to coast to coast?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Alfred-Pellan for his question and his hard work.

The past two years were extremely difficult for the tourism industry. On this national tourism week, I would like to thank the tourism industry for its resilience and for promoting Canada around the world.

Whether it is about dancing to the music at the Montreal International Jazz Festival or watching Belugas in Churchill, let us showcase Canada and make it the top tourist destination for people around the world.

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[English]

HEALTH

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nothing says, “Happy Tourism Week” like the arbitrary, unjustified extension of the restrictions and mandates in Canada’s airports. Airports, airlines, chambers of commerce and health experts have all called for an end to mandates, and, this week, even members of the Prime Minister’s own caucus said that these restrictions do not make sense anymore.

What was his response? He doubled down. What more will it take for him to finally do the right thing, do his job, clear the backlogs in our airports and give Canadians their rights back?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, I wish we were able, like the Conservatives think we are, to simply wish away a pandemic, wish away the thousands of deaths, and wish away the people dying every day, who continue to do so, in this pandemic. Yes, we all want it to be over, but the best way to make sure that it is over—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. Are we ready?

The right hon. Prime Minister can begin from the top, please.

• (1510)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, once again, we see the Conservatives in denial about the reality of this pandemic. We continue to have a pandemic in this country. We continue to need to take measures to keep Canadians safe, and we will continue to be informed by the best public health advice and the advice of experts to get us through this.

We know that Canada was able to do the right things across the country to minimize the impacts of the pandemic both on Canadians and on our economy. We will continue to make sure we are putting the health of Canadians and the health of our economy first and foremost because nobody wants another wave of this COVID-19.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nearly 38,000 people participated in a Twitter poll posted by the government, but PHAC says 33,000 of them got the answer wrong. It seems like the government has done a terrible job of keeping Canadians informed.

The Prime Minister has extended his punishing mandates for another month, so let us give him a chance to provide Canadians with some information and some facts. For how many more months will the Prime Minister extend his unscientific mandates?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, no one knows how long this pandemic is going to last, but I can tell members that, even though the Conservatives seem to think it is over already, it is not. We will continue to make sure we are putting first and foremost the protection of Canadians, their safety, their well-being, the safety and the reliability of their jobs, and their futures.

We have done that every step of the way, and we will continue to be informed by science, not by the barking of the Conservative opposition.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has changed his story so many times and moved the goalpost so many times. He refuses to answer a simple question. Millions of Canadians have lost their jobs and cannot travel across the country because the Prime Minister chooses to divide, wedge and stigmatize. Canadians deserve leadership, not ideology.

When will the Prime Minister finally drop the divisive politics and end the mandates?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, we see the Conservatives refusing to remember that we actually had a very important election last year on the question

of mandates and on the question of protections for Canadians, and they lost that election.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, overwhelmingly, Canadians supported moving forward with vaccination mandates to keep Canadians safe. Unfortunately, they are stuck on the wrong side of things, but we continue to know putting science first and putting vaccinations first actually matters most to keep Canadians safe and to keep our economy going well. That is what we will continue to do.

The Speaker: We are getting close to the end, and I know everybody is getting excited, but I would just like to remind members, especially the ones with loud voices that carry well, that I can hear them. As well, some of them do not have masks on, so I can see their lips moving. I know who they are.

The hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country.

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, British Columbia has been the epicentre for the overdose crisis for the past several years, and the increasingly toxic drug supply has exacerbated an already heart-breaking loss of life. In B.C. alone, there were an average of five deaths per day in the month of March alone, sending shock waves of grief that ripple through families and communities.

Can the Prime Minister please update the House on what our government is doing to turn the tide on the overdose and toxic drug supply crisis to save lives and to create a brighter future for communities in my province and right across the country?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country for his incredibly hard work on this file and others.

We are taking concrete action to tackle the opioid epidemic, including the announcement of the approval of B.C.'s proposal to decriminalize personal possession of certain small amounts. We will work in partnership with B.C. through its comprehensive monitoring and evaluation strategy to address both public health and public safety. Our approach is supporting community-led solutions to reduce harm, treat addiction and prevent overdoses.

* * *

• (1515)

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is so nice to see you back in the chair.

Last week, the Liberals said they would move ahead with a disability benefit bill. People with disabilities deserve meaningful support from the government, and they have made it clear that the last bill was not good enough. Any new legislation must spell out comprehensive support. It cannot leave people behind. People living with disabilities have been waiting over a year for better.

Will the Prime Minister promise that any new legislation will actually lift Canadians with disabilities out of poverty?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am always pleased to see members of the NDP asking about this file. It is one that we take extraordinarily seriously and have continued to lead on every step of the way, including through the difficult times of the pandemic, by being there for Canadians living with disabilities. That is why we are very pleased to be moving forward to reintroduce the Canada disabilities legislation.

We know that support for people with disabilities is extremely important, but we also know that getting it right really matters. We do nothing about people with disabilities without Canadians with disabilities' input, and that is why we will be working with the community to make sure we are getting it right.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, this is it. The Prime Minister has one last opportunity before we vote on Bill C-216. A national crisis requires federal leadership. There are moms, such as Irene and Angela, who are with us today, and the tens of thousands more across the country, who have lost loved ones to a poisoned drug supply.

The Prime Minister can put people's lives ahead of politics. He can turn around right now and give his caucus permission to support having expert input at committee. Will he do it?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are acting to keep Canadians safe. We have moved forward with a proposal, working hand in hand with the provincial government in British Columbia to make sure that, as we move forward, people have the supports in their community and in the local health system. We need a wraparound approach, which B.C. is leading on, and we are very pleased to work with them. We also look forward to working with any other jurisdiction that wants to take on this responsible approach, which British Columbia and its NDP government has led with. We stand with them, and we thank them for their leadership as we move forward.

The Speaker: That is all the time we have for questions today.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order.

During question period, I and a number of members on this side of the House heard the member for Kildonan—St. Paul make an intemperate if not incendiary remark in response to an answer the

Private Members' Business

Prime Minister was making with regard to the over-incarceration of indigenous peoples and Black Canadians.

I am confident that this member will not want those remarks to stand in the Hansard. I ask that you, Mr. Speaker, offer her the opportunity to withdraw those remarks or to significantly clarify them to the House.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if the member is referring to my question, so maybe he can clarify it.

Hon. Greg Fergus: Mr. Speaker, I am very reluctant to repeat those comments because they were so incendiary and intemperate. If I may, I might ask you, Mr. Speaker, to review Hansard and to review the comments that I am certain our reporters heard.

To answer the member's question, it was not a question that she posed to the Prime Minister. Rather, it was a statement that she made while the Prime Minister was answering.

The Speaker: If it is okay with the House, what we will do is we will revise the language and then come back to the House, should something arise from that.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1520)

[English]

FIGHTING AGAINST FORCED LABOUR AND CHILD LABOUR IN SUPPLY CHAINS ACT

The House resumed from May 18, consideration of the motion that Bill S-211, An Act to enact the Fighting Against Forced Labour and Child Labour in Supply Chains Act and to amend the Customs Tariff, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: It being 3:18 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 at second reading stage of the bill.

Call in the members.

● (1530)

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

(Division No. 113)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Alghabra	Ali
Allison	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus

Private Members' Business

Arnold	Arseneault	Kelloway	Kelly
Arya	Atwin	Khalid	Khera
Bachrach	Badawey	Kitchen	Kmiec
Bains	Baker	Koutrakis	Kram
Baldinelli	Barlow	Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Barrett	Barron	Kusie	Kusmierczyk
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste	Kwan	Lake
Beaulieu	Beech	Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Bendayan	Bennett	Lametti	Lamoureux
Benzen	Bergen	Lantsman	Lapointe
Bergeron	Berthold	Larouche	Lattanzio
Bérubé	Bezan	Lauzon	Lawrence
Bibeau	Bittle	LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Blaikie	Blair	Lehoux	Lemire
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas	Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Blaney	Block	Liepert	Lloyd
Blois	Boissonnault	Lobb	Long
Boulerice	Bradford	Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
Bragdon	Brassard	MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
Brière	Brock	MacGregor	MacKenzie
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire
Cannings	Caputo	Maloney	Martel
Carr	Carrie	Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Casey	Chabot	Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
Chagger	Chahal	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Mazier
Chambers	Champagne	McCauley (Edmonton West)	McDonald (Avalon)
Champoux	Chatel	McGuinty	McKay
Chen	Chiang	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLean
Chong	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	McLeod	McPherson
Collins (Victoria)	Cooper	Melillo	Mendès
Cormier	Coteau	Menicino	Miao
Dabrusin	Dalton	Michaud	Miller
Damoff	Dancho	Moore	Morantz
Davidson	Davies	Morrice	Morrison
DeBellefeuille	Deltell	Morrissey	Motz
d'Entremont	Desbiens	Murray	Muys
Desilets	Desjarlais	Naqvi	Nater
Dhaliwal	Dhillon	Ng	Noormohamed
Diab	Doherty	Normandin	O'Connell
Dong	Dowdall	Oliphant	O'Regan
Dreeshen	Drouin	O'Toole	Patzner
Dubourg	Duclos	Paul-Hus	Perkins
Duguid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi	Plamondon	Poilievre
El-Khoury	Ellis	Powlowski	Qualtrough
Epp	Erskine-Smith	Rayes	Redekopp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)	Reid	Rempel Garner
Fast	Fergus	Richards	Roberts
Ferreri	Fillmore	Robillard	Rodriguez
Findlay	Fisher	Rogers	Romanado
Fonseca	Fortier	Rood	Ruff
Fortin	Fragiskatos	Sahota	Sajjan
Fraser	Freeland	Saks	Samson
Fry	Gaheer	Sarai	Savard-Tremblay
Gallant	Garneau	Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Garon	Garrison	Schiefke	Schmale
Gaudreau	Gazan	Serré	Sgro
Généreux	Genuis	Shanahan	Sheehan
Gerretsen	Gill	Shields	Shipley
Gladu	Godin	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Goodridge	Gould	Simard	Singh
Gourde	Gray	Small	Sorbara
Green	Hajdu	Soroka	Steinley
Hallan	Hanley	Ste-Marie	Stewart
Hardie	Hepfner	St-Onge	Strahl
Hoback	Holland	Stubbs	Sudds
Housefather	Hughes	Tassi	Taylor Roy
Hussen	Hutchings	Thériault	Therrien
Iacono	Idlout	Thomas	Thompson
Ien	Jaczek	Tochor	Tolmie
Johns	Joly	Trudeau	Turnbull
Jones	Jowhari	Uppal	Valdez
Julian	Kayabaga	Van Bynen	van Koeverden

Private Members' Business

Van Popta
Vandenbeld
Vidal
Viersen
Villemure
Vis
Wagantall
Waugh
Weiler
Williams
Yip
Zarrillo
Zuberi— 327

Vandal
Vecchio
Vien
Vignola
Virani
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Wilkinson
Williamson
Zahid
Zimmer

Collins (Victoria)
Dabrusin
DeBellefeuille
Desilets
Dzerowicz
Fillmore
Garneau
Garrison
Gazan
Green
Hughes
Johns
Kwan
Lemire
Long
MacGregor
Masse
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McLeod
Michaud
Normandin
Plamondon
Simard
Ste-Marie
Therrien
Villemure
Zarrillo— 71

Coteau
Davies
Desbiens
Desjarlais
Erskine-Smith
Fortin
Garon
Gaudreau
Gill
Hanley
Idlout
Julian
Larouche
Lightbound
MacDonald (Malpeque)
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Morrice
Perron
Savard-Tremblay
Singh
Thériault
Vignola
Vuong

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee.)

* * *

• (1535)

[*Translation*]

HEALTH-BASED APPROACH TO SUBSTANCE USE ACT

The House resumed from May 20 consideration of the motion that Bill C-216, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and to enact the Expungement of Certain Drug-related Convictions Act and the National Strategy on Substance Use Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

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 motion at second reading stage of Bill C-216 under Private Members' Business.

The question is on the motion.

[*English*]

May I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

• (1545)

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

(*Division No. 114*)

YEAS

Members

Angus
Atwin
Barron
Beaulieu
Bérubé
Blanchet
Blaney
Brunelle-Duceppe
Chabot

Ashton
Bachrach
Barsalou-Duval
Bergeron
Blaikie
Blanchette-Joncas
Boulerice
Cannings
Champoux

Abouttaif
Albas
Ali
Anand
Arnold
Arya
Bains
Baldinelli
Barrett
Bennett
Bergen
Bezan
Bittle
Block
Boissonnault
Bragdon
Brière
Calkins
Carr
Casey
Chahal
Champagne
Chen
Chong
Cooper
Dalton
Dancho
Deltell
Dhaliwal
Diab
Dong
Dreeshen
Dubourg
Duguid
Ehsassi
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Ferrerri
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser

NAYS

Members

Aitchison
Aldag
Allison
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Badawey
Baker
Barlow
Beech
Benzen
Berthold
Bibeau
Blair
Blois
Bradford
Brassard
Brock
Caputo
Carrie
Chagger
Chambers
Chatel
Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier
Damoff
Davidson
d'Entremont
Dhillon
Doherty
Dowdall
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
El-Khoury
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Fergus
Findlay
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Freeland

Private Members' Business

Gaheer	Gallant
Généreux	Genuis
Gerretsen	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gould	Gourde
Gray	Hajdu
Hallan	Hepfner
Hoback	Holland
Housefather	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Ien	Jaczek
Jeneroux	Joly
Jones	Jowhari
Kelloway	Kelly
Khera	Kitchen
Kmiec	Koutrakis
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Kusmierczyk	Lake
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lantsman	Lapointe
Lattanzio	Lauson
Lawrence	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKenzie	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maguire	Maloney
Martel	May (Cambridge)
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McLean
Melillo	Mendès
Mendicino	Miao
Miller	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Morrissey	Motz
Murray	Muys
Naqvi	Nater
Ng	Noormohamed
O'Connell	O'Regan
O'Toole	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Perkins
Petipas Taylor	Poilievre
Powlowski	Qualtrough
Rayes	Redekopp
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Rood
Ruff	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Schiefke	Schmale
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Shields	Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Small	Sorbara
Soroka	Steinley
Stewart	St-Onge
Strahl	Stubbs
Sudds	Tassi
Taylor Roy	Thomas
Thompson	Tochor
Tolmie	Trudeau
Turnbull	Uppal
Valdez	Van Popta
Vandal	Vandenbeld

Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Virani	Vis
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Weiler	Wilkinson
Williams	Williamson
Yip	Zahid
Zimmer	Zuberi — 248

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!**The Speaker:** Order.

I want to remind hon. members that reacting to what is going on in the galleries is not permitted, in case anyone forgot.

* * *

● (1550)

[*Translation*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from May 30 consideration of the motion that Bill C-233, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Judges Act (violence against an intimate partner) be read the third time and passed.

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 motion at third reading stage of Bill C-233 under Private Members' Business.

The question is on the motion.

● (1600)

[*English*]

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

(Division No. 115)

YEAS

Members

Aboultarif	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Alghabra	Ali
Allison	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Benzen	Bergen
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney

Private Members' Business

Block	Blois	Lloyd	Lobb
Boissonnault	Boulerice	Long	Longfield
Bradford	Bragdon	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
Brassard	Brière	MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe	MacKenzie	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Calkins	Cannings	Maguire	Maloney
Caputo	Carr	Martel	Martinez Ferrada
Carrie	Casey	Masse	Mathysen
Chabot	Chagger	May (Cambridge)	May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)
Chahal	Chambers	Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
Champagne	Champoux	McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
Chatel	Chen	McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Chiang	Chong	McLean	McLeod
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)	McPherson	Melillo
Cooper	Cormier	Mendès	Mendicino
Coteau	Dabrusin	Miao	Michaud
Dalton	Damoff	Miller	Moore
Dancho	Davidson	Morantz	Morrice
Davies	DeBellefeuille	Morrison	Morrissey
Deltell	d'Entremont	Motz	Murray
Desbiens	Desilets	Muys	Naqvi
Dhaliwal	Dhillon	Nater	Ng
Diab	Doherty	Noormohamed	Normandin
Dong	Dowdall	O'Connell	Oliphant
Dreeshen	Drouin	O'Regan	O'Toole
Dubourg	Duclos	Patzer	Paul-Hus
Duguid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Perkins	Perron
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi	Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
El-Khoury	Ellis	Poilievre	Powlowski
Epp	Erskine-Smith	Qualtrough	Rayes
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)	Redekopp	Reid
Fast	Fergus	Rempel Garner	Richards
Ferreri	Fillmore	Roberts	Robillard
Findlay	Fisher	Rodriguez	Rogers
Fonseca	Fortier	Romanado	Rood
Fortin	Fragiskatos	Ruff	Sahota
Fraser	Freeland	Sajjan	Saks
Fry	Gaheer	Samson	Sarai
Gallant	Garneau	Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Garon	Garrison	Scheer	Schiefke
Gaudreau	Gazan	Schmale	Serré
Généreux	Genuis	Sgro	Shanahan
Gerretsen	Gill	Sheehan	Shields
Gladu	Godin	Shiple	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Goodridge	Gould	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Gourde	Gray	Singh	Small
Green	Hajdu	Sorbara	Soroka
Hallan	Hanley	Steinley	Ste-Marie
Hardie	Hepfner	Stewart	St-Onge
Hoback	Holland	Strahl	Stubbs
Housefather	Hughes	Sudds	Tassi
Hussen	Hutchings	Taylor Roy	Thériault
Iacono	Idlout	Therrien	Thomas
Ien	Jaczek	Thompson	Tochor
Jeneroux	Johns	Tolmie	Trudeau
Joly	Jones	Turnbull	Uppal
Jowhari	Julian	Valdez	Van Bynen
Kayabaga	Kelloway	van Koeverden	Van Popta
Kelly	Khalid	Vandal	Vandenbeld
Khera	Kitchen	Vecchio	Vidal
Kmiec	Koutrakis	Vien	Viersen
Kram	Kramp-Neuman	Vignola	Villemure
Kurek	Kusie	Virani	Vis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan	Vuong	Wagantall
Lalonde	Lambropoulos	Warkentin	Waugh
Lametti	Lamoureux	Webber	Weiler
Lantsman	Lapointe	Wilkinson	Williams
Larouche	Lattanzio	Williamson	Yip
Lauzon	Lawrence	Zahid	Zarrillo
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier	Zimmer	Zuberi— 326
Lehoux	Lemire		
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)		
Liepert	Lightbound	Nil	

NAYS

Business of Supply

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS*[English]***BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

OPPOSITION MOTION—CANADA RESEARCH CHAIRS PROGRAM

The House resumed from May 31 consideration of the motion.

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 motion of the member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques related to the business of supply.

The question is on the motion.

• (1615)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 116)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benzen	Bergen
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Carrie
Chabot	Chambers
Champoux	Chong
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
d'Entremont	Desbiens
Desilets	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay
Fortin	Gallant
Garon	Gaudreau
Généreux	Genuis
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kram	Kramp-Neuman

Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Larouche	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lemire
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	MacKenzie
Maguire	Martel
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Michaud	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Normandin
O'Toole	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Perkins
Perron	Plamondon
Poilievre	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ruff	Savard-Tremblay
Scheer	Schmale
Shields	Shiplely
Simard	Small
Soroka	Steinley
Ste-Marie	Stewart
Strahl	Stubbs
Thériault	Therrien
Thomas	Tochor
Tolmie	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Vien
Viersen	Vignola
Villemure	Vis
Vuong	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williams
Williamson	Zimmer — 148

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Barron
Battiste	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chagger
Chahal	Champagne
Chatel	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Fergus	Fillmore
Fisher	Fonseca

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[Translation]

BUILDING A GREEN PRAIRIE ECONOMY ACT

The House resumed from May 31 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.

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 motion at second reading of Bill C-235 under Private Members' Business.

● (1625)

[English]

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

*(Division No. 117)***YEAS**

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bergeron	Bérubé
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
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
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Fergus	Fillmore
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Garneau
Garon	Gaudreau
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gill	Gould
Green	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes

Fortier	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Garneau	Gazan
Gerretsen	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	Lattanzio
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod	McPherson
Mendès	Mendicino
Miao	Miller
Morrice	Morrissey
Murray	Naqvi
Ng	Noormohamed
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski	Qualtrough
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Singh
Sorbara	St-Onge
Sudds	Tassi
Taylor Roy	Thompson
Trudeau	Turnbull
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Virani
Weiler	Wilkinson
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zuberi— 178

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

Private Members' Business

Hussen	Hutchings	d'Entremont	Doherty
Iacono	Idlout	Dowdall	Dreeshen
Jaczek	Johns	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Joly	Jones	Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Jowhari	Julian	Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Kayabaga	Kelloway	Ferreri	Findlay
Khalid	Khera	Gallant	Généreux
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk	Genuis	Gladu
Kwan	Lalonde	Godin	Goodridge
Lambropoulos	Lametti	Gourde	Gray
Lamoureux	Lapointe	Hallan	Hoback
Larouche	Lattanzio	Jeneroux	Kelly
Lauzon	LeBlanc	Kitchen	Kmiec
Lebouthillier	Lemire	Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Lightbound	Long	Kurek	Kusie
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	Lake	Lawrence
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)	Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Maloney	Masse	Lloyd	Lobb
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)	MacKenzie	Maguire
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McDonald (Avalon)	Martel	Mazier
McGuinty	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
McLeod	McPherson	Melillo	Moore
Mendès	Medicino	Morantz	Morrison
Miao	Michaud	Motz	Muys
Miller	Morrice	Nater	O'Toole
Morrissey	Murray	Patzer	Paul-Hus
Naqvi	Ng	Perkins	Poilievre
Noormohamed	Normandin	Rayes	Redekopp
O'Connell	Oliphant	Reid	Rempel Garner
O'Regan	Perron	Richards	Roberts
Petitpas Taylor	Piamondon	Rood	Ruff
Powlowski	Qualtrough	Scheer	Schmale
Robillard	Rodriguez	Shields	Shiple
Rogers	Romanado	Small	Soroka
Sahota	Sajjan	Steinley	Stewart
Saks	Samson	Strahl	Stubbs
Sarai	Savard-Tremblay	Thomas	Tochor
Scarpaleggia	Schieffe	Tolmie	Uppal
Serré	Sgro	Van Popta	Vecchio
Shanahan	Sheehan	Vidal	Vien
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Viersen	Vis
Simard	Singh	Wagantall	Warkentin
Sorbara	Ste-Marie	Waugh	Webber
St-Onge	Sudds	Williams	Williamson
Tassi	Taylor Roy	Zimmer— 117	
Thériault	Therrien		
Thompson	Trudeau		
Turnbull	Valdez		
Van Bynen	van Koeverden		
Vandal	Vandenbeld		
Vignola	Villemure		
Virani	Vuong		
Weiler	Wilkinson		
Yip	Zahid		
Zarrillo	Zuberi— 206		

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology.

(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 67 minutes.

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 Peace River—Westlock, Health; the hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton, Justice; the hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, Health.

NAYS

Members

Abouttaif	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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to two petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, regarding the membership of committees of the House.

• (1630)

[English]

If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the ninth report later this day.

FINANCE

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Finance in relation to Bill C-19, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022 and other measures.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our legislative clerks Jacques Maziade and Émilie Thivierge, finance committee clerk Alexandre Roger, and all our committee staff, interpreters, services, members of the committee, witnesses and department officials for their hard work in getting this report completed.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

While I am on my feet, I move:

That the House do now proceed to Orders of the Day.

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

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, we request a recorded division.

The Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1715)

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

Routine Proceedings

(Division No. 118)

YEAS

Members

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

Government Orders

Robillard
Rogers
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Schieffe
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sorbara
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Trudeau
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Weiler
Zahid
Zuberi — 173

Rodriguez
Romanado
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Singh
St-Onge
Tassi
Thompson
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Virani
Wilkinson
Zarrillo

Perkins
Plamondon
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Rood
Savard-Tremblay
Schmale
Shiple
Small
Steinley
Stewart
Stubbs
Therrien
Tochor
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien
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Waugh
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Perron
Poilievre
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Ruff
Scheer
Shields
Simard
Soroka
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Thériault
Thomas
Tolmie
Van Popta
Vidal
Viersen
Villemure
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Albas
Arnold
Barlow
Barsalou-Duval
Bergen
Berthold
Bezan
Block
Brassard
Brunelle-Duceppe
Caputo
Chabot
Champoux
Cooper
Dancho
DeBellefeuille
d'Entremont
Desilets
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Ferrer
Fortin
Garon
Généreux
Gill
Godin
Gourde
Hallan
Jeneroux
Kitchen
Kram
Kurek
Lake
Larouche
Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lobb
Maguire
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Melillo
Moore
Morrison
Muys
Normandin
Patzner

Aitchison
Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett
Beaulieu
Bergeron
Bérubé
Blanchette-Joncas
Bragdon
Brock
Calkins
Carrie
Chambers
Chong
Dalton
Davidson
Deltell
Desbiens
Doherty
Dreeschen
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Findlay
Gallant
Gaudreau
Genuis
Gladu
Goodridge
Gray
Hoback
Kelly
Kmiec
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Lantsman
Lawrence
Lemire
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
MacKenzie
Martel
Mazier
McLean
Michaud
Morantz
Motz
Nater
O'Toole
Paul-Hus

PAIRED

Nil

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I declare the motion carried.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**CRIMINAL CODE**

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-5, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

[*English*]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There are five motions in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-5.

Motions Nos. 1 to 5 will be grouped for debate and voted upon according to the voting pattern available at the table.

[*Translation*]

The mover of the motion as well as the two members who had submitted an identical notice have indicated to the Chair that they do not wish to proceed with Motion No. 1.

[*English*]

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 2

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

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-5 be amended by deleting Clause 6.

Motion No. 4

That Bill C-5 be amended by deleting Clause 7.

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-5 be amended by deleting Clause 8.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I understand there have been discussions amongst the parties, and if you seek it you should find unanimous consent that the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House earlier this day, be concurred in.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay.

It is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-5, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Madam Speaker, today we are debating Bill C-5 at report stage. It is actually hard to believe that a bill this reckless with the safety and security of Canadians has even gotten this far in the legislative process.

This bill seeks to make changes to the Criminal Code in order to make life easier for criminals charged with violent firearm offences and criminals who are fuelling the opioid crisis in Canada. The Liberals have made themselves dizzy by the amount of spin they put on Bill C-5, but today I want Canadians to hear just the facts about this dangerous piece of legislation.

Most of the offences we are discussing today, for which the Liberals want to get rid of mandatory jail time, are crimes that involve firearms. However, the Liberal government has chosen to leave in the Criminal Code many of the mandatory minimum penalties, particularly some escalating ones around gun violence that came in under the previous Conservative government.

I want to make another point before I get too far into my speech. The charges for which the government is removing mandatory jail time are not for an otherwise innocent individual who was in the wrong place at the wrong time. This bill specifically allows repeat offenders to avoid mandatory jail sentences. These are hardened criminals who have already made the choice to live outside the law

Government Orders

and have not made an effort to change their behaviour. These are the people the Liberals are helping with Bill C-5.

In the government press release announcing Bill C-5, there was not a single mention of guns or gun violence. How, then, would the average Canadian know that this bill would eliminate mandatory jail time for criminals charged with robbery with a firearm; extortion with a firearm; weapons trafficking; importing or exporting knowing that a firearm is unauthorized; discharging a firearm with intent; using a firearm in the commission of an offence; possession of a prohibited or restricted firearm with ammunition; possession of a weapon obtained by the commission of an offence; and possession for the purpose of weapons trafficking, just to name a few? These are the very offences that are ripped from the headlines today, the stories that we are hearing in many of our large cities of gang crimes and drive-by shootings. These are the types of offences for which mandatory jail time would be removed in Bill C-5.

Why would the Liberals keep Canadians in the dark about getting rid of mandatory jail time for these serious offences? I am sure they are familiar with these mandatory prison sentences, as most of them were actually introduced by previous Liberal governments. The Liberal Party used to recognize that public safety should be a key factor.

In 2007, Roy Cullen, the former parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, said that the Liberals “support mandatory minimums for gun related crimes because the research shows they work.” It was Marlene Jennings, the former parliamentary secretary to the Solicitor General of Canada, who correctly stated, “It was a Liberal government that recognized minimum mandatory penalties in very targeted areas could send a clear message and could be effective in the sense of removing the offender from the community and ensuring that the victim and the community were not re-victimized.” In the 2006 election campaign, the Liberal Party of Canada, under the Right Hon. Paul Martin, ran on a promise to increase mandatory minimum sentences.

The version of the Liberal Party that we see today is not using Bill C-5 to reverse Conservative policies. The Liberals are using Bill C-5 to turn away from their own party's long-established values.

Unfortunately, Canadians are seeing the same disregard for foundational beliefs among the members of the NDP as well. It was not so long ago that the former NDP leader, the late Jack Layton, ran on a platform that promised to increase the mandatory minimum penalty for the possession, sale and importation of illegal arms such as handguns, assault rifles and automatic weapons. He also promised to add mandatory minimum sentences to other weapons offences. It is hard to believe how in such a short time, the Liberals and the NDP have turned their backs on the principles and values that were deeply held by their predecessors.

Government Orders

I want to be very clear: The changes to the Criminal Code imposed by Bill C-5 are a radical shift away from long-standing and bipartisan values and principles held by members of this House when it comes to public safety.

• (1720)

The Liberal members and the government across the way cannot pretend that they have not recognized the rising rate of violence in Canadian communities. They have seen it first-hand in their own ridings. While support for this bill would indicate otherwise, I am sure many of the Liberal members are aware of the tragic firearms incidents that are happening weekly in their own ridings. We are talking about gun violence on the streets of Canada's big cities every day.

The member for Mississauga—Streetsville would be aware of the increasingly bold behaviour of violent firearm offenders. In April, a young person was rushed to a hospital in life-threatening condition following a shooting at a townhouse complex in her riding in the middle of the afternoon. The member for Laval—Les Îles is well aware that in his riding, less than a month ago, a young man was shot just after 1 o'clock in the afternoon. Just a few weeks ago, on May 11, the Montreal police announced that the city's ninth homicide this year had taken place shortly after 4 o'clock in the afternoon. That shooting occurred in the riding of Papineau.

Criminals carrying firearms are becoming more brazen, and it is happening right in the Liberal members' own backyards. Instead of coming down hard on these violent offenders, the Liberals are rewarding their behaviour by giving them changes to the Criminal Code as proposed in Bill C-5.

André Gélinas is a retired detective sergeant with the Montreal police service with years of experience, particularly with gang violence in Montreal. We have all seen the headlines out of big urban centres like Montreal and the rising gun and gang violence terrorizing communities within Canadian cities. The retired sergeant told the justice committee, in no uncertain terms, that "anything remotely related to firearms trafficking must continue to be subject to mandatory minimum sentences." He called Bill C-5 "a race to the bottom."

Anie Samson is a former municipal councillor and mayor whose jurisdiction included the most multicultural neighbourhood in Montreal. Unfortunately, this neighbourhood had a very high crime rate. It was also in the top 10 of the poorest neighbourhoods in Canada. Ms. Samson has shared heartbreaking stories about youth and even young children being victimized and targeted by organized crime in her community.

When Ms. Samson spoke to our committee last month, she told us that not only would Bill C-5 fail to protect the young people in her community from getting involved in criminal activity, but abolishing certain mandatory minimum penalties would actually increase the feeling of impunity for criminal behaviour that we are seeing every day in the headlines.

She went on to say that criminal organizations are becoming more bold in our communities and have less regard for the law and for the implications of getting caught and facing some kind of consequence. Bill C-5 makes that stark reality even worse. In other

words, Bill C-5 gives gang members licence to continue to terrorize her community, a community that already faces a multitude of hardships.

I should also mention that the borough of Montreal that Ms. Samson represented as mayor also happens to be in the home riding of the Prime Minister. Over the past seven years, it has become increasingly obvious that the Prime Minister does not prioritize the safety and security of Canadians in general, but it is particularly disappointing and even cruel that he would disregard the safety and security of his own constituents.

In contrast, justice committee members were privileged to hear from individuals and organizations who care very deeply about the safety and security of all Canadians, in particular those who have been victimized by violent crime or have lost a loved one due to some of the offences where punishment will be reduced by Bill C-5.

In this bill, the Liberals are making more criminal charges eligible to receive conditional sentences, also known as house arrest. There may be cases where house arrest is acceptable, but house arrest should never be made available to dangerous offenders and criminals whose actions have victimized an innocent person or family.

The fact of the matter is this: The crimes that would become eligible for house arrest under the Liberals' Bill C-5 are not victimless crimes and are, in fact, dangerous. Should a criminal who abducted a child under the age of 14 be eligible for house arrest? The Liberal government says yes. Should a criminal who benefits financially from the scourge of human trafficking be eligible for house arrest? The Liberal government says yes. Should someone convicted of kidnapping get house arrest? The Liberal government says yes. Should criminals charged with sexual assault be able to serve their time back in the same community of their victims? I would argue absolutely not, but the Liberal government says that it is absolutely appropriate.

• (1725)

The Liberals are trying to expand house arrest for those charged with prison breach. In what world does one reward people for trying to break out of jail by offering them a sentence of house arrest? This is just one example of how the Liberal government is trying to make a complete mockery of the Canadian justice system.

I will wrap up my remarks. I will be very strongly voting against Bill C-5, and I encourage all members of this House to do the same.

Government Orders

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one thing I did not hear from my colleague during his 10-minute speech is the term “systemic racism”. We know from the Auditor General’s report yesterday, in which she talks about correctional institutions and the need to address issues of systemic racism, that indigenous and Black Canadians who go into prisons stay longer because of systemic racism within the system. Therefore, it is important that we ensure there are off-ramps and possibilities for people who do not pose a threat to be able to serve their sentence in the community.

I wonder if my friend opposite could say why, in the 10 minutes he had, he could not even utter the words “systemic racism” in his speech.

Hon. Rob Moore: Madam Speaker, I am shocked that the member opposite raised this issue because, for a number of the offences within Bill C-5, such as weapons trafficking, discharging a firearm with intent, and possession of a weapon obtained in the commission of an offence, the government said last week that people would not go to jail at all, and this week, in Bill C-21, for those very same offences, it has increased the maximum penalties. It cannot have it both ways.

• (1730)

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know there is a lot of shared ground here in the House of Commons on wanting to make communities safer. That is a goal we all share, but we share a difference of opinion on how best to do that. I am always disappointed when I hear the Conservatives implying that somehow mandatory minimums create safer communities, when all the research and all the evidence show that this is simply not true. I guess I am hoping the member could acknowledge that we have a difference of opinion about how best to protect communities. It is not that some of us care about communities more than others.

Hon. Rob Moore: Madam Speaker, I will absolutely acknowledge that we have a difference of opinion. I, for one, believe that criminals who are putting Canadians at risk and engaging in activities in our communities such as using a firearm in the commission of an offence, weapons trafficking, robbery with a firearm, extortion with a firearm, and discharging a firearm with intent should get jail time. I think most Canadians would agree with that, whether they live in an urban or a rural area.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am so grateful to be acknowledged at this moment, because it allows me to follow up on the question from the hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke and clarify for the hon. member for Fundy Royal that no one voting for Bill C-5 thinks that guilty parties should have no jail time.

What we are arguing for, based on the evidence, is that we do not put an additional cost burden on the provinces by putting more people in jail. The provinces have to pay the costs of what was an omnibus crime bill in a previous Parliament, Bill C-10. We do not want to see people who are innocent get so worried about a mandatory minimum that they take their lawyer’s advice and take a plea deal because they do not really want to take the chance of letting the judge use his or her discretion, having heard all the evidence,

and we do not want people to get lesser sentences because they did not go through the process where a judge had the discretion to decide how they should go to jail.

The punishment must fit the crime, and the cookie-cutter approach of mandatory minimums is a failure.

Hon. Rob Moore: Madam Speaker, I wish all Canadians could have been watching when we saw the Green Party move amendments at our committee to remove every single mandatory penalty from the Criminal Code, including sexual offences against children. It was appalling. They moved the amendments, but then they did not want to speak about them.

I am happy to speak about them. We, the Conservatives, believe that Parliament needs to send a message that individuals who victimize young people and Canadians, cause fear in our communities and engage in drive-by shootings, weapons trafficking, the importing and exporting of firearms illegally, robberies with a firearm, extortion with a firearm and the discharging of a firearm with intent, as in a drive-by shooting, need to be off the streets and there need to be serious consequences for those types of crimes.

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the third reading debate of Bill C-5, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. Let me begin by acknowledging that I am speaking from the traditional unceded lands of the Algonquin peoples.

At the outset, I would like to thank my colleagues at the justice committee for their diligent work in improving this bill and moving it forward and the many witnesses who came forward to speak about their lived experiences.

Bill C-5 addresses systemic racism and discrimination in the criminal justice system by promoting a fairer and more effective justice system that, among other things, would provide courts with increased judicial discretion at sentencing through the elimination of some mandatory minimum penalties of imprisonments and of restrictions on the imposition of conditional sentences of imprisonment. Further, the bill promotes alternatives to charging and prosecuting individuals in cases involving simple possession of drugs.

We see again here the opposition attempting to reinstate mandatory minimum penalties in the legislation when we have clearly seen that MMPs do not work. I am proud of the announcement our government made Monday to crack down on illegal and dangerous firearms in Canada, including raising maximum penalties for many firearm offences. Together with this bill, we would be restoring discretion to judges, ensuring that their fair sentences can be applied and that serious crimes would still receive serious sentences.

Government Orders

• (1735)

[*Translation*]

The Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights has now concluded its study of the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House of Commons with four amendments, which I believe strengthen the bill.

[*English*]

Bill C-5's amendments would provide space to treat the simple possession of drugs as a health issue rather than a criminal one, as it should be, and is consistent with the announcement made by the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions for British Columbia yesterday. The bill requires police and prosecutors to consider alternative measures, including diverting individuals to treatment programs, giving a warning or taking no further action, instead of laying charges or prosecuting individuals for simple possession of an illegal drug. Further, it would provide a declaration of principles to guide police and Crown prosecutors in the exercise of their discretion.

Among other principles, the bill would recognize that scarce judicial resources should be reserved for offences that pose a risk to public safety and that criminal sanctions imposed in respect of the possession of drugs for personal use are not consistent with established public health evidence.

The principles enacted under Bill C-5 do not condone the sale of drugs, as that may result in the death of the purchasers, including purchasers who may be youths and first-time users and who are at greater health risks from consuming highly concentrated drugs. Condoning the sale of drugs would be contrary to the government's ongoing efforts to combat the opioid crisis and deaths. Further, such an approach would also be contrary to the harm reduction and prevention pillar of the Canadian drugs and substances strategy.

Let me be clear that Bill C-5 is only one part of a larger government strategy to fight the ongoing opioid crisis. On May 31, 2022, the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health announced the granting of a time-limited exemption, under subsection 56(1) of the CDSA, to exempt the application of the simple possession offence to the personal possession of small amounts of controlled substances, which is commonly involved in overdose deaths by adults 18 years or older in the province of British Columbia. The exemption is part of the province's comprehensive approach to address the overdose crisis and is intended to reduce harm for people who use drugs and promote better access to life-saving health services in the territory.

Before I go into the other parts of the amendment, I do want to highlight the report by the Auditor General of Canada to Parliament from yesterday. When I speak about the need to avoid prison sentences for those who pose virtually no threat to the public, particularly from racialized communities, and indigenous and Black communities, it is because we know that systemic racism is prevalent within many parts of the criminal justice system.

The report by the Auditor General from yesterday makes it crystal clear that there is a disparity in the manner in which we treat indigenous and Black offenders. For example, and I would like to read parts of the report, it says, "Indigenous and Black offend-

ers...faced greater barriers to a safe and gradual reintegration into society" than other incarcerated groups.

The report goes on to say, "Indigenous and Black offenders remained in custody longer and at higher levels of security before release." Essentially, Correctional Services categorizes offenders based on low, medium and high risk, and it is clear that there is a disparity in the manner in which it classifies indigenous and Black offenders. For example, the report continues, "We found that Indigenous and Black offenders were placed at higher security levels on admission into custody at twice the average rate of other offenders."

The report then says:

We found that, although the majority of offenders were released on parole before the end of their sentences, fewer Indigenous offenders were released when first eligible. In fact, more Indigenous offenders remained in custody until their statutory release and were released directly into the community from higher levels of security.

This means that they did not obtain the right level of support for them to go into the community and integrate. The report continues, "Indigenous offenders served longer portions of their sentences in custody than the average, placing them at a disadvantage to access early release or parole."

I believe this report is important to the discussion today because, when we speak about ensuring that we minimize those going into the criminal justice system, we are not saying that we treat everyone the same. We are saying that, if a person poses no risk and is a low-risk offender who does not belong in jail, then they have other alternatives. As a government bill, Bill C-5 would address some of the root causes of both mandatory minimum penalties and avoiding jail sentences, which we know from the Auditor General's report does have adverse impacts on indigenous and Black Canadians, particularly indigenous women and young Black men.

I will now talk about the amendments that Bill C-5 would make.

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The first amendment would be to clarify the kind of information to be kept in the police record on warnings or referrals, the use of such records and to whom they may be disclosed. For instance, once amended, any information contained in the record of warning or referral may be made available to a judge or a court for any purpose relating to offence proceedings for the preparation of a presentence report but limited to circumstances to which the record relates. These changes address the concerns raised by several witnesses that records could be improperly applied, which would frustrate the objectives of the bill to promote diversion while recognizing that police officers are legally and ethically bound to keep notes to facilitate various operational requirements of the criminal justice system.

To address these concerns, a second amendment would provide a mechanism to reduce the stigma associated with convictions for simple possession of drugs by specifying that past and future convictions must be kept separate and apart from other criminal convictions after a certain period of time. These new measures would need to be implemented two years after the coming into force of the bill in the case of convictions that occurred before the bill came into force, two years after the conviction or completion of an offender's sentence, or in the case of conviction after Bill C-5 is enforced.

The third amendment would provide an express provision to clarify that no social worker, medical professional or service provider would be committing the offence of simple possession when they come into possession of a controlled substance in the course of their duties when they have the intent to, within a reasonable period, lawfully dispose of it. We believe that this particular amendment is covered in the "innocent possession" common law defence, and we were able to work with the opposition in order to strengthen the bill to have a bit more clarity, which is incorporated herein.

The last amendment from Bill C-5 would require a comprehensive review of the provisions and operations of the bill to be undertaken by the House on the fourth anniversary of the bill coming into force.

In conclusion, Bill C-5 is a very important step forward in addressing common sense criminal law reform. Mandatory minimum penalties, in many cases, have not had a positive impact on communities, particularly indigenous, Black and other racialized communities, and this bill is a very important step forward in addressing the systemic racism that we have within the criminal justice system.

• (1740)

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to my colleague's speech. The problem is that a number of times I heard the words "simple possession". The issue is that this is not what Bill C-5 deals with.

The mandatory minimum penalties being repealed in the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act have to do with trafficking, importing or exporting controlled substances, or the production of schedule I or schedule II drugs, that is, cocaine, heroine, fentanyl and crystal meth.

Would the hon. member maintain that production, trafficking and importing are "simple possession"?

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Speaker, it is clear that, when we have criminal law, it is intended to serve a particular purpose. What we are doing today is bringing forward smart criminal justice reform that is intended to address the root cause of the issue and ensure that we have enough off-ramps for people, who may have substance addiction issues, to be able to get the right treatment and the right supports to enable them to move on in society.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Mr. Speaker, mandatory minimum sentences have their pros and cons.

In any case, I am not against abolishing them. However, there are problems associated with them that must be resolved. They include problems with education, illegal arms trafficking, social issues, and the need for hospitalization and diagnosis.

It is time that the government provided health transfers, if only to address the health aspect, so that youth could be monitored from early childhood to prevent them from ending up in jail or other bad situations. This would also ensure better social support.

When will this happen?

• (1745)

[*English*]

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Speaker, I think the question here is that, as a society, we need to ensure that there are enough off-ramps for people who somehow got into the criminal justice system to rehabilitate, be able to move on and get the right levels of support, whether it is through addiction counselling, rehab or community engagement work, or, in some cases, serving sentences.

That is really the purpose of this bill, to advance smart criminal justice policy that goes toward ensuring that our communities are safe.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to reflect on what happened just before we started this debate on Bill C-5 because there are some modest measures in Bill C-5 that would help address the opioid crisis, but the government just defeated Bill C-216, which would have decriminalized personal possession of drugs.

The Prime Minister said earlier today that, in reference to the section 56 exemption for British Columbia, he would be prepared to work with communities who are interested in such an exemption. Is the government really telling us today that, instead of just eliminating penalties for possessions, it will work positively with communities to grant exemptions in addition to those in British Columbia?

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Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Speaker, I think the answer to that question is obvious. The Prime Minister, from the outset, has said he is willing to engage communities and the result is what we saw in British Columbia yesterday with the section 56 exemption. Of course, when parties come together, when provinces and municipalities come together, there is always room for us to discuss. I am absolutely certain that the Prime Minister, as indicated today, will live up to that, as we have with British Columbia.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the member could provide his thoughts on the impact on systemic racism and bringing forward this legislation.

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Speaker, on the eve during which Bill C-5 is coming to third debate, I do want my friends opposite to reflect on the notion of systemic racism. It is something that has been central to this bill. I really do invite members, especially the opposition, to read the report by the Auditor General from yesterday that talks about systemic barriers within Correctional Service Canada.

It is a very profound report. I know that the Office of the Correctional Investigator, for many years, has been putting forward reports after reports after reports. However, this is coming from the Auditor General who has, I think for the first time, empirically demonstrated that systemic racism does, in fact, exist within our criminal justice system. It is something that I take very personally.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill C-5. I find this bill important but disheartening at the same time. The way in which the bill was presented is deplorable, and that is very sad. Bill C-5 is really two bills in one. The first decriminalizes certain offences, and the second establishes diversion measures while also abolishing minimum sentences. These are two very different issues.

We are comfortable with the elimination of certain minimum sentences. Generally speaking, the Bloc Québécois believes that minimum sentences are not a cure-all. We think that they can actually be harmful in many cases and that we should trust the judges overseeing criminal trials. However, we believe that minimum sentences can be useful in some circumstances.

It would be especially unfortunate to eliminate them at the wrong time. Right now, gun violence is on the rise in Montreal and many other Canadian cities, and people want the government to do something. The government proposed Bill C-21 in an effort to control the circulation of legal weapons. However, the bill does nothing about the illegal weapons being used by street gangs to commit crimes and shoot people in the streets.

The Bloc says that this problem needs to be addressed, and we have some suggestions. For months now, we have been standing up in the House and talking about the need to identify organized criminal gangs and include targeted measures against members of criminal gangs in the Criminal Code. We have proposed a joint task force to stem the trafficking of illegal guns through indigenous reserves. People on the reserves have agreed to work with us on this plan. We have proposed more funding for border controls, to no

avail. All of these measures would help curtail shootings, but the government has done nothing in this respect.

Now we have Bill C-5, which not only does nothing to fight gun violence committed with illegal weapons, but which also eliminates mandatory minimum sentences for crimes that I believe are pretty serious. I hardly consider armed robbery to be a trivial matter. Armed extortion is not a trivial matter either, nor is discharging a firearm with intent to wound, maim or disfigure. The government wants to eliminate the minimum sentences for these crimes just as the public is expressing concern. People want the government to do something to reassure them. Not only is the government responding by doing nothing, but it is eliminating the minimum sentences for these crimes. I am appalled.

At the same time, the government is establishing diversion measures for certain offences involving illicit substances. It is offering diversion for possession of substances for personal use. Rather than sending a person with drug addiction to prison, we will provide treatment. We will help the person regain control of their life and become a useful member of society again. That is a good thing.

However, these are two completely different subjects. The government is taking Parliament hostage by saying this is a package deal. Members are being forced to decide whether they are totally for it or totally against it. I find that appalling. In my opinion, that is a way of muzzling democracy.

I would have liked to hear my colleague from the governing party speak to this aspect of the issue. Why did his party refuse to split the bill from the beginning, as we requested? That would have made it a lot easier to work on. In any case, we have to live with it now. It is what it is.

Getting back to what I was saying about minimum sentences, there is a major problem with some of the offences. We tried to find solutions. The Bloc Québécois is against many things, but we are also in favour of certain things. Above all, we try to improve the bills that come through the House. Whenever we can make them acceptable and make sure they reflect the values and interests of the people we represent, we are happy to do so.

In this spirit, we made a suggestion. Now is not the time to abolish minimum sentences, because this would send the wrong message. Not only would it not reassure the public, but it would worry them even more. We therefore suggested maintaining the minimum sentences and adding clauses stating that the court could override them under exceptional circumstances.

• (1750)

That is the system used in other jurisdictions, and it works, as an expert told the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. We proposed adding a clause requiring judges to state, if applicable, that the case they are trying is an exceptional case and that, under the circumstances, they will override the mandatory minimum sentence for such and such a reason. The clause would provide guidelines and ensure that justice is taken seriously.

Our proposal was so good that the Liberals changed two or three words and proposed it themselves. I was very happy about that, since I feel no need to take credit for the amendments to Bill C-5. However, when the time came to put the Liberals' amendment to a vote, none of them rose to present it, so I did it for them. I am dismayed by these sorts of games, because I think they are anti-democratic. They do not serve the interest of voters, either in Quebec or elsewhere in Canada. I am appalled by these tactics, and I would like to hear what my colleague across the aisle has to say about this.

That being said, there is also the whole diversion component, which is important to us, as I mentioned earlier. That is why I feel torn today. I do not know what to do. We will have to live with our decision, and it feels a bit like choosing between the plague and cholera. Whichever way we vote, we will be partly disappointed and partly happy.

However, we could have been completely happy if everyone here could have come to an agreement, because we basically want the same thing. I do not think that the members across the aisle, or my Conservative and NDP colleagues, are acting in bad faith. I simply think that we have different ways of looking at things and that, if we work together, we can find solutions that will satisfy our interests, our prerogatives and our respective voters. Unfortunately, we were unable to find common ground.

The opioid crisis is affecting Rivière-du-Nord, and it is a major problem. We have a great many other problems that we would like to solve using rehabilitation.

The Quebec government has already adopted diversion measures for criminal offences. It tries to rehabilitate people rather than make them stand trial and send them to prison. We try to help them reintegrate into society and become active contributors again, as most of them used to be. For whatever reason, these people had experiences that set them on a path they would not otherwise have chosen, any more than we would have. In Quebec, we believe that we can help them and rehabilitate them.

I applaud diversion efforts, and so does the Bloc. I think that it is the right solution, for the same reason that we previously voted in favour of the NDP's Bill C-216 along the same lines. We need to work with these people and help them. They do not need jail time, they need help. Drug addiction is a health issue, not a criminal justice issue. We therefore applaud this measure.

However, we are torn over the idea of abolishing minimum sentences. This would send a message that I dare not describe in the House. I will say just that it is completely out of touch with reality because, day after day, people are shooting up day cares and apartment buildings. Just this morning, I read in the news that a stray

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bullet found its way into a senior's apartment. Fortunately, she was not hit.

Members will recall that someone shot up a day care last week. That is not even organized crime. It is just delinquency. I am not a criminologist, and I cannot say any more on this subject, but we need to address this problem. Gun control falls under the federal Criminal Code, but the federal government is not doing anything. On top of that inaction, it wants to abolish the minimum sentences for these offences. I think that is just terrible.

We will see how we vote on the bill, but I will admit that we are torn. This is not a good day for democracy.

• (1755)

[*English*]

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I enjoy working with my colleague opposite, and I believe he comes from a really good space when he talks about this bill, but I want to highlight a couple of things.

First and foremost is Bill C-21. A lot of the challenges the member addressed in his speech are addressed in Bill C-21. We have heard from him about them a number of times and we have delivered. It was tabled on Monday.

The issue that I want to probe with the member is the notion of systemic racism, because it is an area where we have had some conversations and I do not believe he is quite there yet in acknowledging that systemic racism exists.

After the report from the Office of the Correctional Investigator yesterday and after the testimony of people like the president of the Canadian Association of Black Lawyers and many others, does my friend opposite acknowledge that systemic racism exists and that we need to ensure our system of justice is fair and equitable to all who are part of it?

• (1800)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question. I am happy to address this aspect, which I did not have time to talk about in my initial presentation.

First, with respect to Bill C-21, let us forget that. We need to fix this quickly, since there is not a single street gang that buys their guns at Canadian Tire. That does not happen.

With respect to systemic racism, what kind of twisted idea is it to claim that if there are indigenous or racialized people in our prisons, it is because the penalties are too harsh? What kind of an argument is that?

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This population needs help, that is what we heard in committee. Yes, there are more people in prison; those are the statistics, and I will not change them. It is true that there are more indigenous and Black people in prison, but we need money, we need to work with these people and help their communities. It takes more than social workers, health care, education and all that to help them not commit crimes. To argue that society will lower its standards, that people from the Black or indigenous communities commit crimes and therefore we will reduce penalties so they do not go to prison, is just mind-blowing. I could not believe it when I read that.

When I saw my colleagues defend that in committee, I was happy I was not in their shoes. I imagine that the caucus forces them to defend these views, but if I were in their shoes I think I would have left the caucus.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, although I do not agree with absolutely everything my colleague just said, I do agree with almost all of it, especially the part about the current government's reasoning for wanting to, as the member so aptly put it, lower its standards when it comes to crime and sentencing.

I have the privilege of representing the riding of Louis-Saint-Laurent. As members know, Wendake is located in the heart of my riding. Some people who are close to me are outraged about the government's approach and desire to lower the standards. As the member said so well, we should be helping the least fortunate and the most vulnerable among us to prevent these crimes.

The government should be taking a positive and constructive approach to the challenges we face with respect to the first nations and racialized peoples who are unfortunately in our prisons. It should be helping them, but instead, it is lowering standards in a race to the bottom. What are my colleague's thoughts on the government's approach?

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with my colleague.

We did not hear a single person or witness in committee say that they wanted to be allowed to commit criminal acts. No one said that. These people are saying they have a problem, they need help, and we need to help them. It is our job as members of Parliament to help them.

Once again, it makes no sense to say that we are going to reduce sentences for crimes that are committed. It is unjustifiable, and it is insulting to these people.

It is true that they need help for all kinds of historical reasons. They have not been treated fairly in the past. This needs to be addressed, and we need to offer support and assistance to these communities. However, allowing them to commit crimes with a lesser penalty is not going to help them. That will not help anyone, on the contrary.

The Deputy Speaker: I encourage members to ask their questions quickly and answer them briefly so that everyone can participate in the discussion.

[English]

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am really pleased to rise to speak on Bill C-5 today.

Sometimes the debate strays away from what is actually in the bill and goes into a lot of other things. I would just like to remind everybody what the bill is doing.

It is attempting to attack systemic racism in our criminal justice system by eliminating 20 mandatory minimum penalties, all of those in the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and a few relating to firearms and tobacco offences. It also expands access to conditional sentences through things like house arrest and serving time on weekends, which is important in rehabilitating people who, for whatever reason, became involved with the criminal justice system. The third thing it does is provide more discretion for police to provide warnings and diversion instead of charging people, who then end up in jail. All of these three things are key steps in reducing the impact of systemic racism.

In our corrections system, nearly 35% of those who are imprisoned are indigenous, but indigenous people make up less than 5% of our population. We know that about 7.5% of those in prison are Black Canadians, but they only represent 3.5% of the population. Something is clearly going on here in a systematic manner that produces these much worse outcomes for racialized and indigenous people.

Who is in favour of this bill? This is something nobody else has really been talking about here. I know why some people do not raise this point. Most important to me is that the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police is in favour of this legislation, because they know that mandatory minimums do nothing to make communities safer.

Two other organizations I want to mention that are very much in favour are the John Howard Society and the Elizabeth Fry Society. These are two very valuable non-profits that work with those who have served time to help re-integrate them back into the community. They gave very powerful testimony at committee about the impacts of mandatory minimums.

Who is opposed to them? The Conservatives and the Bloc are clearly opposed to this bill that would reduce mandatory minimums. They often fly off into what I would call a fantasy world, where the idea is that if we take away mandatory minimums, somehow people would not get prison sentences and somehow serious criminals would not end up in jail. That is not what would happen with mandatory minimums or their removal. Judges would still assign serious time for serious crime. That is not what we are talking about here.

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The fact is that mandatory minimums—and most of those that would be removed are of less than two years—would result in people going into provincial corrections systems, which have very limited rehabilitation programs. It also means, when we take into time served for good behaviour and other facets of our criminal justice system, that people would serve only a few months. Even if there was an addiction treatment program, even if there was a skills training program, the time is too short for those to be successful.

However, the time is not too short to make sure that people lose their housing. The time is not too short to make sure that people lose their job. The time is not too short to make sure that people's families are put at risk. Often the people who go under mandatory minimums are the sole providers for their families, so their kids are at risk of apprehension while they are in prison. All of this contributes to huge social problems that are not necessary.

If we do not have a mandatory minimum, we could use conditional sentences. Someone could stay in their own home, maintain their job, serve their time on weekends, and actually become a productive member of society again, rather than having their whole life turned upside down, which would put them on a path that only leads to further addiction and further crime.

We know that is the record of mandatory minimums. The academic studies all show the same thing: Mandatory minimums, if they do anything at all, actually make recidivism worse, because people have fewer options as a result of serving those mandatory minimums. The evidence is quite clear: They do not work.

Should the government have done more? Yes; as a New Democrat, I agree it should have done more. The government should have done more earlier today when it had the chance to vote on our bill, Bill C-216, which would have decriminalized personal possession of drugs. That would have helped to address systemic racism, because we know that Black Canadians and indigenous Canadians are overcharged and charged at much higher rates for personal possession of drugs when their rates of drug use are not in fact higher. It would have helped tackle that.

I do not think it is enough to say that we are going to reduce mandatory minimums; the government should have voted for Bill C-216. We should have made better progress.

• (1805)

I am happy to see the government grant an exemption to British Columbia under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and I think it will lead to great success in tackling the opioid crisis, but I just do not understand why the government was not prepared to do that for the more than 70% of Canadians who live outside of British Columbia. I was glad to hear the Prime Minister say, in answer to a question, that the Liberals are prepared to consider other exemptions, and certainly New Democrats will be asking them to step up when that time comes.

What was in Bill C-5, as I said, was modest, and so I wish the Liberals had done more on Bill C-216, but I also wish they had done more on the bill, and that is why I proposed two amendments at committee, which I thank the government for accepting.

The first of those, to me, is the most important. It is an amendment that says not only do mandatory minimums cause problems in racial injustice, but the resulting criminal records make things much worse.

There are 250,000 Canadians who have a record for personal possession of drugs. What does this mean? It means that sometimes this record affects someone's hiring. Very often it affects their housing, whether it is social housing, which does not allow people with criminal records, or whether it is landlords who refuse to rent to them. It prevents people from getting bank loans and mortgages. It forces them into the hands of what I call loan sharks, otherwise called payday lenders. It prevents people from travelling.

However, the one I have heard the most in my community is that a criminal record prevents someone from volunteering with kids or seniors, even though it may have been a personal possession charge from 20 years ago and has nothing to do with the way the person has turned their life around. In fact, some of those people might be the perfect people to volunteer with youth and show them a positive way forward.

I thank the government for agreeing. What we agreed on is what it calls a sequestration of records, meaning they will be held separate and apart and will not show up in criminal records. Within two years, we will be wiping out the records of 250,000 people, and I think that is enormously important for rehabilitation and building safer communities.

The second amendment I moved had to do with the expanded discretion for police. Here, New Democrats had a worry that was shared by many in the community, because discretion by the police is often subject to that very same systemic racism. The bill originally did not require record-keeping at all for the use of discretion; my amendment suggests that the police have to keep records on who they grant diversion to and who they warn. Then we will be able to see if this discretion happens just to privileged white folks or is being used fairly among all Canadians.

The second part of that amendment says we will keep records, but those records cannot be used in future proceedings against individuals. Why say that? It may seem counterintuitive. If it is really a warning, then it is a warning, not a conviction, and so it should not be used in future criminal processes. It will make warnings much more powerful for people who get them and diversions much more powerful for people who get them.

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If someone successfully stays out of trouble with a warning or they successfully complete drug and alcohol counselling as part of their diversion, then this will never come back to haunt them again. It will encourage success in those programs. I thank the government for supporting those two measures. I fail to understand why the Conservatives and Bloc oppose those two amendments, but I also fail to understand why they are opposing this bill altogether.

I know time is running short, but I want to go back to what I think is most important here.

I have to say that I know people like to put forward their records as prosecutors and as police when they are talking about these things. I taught criminal justice for 20 years and I worked very closely with the John Howard Society and the Elizabeth Fry Society on the question of rehabilitation of people, and we know what works.

We know that when people can stay with their family and when people can have a job and maintain their employment, all of those things push them out of the criminal lifestyle and into the community. This is an important initiative in making all communities safer.

Despite people saying that the bill removes mandatory minimums on serious crimes, I say no, the judges will still give out serious time for serious crime. What it does is take away the injustice of those mandatory minimums falling most heavily on indigenous people and racialized Canadians.

• (1810)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the work of my friend opposite in supporting and strengthening Bill C-5.

I do want to pose a question for him with respect to the issue of sequestration of simple possession. I know it is an issue that he fought very hard for.

As he knows, the Minister of Public Safety is also mandated to ensure that there are reforms to the pardon system. Could the member opposite reflect on how important it is to make sure that issues such as simple possession and the records surrounding it are addressed within this bill?

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary and I worked very co-operatively during the hearings on this bill to try to find some serious improvements, and the government has certainly stepped forward to accept them.

I am going to use an example that is maybe a little counterintuitive to show why I think this is so important. The government has an existing program to expunge criminal records. In two years, of those 250,000 records, the government's program expunged 484 records. That is why I was insisting that this process has to be automatic, with no application and no fee. These records simply disappear. Both the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Public Safety met with me personally to discuss this, and I thank them for their support.

• (1815)

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his work on the justice committee.

He and I obviously do not agree on Bill C-5, but one thing I hope he would agree with me on is the mandatory minimums being repealed in the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.

The Liberal government likes to speak about simple possession. Mandatory minimums would be eliminated for the offences of trafficking, importing or exporting controlled drugs and substances or the production of schedule I or schedule II drugs, which are cocaine, heroin, fentanyl and crystal meth. Would he categorize those offences as "simple possession"?

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, that may sound like a tough question, but for me, as someone who has been a public advocate of decriminalizing all drugs for more than a decade, that is an easy question. I think all drugs should be decriminalized, and that is what we put forward in Bill C-216 today.

If we actually look at the statistics on the mandatory minimums that are applied by judges, we see that most of them are for things like simple possession or trafficking to support people's own drug habit. I am sorry that I do not have the statistic in front of me, but something like 61% are for those offences. They are not for the offences that the Conservatives have combed through the code to find and fearmonger on by saying that eliminating those mandatory minimums means that those serious crimes would not be punished by jail time. They would be.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with my colleague with regard to diversion measures. We really are on the same wavelength, as I was saying earlier.

That being said, I think we disagree about minimum sentences. I would like to know what my colleague thinks about doing away with the minimum sentences the government is proposing in response to the spike in shootings in Montreal.

Does he think that doing away with minimum sentences will send a reassuring message to the public? If not, what does my colleague propose? The Bloc Québécois is proposing creating a registry of criminal organizations, setting up a joint task force to combat firearms trafficking, and increasing security at the border. What does he think about those suggestions and what does he propose?

[*English*]

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, I enjoy working with the member on the justice committee.

Of course I support all those measures he is talking about. The law on mandatory minimums is not the solution to everything, but it is a solution to systemic racism and it is a partial solution to the opioid crisis.

Do we need more measures to interdict the illegal importation of guns into our communities? Absolutely, I support those kinds of things, but the reason that this does not create public confidence is that some people are putting forward the myth that somehow eliminating mandatory minimum sentences makes our communities more dangerous. It does precisely the opposite.

The Deputy Speaker: We got a lot closer to getting people in, but we are now out of time again. If there are quick questions and quick answers, we will get everybody to participate in the process.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Calgary Rocky Ridge.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to join the debate on Bill C-5, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. I will spare members the suspense and say from the outset that I do not support the bill.

The bill sends exactly the wrong message from this Parliament to the judiciary. It sends the wrong message from the government to criminals. It sends the wrong message to Canada's victims of serious and violent crimes. It also represents a missed opportunity to send a message that might help address a serious and growing problem, which is fraud, a crime that the current government has taken no meaningful action to address since it was first elected nearly seven years ago, but I will not have time to talk about that today.

Thankfully, in recent decades there has been a steep reduction in most violent offences and property crimes. Experts and pundits have theories to explain this, but the most recent years show that this overall trend may now be in reverse. It is against this backdrop that the government has chosen to undo a series of minimum sentences for offences that successive Liberal and Conservative governments have passed over a very long time.

Offences for which the government wishes to reduce minimum sentences include some of the most grievous offences on the books. One is left to wonder why.

Who are the Canadians crying out for lighter sentences on, for example, firearms offences? Are there Canadians who think that the Criminal Code is too harsh on gun traffickers or those who smuggle guns illegally from the United States into Canada? Do Canadians think that the judicial system is too harsh on people convicted of robbery with a firearm? Is there really anyone in Canada who thinks that robbery with a firearm should result in anything other than a custodial sentence? Does any Canadian think that if a person uses a firearm to rob someone, they should not do so with full knowledge that if caught they will go to prison? Is there anyone in Canada who thinks extortion with a firearm or discharging a firearm with intent is not a serious criminal offence?

I listened to the justice minister's speech when this bill was first tabled and debated at second reading. He spoke of the need for greater flexibility in sentencing and he used a hypothetical example. He spoke of a 19-year-old man residing in a remote northern community who, after having too much to drink and maybe on a dare from his buddies, discharged a firearm. He fired a gun into a building.

The minister suggested in this example that the current Criminal Code would force this young man into the prison system and into

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the company of other criminals, destroying his potential for life-long employment and setting him on a life-long trajectory of career criminality. The justice minister's hypothetical critique of a mandatory sentence for this hypothetical crime is riddled with a series of false premises.

First, the minister falsely assumed that in this hypothetical case the police, the prosecutor and the judge would have no other choice but to charge, prosecute and convict this young man of discharging a firearm with intent and sending him to a mandatory sentence.

Second, the minister, in choosing this example, deliberately chose to characterize drunkenly shooting up a building as a minor offence. There was a certain amount of arrogance in assuming that a drunken late-night shooting was somehow more acceptable in a northern community than perhaps in his Montreal riding.

I disagree with the minister. Discharging a firearm is a serious crime with potentially life-altering consequences for victims that ought to carry life-altering consequences for the shooter, such as a custodial sentence should their actions actually meet the high bar for conviction that firing with intent would carry.

Gun crimes are not the only offence for which this bill would reduce floor sentences. Bill C-5 would reduce the penalties for kidnapping and human trafficking, and it would allow for conditional sentences of house arrest instead of prison for those who abduct vulnerable Canadians and force them into unpaid labour or into the sex trade.

I ask again, who wants lighter sentences for human trafficking? Do we live in a country where normal people, even legal experts, would say that the Criminal Code is too strong and inflexible in the way that it robs judges of the flexibility to allow human traffickers and rapists to serve their sentences in their own homes?

● (1820)

Allowing offenders convicted of sexual assault, kidnapping or human trafficking to serve sentences in their homes in their communities would be the ultimate insult to their victims. We all know that the majority of these crimes go unreported, and that is exactly why. Most victims of sexual assault have no confidence, as it is now, that justice will be done if they come forward. The very knowledge that the perpetrators of sexual assault could receive a community sentence is a disincentive to victims of sexual assault to report the crime.

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Bill C-5 would also weaken sentencing for criminals at the very top of criminal enterprises: the deadly opioid epidemic. This bill would reduce minimum penalties for the production and trafficking of schedule 1 drugs. We are not talking about simple possession, and we are not talking about street-level addicts who are selling drugs to finance their habit. We are talking about producers and importers of fentanyl and heroin. Every day, these drugs kill Canadians, and every day these drugs create misery and deprivation that rip families apart, yet this bill would reduce the minimum penalties for criminals who illegally manufacture these drugs to be sold to the most desperate and vulnerable members of our society.

If someone manufactures the illegal opioids that are killing Canadians, they belong in prison.

As we have heard, this bill would eliminate the necessity of a custodial sentence for those convicted of crimes that include armed robbery, kidnapping, sexual assault, gun trafficking, opioid production and a bunch of others. What about the administration of justice? The minister has argued that the existence of mandatory prison sentences clogs up the system. Setting aside the question of whether mandatory penalties cause delays within the courts, let us instead ask whether this is relevant in the context of serious violent crime.

The reason for floor sentences for criminals who commit serious and violent crimes is to protect the public from dangerous offenders, to allow communities time to recover from victimization, to address issues such as witness intimidation and, most importantly, to ensure that punishment is proportionate to crime.

If the argument against floor sentences for these crimes is simply to relieve congestion in the courts and reduce the number of people in prison, then I must disagree with proponents of this bill. If our courts are congested, and delay is denying the public, the accused and the victims of justice, the minister should get serious about timely judicial appointments, instead of trying to blame those who disagree with him on the necessity of floor sentence requirements for serious, violent offences.

The member for Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River raised an important point when he pointed out that peace officers, prosecutors and judges already do what they can to divert non-violent offenders away from prison into other programs. I agree that prison is not the only, nor even the most suitable, option for non-violent offenders when other programs can adequately punish their crimes, contribute to public safety and increase the chances of successful reintegration. One can recognize this fact and still object to this bill.

The point of floor sentences is not to railroad the judiciary into certain decisions or to unduly diminish judges' discretion. It is to ensure that justice is done and the public is protected from violent offenders.

Finally, legislating effective sentencing would not pit the legislature against the judiciary, as the minister would frame it. It is an example of Parliament exercising its legitimate authority over defining criminal offences and setting floors and ceilings on penalties. Setting reasonable parameters for sentencing is part of Parliament's job.

In conclusion, Bill C-5 sends the wrong signals to criminals and society at large about the severity of certain crimes. It risks increasing crime rates and victimization, it continues to miss the mark on addressing gun crime and the opioid crisis, and it goes soft on sexual assault, kidnapping and modern-day slavery.

As such, I cannot support the bill.

• (1825)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I note that within his speech, my hon. colleague did not acknowledge or discuss the notion of systemic racism. I cited the report of the Auditor General a number of times yesterday and highlighted the issue of systemic racism within the correctional system, which is one of the reasons we need to ensure we do not put people in jail when there are alternatives, especially for those who are not deemed to be harmful.

I am wondering if my friend could highlight why he did not use the term "systemic racism". Does he believe it exists and, if it does, what are his suggestions to address that?

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that racism exists in our systems, and in our justice system. It is indeed a serious problem, but I will also point out that the victims of many of the crimes for which this bill reduces floor sentences are often the same Canadians, and members of the same communities, who face racism. I do not see that repealing these sentences will adequately address the issue of racism, and it certainly will not help the victims of these serious crimes, who are often among the most vulnerable populations in Canada.

• (1830)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. I thank him for it and I would like to ask him a simple question.

He mentioned the possibility of stepping in proactively to prevent certain groups of individuals from committing crimes or to better support certain communities so that fewer crimes are committed by certain people.

I would like my colleague to explain how it would be possible to act proactively and limit the crimes committed by certain individuals, rather than handing down reduced sentences.

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[*English*]

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, indeed, one can acknowledge the vast issues that contribute to offences and acknowledge that there are different ways to deal with the problems of crime and criminal justice without the prison system. The prison system is certainly the last resort in these matters. I do not really have time to get too far beyond the bill itself, which is where we are dealing with a repeal of floor sentences for grievous offences. I do not think that the Canadian public is served by that.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful to my colleagues in the NDP for not standing up in this round.

I want to make this clear again. I was in this place when, under Stephen Harper, the omnibus crime bill, Bill C-10, was passed. At that time, we already knew that there was no evidence that mandatory minimums would reduce the crime rate. We were watching in the United States as they were being removed in Texas. We saw at the time that these would probably be struck down as unconstitutional, as they are being struck down. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms is being found to be violated by a number of these laws. What they do, at their essence, is not deter criminals. They do not make communities safer. There is no evidence that they make communities safer.

I would ask my hon. friend for Calgary Rocky Ridge if he is able to produce at this time, or cite for us, any study by reputable criminologists or any group that works with criminal defence, or anything from the Elizabeth Fry Society or the John Howard Society that would suggest that mandatory minimums make communities safer, because there is no evidence for that proposition.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, the member launches straight into an attack on the previous Conservative government while ignoring that almost all of the mandatory floor sentences being repealed in this bill were not passed under the Harper government. They came from earlier governments. Successive governments, Conservative and Liberal, with different prime ministers, have, over a very long period of time, created these minimums. Most of them predate the Harper government. It was disappointing to hear her use this as an opportunity just to make a dig at the previous government, when this is something that has been ongoing for many years.

The hon. member disagrees that there should be mandatory minimum sentences. I can agree with her. I can agree with many people who have spoken about the futility, and the blunt instrument that prison can be, but for the most serious crimes there needs to be a floor.

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to this bill today. One thing I find most interesting is that when Liberal members are talking about guns, we hear they are always trying to crack down and ban guns that have already been banned for 45 years. We hear this every day. They blame every problem that happens on guns.

I want to note to the Canadian public what Bill C-5 is doing. It eliminates a number of mandatory minimums relating to gun crimes: robbery with a firearm; extortion with a firearm; weapons trafficking, including firearms and ammunition; importing or exporting knowing it is unauthorized; discharging a firearm with in-

tent; using a firearm in the commission of offences; possession of a firearm knowing its possession is unauthorized; possession of a prohibited or restricted firearm with ammunition; possession for the purpose of weapons trafficking; and discharging a firearm with recklessness.

The bill would eliminate the mandatory prison times for these firearm offences. It is very simple. There is a great hypocrisy in what is happening here in this country. We have a government fixated on guns, but now it is letting off criminals who bring illegal guns into this country, the illegal guns that are killing children and innocent people in their homes and on their properties. It is letting them off without mandatory prison time.

Now explain to me how Liberals can be bleeding hearts and against guns when they are allowing them to be trafficked into this country and are allowing people to get away with no mandatory prison sentences based on the very guns they are trying to convince the public they are banning and that were already banned 45 years ago. This is a clear example of the government firmly believing that Canadian citizens do not know anything about guns and that Canadian citizens want people who committed crimes with weapons to have lesser sentences. Imagine the hypocrisy in our country in this very bill.

A majority of the above mandatory minimums were introduced under previous Liberal governments, most notably the government of the Prime Minister's own father, contrary to the narrative from the Liberals that they are undoing Conservative legislation. This is yet another hypocrisy. To be clear, the Liberals would eliminate mandatory prison time for criminals who commit robbery with a firearm, weapons trafficking and drive-by shootings. That is shameful.

• (1835)

The Deputy Speaker: That is all the time we have for this matter this evening. When the member comes back, he will have about seven minutes.

[*Translation*]

It being 6:37 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS***[English]***CANADA NATIONAL PARKS ACT**

The House resumed from March 21 consideration of the motion that Bill C-248, An Act to amend the Canada National Parks Act (Ojibway National Urban Park of Canada), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, thank you for all the fantastic work you have done in the House in the absence of our Speaker. It is certainly wonderful to see him back here this week. I am incredibly proud of you, sir, and incredibly proud of how you have helped the decorum of the House, so thank you.

Today I am lucky enough to stand for another private member's bill. It just happens to be from the member for Windsor West, who is in this chamber this evening.

Before I get started on speaking in favour of Bill C-248, I have to tell a quick story. I was elected in 2019, and shortly after the election, the member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington, the member for Windsor West and I ended up in the Pearson airport in Toronto. We were stuck in a snowstorm. Previous to that, I had never had an opportunity to meet the member for Windsor West.

We decided, because the airplanes were not flying and we could not get on a train, that we would take an Uber through one of the ugliest snowstorms that I have seen in recent history. We never know where life is going to take us, and it was a fantastic six-and-a-half-hour drive. I got to know the member for Windsor West quite well.

On top of that story, I also want to tell another story, perhaps one for the history books or the Guinness Book of World Records for Canada. I am speaking to the private member's bill by the member for Windsor West this evening and, ironically, he is speaking to my private member's bill on Friday. I do not know the last time that two neighbouring MPs had a private member's bill in the same week. If we can get the support of the House, hopefully they will both be voted on next Wednesday at committee.

With no further ado, I want to address Bill C-248. However, before I address it, I will suggest that I have done my due diligence. When I say that, I note the bill is for a green space, which is already there. It is an act to amend the Canada National Parks Act specifically to create the Ojibway national urban park of Canada.

For those who do not know the riding of Essex and the ridings of Windsor West and Windsor—Tecumseh, we are somewhat landlocked in that our only way out is across the Ambassador Bridge, which, apparently by 2025, will be the Gordie Howe International Bridge, or through the riding of my other neighbour from Chatham-Kent—Leamington. Other than that, we are surrounded by three bodies of water.

Land is expensive, to say the least. It is prime real estate, and opportunities for our constituents to get out and appreciate Mother Nature at her finest come at a very premium cost.

I am supporting the bill to send it to committee because I have done my due diligence. I have spoken to the mayor of LaSalle,

Mayor Bondy. I have met him in his office. Mayor Bondy said that at the end of the day, there is really no development around this area that can happen anyway, and if it could happen, the cost of permitting and the cost of red tape would be so incredibly high that it would not happen anyway.

Ironically, I then ran into Mayor Dilkens last Thursday up in the city of Windsor. Mayor Dilkens is the mayor for the city of Windsor. I told him that I would be speaking to Bill C-248 this week. I asked him to tell me one more time whether he was in favour of it and he said, "Absolutely, I am in favour of the bill."

Why was I so happy to speak to it tonight? It is because it goes back to the conversation on green spaces. It also goes back to the conversation on mental health.

● (1840)

We need to get people outdoors. We need to get families away from the television. We need to get people active. Through that activeness, we would have healthy, happy people who just might see a white-tailed deer. They might see one of the endangered eastern fox snakes, which does not necessarily excite me because I am not a snake lover, but we are certainly going to respect and protect them.

Something else the bill would do is create tourism, tourism for Essex, tourism for Windsor West and tourism for Windsor—Tecumseh, because there would be an opportunity for our friends in Michigan, Ohio, upstate New York and Wisconsin to come over for a unique, neat national park. The opportunities are endless.

I have said it before and I will say it again: Essex is truly a microcosm of Canada. It always has been. Whatever we can find throughout Canada, we can find in Essex. The only fly in that ointment is the vast beautiful land. This bill would give an opportunity specifically to the residents of LaSalle to get out and enjoy the outdoors.

The only concern with Bill C-248 that I see today is that we need to ensure we keep the arteries open. When I say "arteries", I am referring to a map. I really hope that when the bill is studied at committee, Malden Road and Matchett Road both remain open corridors for the folks who need to get into the cities, who need to get to the Stellantis plant or who need to get to the new \$5-billion battery plants that are now being built, as we speak, in Windsor. We need to make sure that we save them time and save them money so that after they have a hard day's work, they can get home to be with their family.

This information has been, quite frankly, exhaustive. I am so proud to stand here today, because a previous member for Essex, Mr. Watson, worked incredibly hard on this bill as well. I thank Mr. Watson for that and I hope he gets an opportunity to see this.

I could go on about all the paperwork. I have a letter from the City of Windsor, with the council of Windsor unanimously saying to please do this. I am not speaking on behalf of Windsor; what I am saying is that we have done our due diligence.

I have a letter from the Wildlands League, which I could read but I do not have time. It is asking us to please send this to committee. It is really neat.

I also have a letter from the Caldwell First Nation, by Chief Mary Duckworth. It is from April 11, 2022. She said, “Caldwell First Nation has been involved with the Ojibway urban national park project since 2019, and we would like to ensure these lands are protected for future generations.”

It is amazing how fast 10 minutes goes by in the House of Commons. It blows my mind.

The last thing I will say is this. I visited a home in LaSalle two and a half weeks ago. I stood in the backyard, a beautiful place, and asked the homeowner what he thought about this. He said that it cannot be developed anyway. He said it is a great opportunity for the residents of LaSalle, and a great opportunity for folks to get out, get active, maybe smile once again and get away from the negativity.

I will leave the House with one final thought. Usually, but not always, all we hear in the House is the negative side of things, but here is a Conservative incredibly excited to help out a member of the New Democratic Party because it is the right thing to do. It is the right thing for our region. I would ask that this bill get sent to committee to be studied.

• (1845)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise this evening to speak to Bill C-248. I would ask my colleagues to bear with me a little, since they often hear me talk about Quebec, but I am much less familiar with Ontario and the Windsor community. However, I have read a bit about the bill introduced by my colleague from Windsor West and I will gladly support it.

I want to give a little background on the subject and explain why the Bloc Québécois would have taken a different approach if this bill were to apply in Quebec. However, after speaking with my colleague, I understand why he took this approach.

I also want to commend our colleague for his tenacity in championing this project. If I understand correctly, it all began in 2013 when he attended a public meeting organized by local residents. That is when he learned of the importance of preserving Ojibway Shores.

It is not hard to understand why the member for Windsor West is fighting to preserve this 33-acre site, which is home to some very rare plant and wildlife species, including species at risk.

I would say that if there were a parcel of land in need of protection like that in my riding, it is highly likely that I would fight for its preservation. As I was saying, I might not go about it in the same way, but I will come back to that.

For now, let us talk a bit about the Windsor community and its fight over the past few years to protect the Ojibway Shores site. We cannot forget it and we must tell it like it is: The Windsor port authority never really had any intention of protecting and preserving

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the site. Its goal from the start was to turn it into an industrial development site. For that to happen, the entire natural forest along the banks had to be clear-cut.

Such a project is antithetical to the environmental concerns of the people of Windsor, who even organized a petition to have the development that was planned for 2015 suspended. Our colleague will certainly remember that, having lobbied local, provincial and national environmental advocacy organizations to call on the Department of Transport to take this issue seriously and proceed with the transfer of lands.

In October 2017, a few months later, the Windsor Essex County Environment Committee passed a resolution inviting the municipality of Windsor to ask the federal government to conserve the natural condition, biodiversity and biological function of the Ojibway Shores property as a protected area. The federal government's involvement in this issue is now clearer.

The member for Windsor West even organized a public meeting the following month to call for the transfer of the Ojibway Shores area and to talk about its benefits to the community, as well as the protection of Sandwich Towne.

I can understand why the member was rather disappointed in December 2017 when the minister of transport at the time, our colleague from Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, wrote to inform him that the port authority was in discussions with the municipality of Windsor on this matter, and that he would not intervene at that point in time.

My colleague did not give up. He made it an election issue in 2019. The votes he received in his riding sent a clear message. He had the support of his constituents on this issue. A few months after the election campaign, my colleague reminded the House that Canada was a signatory to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, under which Canada, the United States and Mexico committed to protect wetlands and waterfowl. To fund this plan, the United States passed the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, which makes it possible to invest in the protection of wetlands and their wildlife in the three countries.

In September 2020, in the throne speech, the Government of Canada allocated funding to create urban parks across the country. Residents of Windsor felt renewed hope. However, they would have to wait until June 2021, when Windsor's city council voted unanimously in favour of the member for Windsor West's proposal to ask the federal government for help in making the Ojibway Shores area a national urban park.

That part was done, and now we are gathered here to talk about this initiative. This is one more step toward the creation of this urban park and I am really starting to see how important it is. I wanted to give a little bit of background, even though there is a lot more to tell. We would be here for a long time if we had to go over everything. I just wanted us to take the time, as parliamentarians, to consider how long, hard and unnecessarily drawn out it can be to take action to protect the environment. This shows that we will have to continue fighting for a long time to protect the natural areas we care about.

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● (1850)

Also, the obstacles faced in these fights are often surprising. As I understand it, the Windsor Port Authority tried to extract \$12 million from the Sandwich Towne community benefit fund, which is meant to offset border impacts in challenged neighbourhoods, in exchange for a 30-year lease for the Ojibway Shores site. This proposal was soundly rejected. This simple obstacle is preventing Windsor residents from enjoying an urban park that would protect local ecosystems, and it is a good example of what environmental advocates face in Canada.

My colleagues will have gathered that the Bloc Québécois is in favour of Bill C-248 in principle. According to our information, there is no question about the ecological value of the site or even the importance of creating such a park. In fact, the government has already committed to working with cities to expand urban parks. That should advance the objective of protecting 25% of Canada's land and, in our opinion, this type of project is perfectly aligned with that commitment.

That said, I mentioned earlier that I would have taken a different approach to protecting Ojibway Shores and that I would come back to that later, so that is what I want to talk about now. Some questions come to mind in that regard. Why has the fight to protect this site gone on for so long? Why should Canada, the federal government, own this park? Why should the federal government own as many urban parks as it can?

Why not give the provinces adequate funding to support their urban conservation efforts? That could be one approach. The federal government's role is to provide unconditional funding to the provinces so that they can protect fragile lands.

I am not saying we have anything against the federal government creating this park and taking care of it. That is fine, but I think that if this had been done in Quebec, we might have done things differently. Here is an example. The Lachine Canal in Montreal is an integral part of the city's history, especially for neighbourhoods such as Saint-Henri, Griffintown and Pointe-Saint-Charles, so it would be appropriate, from our perspective, for the City of Montreal and the boroughs involved to manage the Lachine Canal park. They could figure out how to run it, develop it and integrate it with neighbouring urban developments. The vision would be informed by the people who live there, the people in and of that place, the ones who understand why this particular location holds such significance for the area from a cultural and environmental point of view.

I think there is one thing my colleagues will agree with me on. People do not see the federal government as being all that close to them. The federal government deals with major issues, such as monetary policy, borders, international relations and defence, but is it really its role to make sure that the plants in an urban park represent the flora of that neighbourhood? Is it really up to us as parliamentarians and federal public servants to be responsible for managing an urban park?

That is an important question. Still, I think my colleague from Windsor West did a fine job of explaining why this is the way it is being done in this case. Even so, this is an issue worth talking about because, as I said, there may have been other ways to handle this.

I want to reiterate that the Bloc Québécois generally supports this bill. I commend my colleague's tenacity. Having introduced my first bill in the House, I remember how overwhelming it can be. There is something exciting about seeing a project through to the end and being the one to lead it. As I said, my colleague has been championing this project for several years now, so it is nice to hear the different opinions from each party and see people come together for the Windsor community.

I will conclude by saying that I wish my colleague the best of luck in getting his bill passed. He can count on the support of the Bloc Québécois.

● (1855)

[English]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise to speak to Bill C-248, a bill that would create Ojibway national urban park near Windsor, Ontario, put forward by the member for Windsor West. This initiative would combine lands owned by the federal government, the provincial government and the City of Windsor to form a priceless package that would protect an endangered ecosystem unique to Canada.

To answer the question put forward by the member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia as to why the federal government should be involved, it is because it is a national treasure. This is an area that is unique in Canada, not just in Windsor, not just in Ontario, but in Canada.

I would like to thank the member for Windsor West for the tireless work he has put in on this file. The previous speaker mentioned that the work he has done has been going on for almost 10 years to get to this point. I have to thank him also for inviting me to Windsor a few years ago to visit the site. He gave me the full tour.

It was a beautiful weekend in September, so we walked the trails of several properties, through fields of big bluestem grass, which is also called turkey-foot because of the way seed pods grow. We also walked through groves of oak trees, late summer flowers and, of course, a diverse array of birds and other wildlife.

The member for Essex mentioned how valuable this would also be for the local residents and visitors. Since the pandemic, I have seen a huge increase, as I am sure every other member here has, in people going into the outdoors in their ridings and visiting parks. We need these spaces for people to get out and go to.

Some might ask why a relatively small collection of properties deserve the status of a national park, when they are only about 900 acres in all, adjacent to the urban industrial areas of Windsor and just across the river from the urban industrial sprawl of Detroit. Ojibway national urban park would preserve some of the last and best remnants of once much larger ecosystems: the tall grass prairie, oak savannas and the Carolinian forest.

In my previous life, I was a biologist. Much of the work I did in that career was centred around endangered ecosystems and species at risk. There are four ecosystems in this country that are consistently listed as the most endangered ecosystems in Canada. They are the Garry oak savannas of southeastern Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands in British Columbia; the desert grasslands of the southern interior of British Columbia, which is my home habitat; the Carolinian forest of southern Ontario; and the tall grass prairie of southeastern Manitoba and southwestern Ontario.

An Ojibway national urban park would protect two of these critically endangered ecosystems. We do not often think of Ontario as a prairie province, but it once had extensive tall grass prairies throughout southern Ontario. Over the past three centuries, those prairies have almost been completely wiped out by agriculture and development. Only 1% of those habitats now remain in scattered remnants from Essex county north to the Rice Lake plains. There are only three relatively large protected prairie remnants in Ontario, and when I say “large”, I am talking about more than just a few acres. There is the Alderville Black Oak Savanna near Rice Lake, Bronte Creek Provincial Park and the Ojibway Prairie Complex. The Ojibway Prairie is a significant part of the national park this bill would create.

Endangered ecosystems are almost, by definition, home to long lists of species at risk, and I would like to talk about some of them now. There are 160 provincially rare species in the Ojibway Prairie area. No other area in Ontario has such a concentration of rare species, and only one or two areas in Canada can match this concentration of rarity. One of those areas, I have to add, is the desert grasslands in my riding.

One hundred and nineteen of these rare species are plants at Ojibway Prairie and 19 of those species are federally listed. They are listed in the Species at Risk Act. That includes the American chestnut and the Kentucky coffee tree. Another endangered plant is the scarlet ammannia, which I have to point out is only found in two places in Canada. One is in Ojibway Prairie and the other is at Osoyoos, British Columbia, in my riding.

● (1900)

These rare plant communities are obviously home to thousands of species of insects, many of which we know little about. For many, we do not even have good, basic survey information, let alone know how important they are to broader ecosystem function.

Since we do not talk very often in this place about beautiful insects, I have to take a moment to talk about at least one species found in the area in question, and that is the giant spreadwing.

As I am sure everyone knows, dragonflies come in two groups: the big dragonflies that rest with their wings open and the smaller damselflies that rest with their wings closed. There is another group

in the middle, the spreadwings, that rest with their wings open as well. The biggest of that group is the giant spreadwing. The only place in Canada it is found is Ojibway Prairie.

There are endangered reptiles. The member for Essex mentioned the eastern foxsnake. There are also Blanding's turtle, Butler's gartersnake and the massasauga rattlesnake. I am not sure what he would think if he came across one of those, but it is a rattlesnake population that is isolated from other Canadian populations by over 300 kilometres, and it is on the brink of local extinction.

Some endangered species, such as the northern bobwhite and the five-lined skink, have disappeared from the Ojibway Prairie area. That is what happens when we let endangered ecosystems become too fractured and too small for populations to maintain themselves.

The bobwhite is an iconic quail species that was once common throughout much of eastern North America. It became rarer in Canada during the 20th century as prairie and savanna habitats were developed for intensive agriculture and housing and altered by afforestation. Its Canadian population collapsed in the 1990s and it is no longer found even on the Ojibway Prairie. The only existing population in Canada is on Walpole Island, northwest of Windsor.

A natural area need not be as large, as spectacular or as pristine as Banff, Jasper or Kluane to deserve protection as a national park. Ojibway Shores and surrounding areas are clearly deserving of this protection. The biodiversity and rare ecosystems there are a national treasure. The fact that the remaining areas of intact habitat are small, dissected by roads and surrounded by farmland, industrial sites and suburban neighbourhoods is no reason to abandon them to further development.

That is almost what happened to Ojibway Shores. In 2013, the Windsor Port Authority planned to clear-cut the forest and fill the Ojibway Shores property for development. The member for Windsor West fought to stop this action, and over the course of several years led a successful battle to convince the federal government to preserve the property.

I would like to stress one other thing that makes this such an important proposal. This national urban park would bring together properties that would provide connectivity from the Detroit River and its shoreline habitats through woodlands and savannas, to upland woodlands and prairies.

Connectivity is a critical part of maintaining the integrity of rare habitats, especially as they become fragmented into smaller pieces. If any one of the parcels that is a part of this proposal is lost to development, it would negatively impact the rest of the parcels. It is critical that they be protected together.

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I would be remiss if I did not mention that there is a national park proposal in my riding: in the South Okanagan area of British Columbia. Like Ojibway, this is an ecosystem unique in Canada in a fragmented landscape. It is a mosaic of Crown land, first nations land, municipalities and private land.

This initiative has been debated in my riding for over 20 years, and is now in the negotiation stage among first nations and federal and provincial governments. Because of the diversity of the land ownership in this landscape, those negotiations represent a delicate balance between the need for strong protection of nationally significant ecosystems and respecting the concerns of the broader community and the livelihoods of those who depend on the grasslands, such as ranchers.

Like Ojibway, this would not be a park like Jasper or Banff, but a park designed for the unique circumstances of the South Okanagan. The Ojibway national urban park proposal has the full backing of the Caldwell First Nation and the City of Windsor, as the member for Essex mentioned. It would be a jewel in the crown of our national park system and I fully support this bill.

● (1905)

In closing, I would simply like to thank the member for Windsor West once again, and thank all of those who have worked so hard, often against all odds, to make this happen.

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my colleagues as we resume debate on Bill C-248 this evening. As members are well aware, this is in act to amend the Canada National Parks Act or the Ojibway national urban park of Canada. It is a great honour to join all of my colleagues here this evening.

Allow me to begin by acknowledging that I am joining this discussion from the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe.

In earlier contributions we saw in the debate with respect to this park, as well as what we have heard this evening, what has certainly emerged is that there is consensus in this chamber that it is imperative that we move forward with this specific park. I must say that it is great, on an evening like this, to see that there is consensus in this chamber.

It is important to emphasize that Windsor is one of seven cities where work is currently under way to create national urban parks. In fact, it falls under a new \$130-million program that has the aim of designating up to six new national urban parks across Canada by the year 2026. Canadians expect us to be bold, and that is why we are fully committed to moving in the right direction with a time frame in place by 2026.

The national urban parks program is being led by Parks Canada and I should emphasize that it cannot be short-circuited. At the heart of the process led by Parks Canada, in this particular case and in others, is the premise that we should not forget that there needs to be partnership and collaboration between stakeholders and communities. Every one of us is committed to partnering and working hand in hand to explore opportunities and define boundaries and governance structures, as well as to achieve a shared vision. The process must be grassroots and bottom-up as well.

Since this process began, Parks Canada has been actively collaborating with key partners in the Windsor area, including, as was alluded to, the City of Windsor, Caldwell First Nation and Walpole Island First Nation. Engagement with key stakeholders has also begun, including with conservation and heritage groups, as well as universities, tourism stakeholders and economic development shareholders. I emphasize engagement and collaboration because I want to highlight one of the obvious weaknesses of the bill before us.

Though I think we can all agree the bill has very good, laudable intentions, the process is top-down and totally bypasses grassroots and bottom-up engagement. The failure to undertake appropriate engagement with indigenous peoples specifically on whose traditional lands the proposed park will occur violates the very spirit of reconciliation and risks undermining new relationships and the requisite trust that must always underpin such developments. Creating a national urban park without proper engagement with indigenous partners from the very start would be an unfortunate setback and would get in the way of achieving an important objective.

Bringing together communities and stakeholders to develop a shared vision would ensure that a national urban park is created that endures as a special place that would allow all of us to come together for generations. At this preliminary stage, key decisions require careful consideration and engagement, particularly with respect to the extent of lands to be included within the boundaries. The bill before us prematurely presupposes the precise limits of the park. Furthermore, the bill's identification of these lands, which includes lands currently owned by the provincial government, amounts to a taking of lands without consent and without consultation.

● (1910)

I re-emphasize that a robust, consultative process is being short-circuited. Imagine supporting a bill, for example, in which Ottawa automatically takes control of a park in Quebec or in one of our western provinces without a single conversation or negotiation with the relevant provincial authorities. This is not the spirit with which to launch an enduring national urban park, and it lacks respect for key partners who have ensured the conservation of the subject lands in the face of significant urban development pressures.

Although the lands identified in the bill may be those that should be included in the park, we must take the time and work collaboratively with our local partners to properly assess this question and to explore whether there are other lands that might be considered. This needs to happen before the boundaries of a proposed park are finalized. The bill before us defines the boundaries prematurely. It also closes the door on the possibility that private landowners or adjacent municipalities may identify lands that could be added to the Ojibway footprint. The bill would close the door to that.

We are already building an Ojibway national urban park. Last summer, over 50 local partners stood in Ojibway with my colleagues, the member for Windsor—Tecumseh and the Minister of Families, to declare our ironclad commitment to establish an Ojibway national urban park. A few months later, we announced over \$580,000 in Parks Canada funding for the City of Windsor to begin pre-consultations. Just two weeks ago, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change announced to the House of Commons that we have an MOU in place between Parks Canada and Transport Canada to work together on transferring the Ojibway Shores lands from the Windsor Port Authority to Parks Canada for inclusion in the eventual Ojibway national urban park.

Ojibway Shores is the last remaining underdeveloped shoreline and natural habitat along the Detroit River, and it would connect the Ojibway Prairie Complex to the Detroit River. It has significant environmental value. It is an essential ecological gem and concentrates in its 33 acres some of the most diverse plants, as was alluded to earlier this evening, insects and animal species in North America. Many of them are rare and at risk.

The Windsor community has been fighting for 20 years to preserve Ojibway Shores. Our government got it done. Ojibway Shores will be preserved forever, and it will be part of a national urban park for generations of residents and visitors to enjoy.

This MOU that I refer to is a major step forward. It underscores the importance and the value of collaboration and consultation in setting the ground work for the national urban park. We are on the cusp of achieving something that everyone wants: A national urban park that will benefit the people of Windsor and all Canadians, contribute to our ongoing efforts to protect the environment and advance reconciliation with indigenous peoples.

Bill C-248 is well-meaning, but it is contemplating the wrong approach, and it sends the wrong message. That is why the House should not support this piece of legislation.

• (1915)

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise this evening to speak with respect to Bill C-248, the private member's bill put forward by the member for Windsor West to create a national urban park, Ojibway urban park in particular.

I want to start by highlighting that this park would not involve any private property whatsoever. It would connect several pieces of publicly owned lands that, if connected, would create one larger 900-acre national urban park. It is important to pause to share more about why national urban parks are so important.

As we have heard, not only are they home in this case to hundreds of endangered species, but they also provide mitigation of flooding due to climate change, providing a natural heritage area that the community can enjoy, appreciate and use with respect to healthy living and ecotourism. It is also worth pausing to reflect on nature deficit disorder, a term that refers to what happens when people are disconnected from their natural surroundings.

If we had more national urban parks, I wonder how this might affect the thinking even in this very place. Given the larger systemic challenges we face, such as the climate crisis, if we had more urban

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green space that Canadians across the country and parliamentarians were enjoying, I wonder how that might affect some of the thinking that goes into decisions we are making with respect to the climate crisis, for example, or decisions we are not making.

It is also important to point out how this aligns with what Parks Canada has already put forward with respect to their interests in establishing at least one new national park in every province or territory across the country and how it aligns with existing plans from the governing party and commitments it has made to protect up to 25% of land by 2025 and up to 30% by 2030. It strikes me that we ought to be making the most of every opportunity we have to go more quickly in protecting biodiversity across the country.

I also want to pause to give kudos to the member for Windsor West for bringing forward legislation like this. In my view, this is actually how democracy is supposed to function. The member has been advocating with respect to this national urban park since 2013, when he made the first request of the federal government, listening to the interests of those across his community and collaborating with others to find consensus to move forward. I will point out that he has received the support of Caldwell First Nation and of Chief Duckworth in particular in a letter shared on April 11 that encourages all parliamentarians to support Bill C-248.

I will point out it has also been unanimously supported by Windsor City Council. In my view, these are exactly the kinds of indications for why a parliamentarian should look to choose a topic such as this, knowing that work has been put in, that consultations have been had, that members here should be listening to their communities first and foremost. It should also be community ahead of party, and that members, based on what they hear, should then be advocating in support of those interests. In my view, that is exactly what the member for Windsor West has done, and doing the same would allow us to move more quickly toward ensuring we have more nationally protected areas and a new national urban park.

I am less interested in who gets the credit for it and more in ensuring we support whoever is bringing forward ideas to this place to ensure that we move more quickly to protect urban areas. It is for this reason that the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands and I will both be supporting this legislation. I was encouraged to hear the member for Essex supporting it as well, and I am encouraged to hear a biologist among us, the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay, also voicing his support.

I will point out that in some ways this has been a difficult day, that there were some votes in which there was not as much alignment as I would have liked, but at least consensus can be achieved on this debate, and I am hopeful that the bill will go to committee as quickly as possible.

• (1920)

The Deputy Speaker: Seeing that there are no other intervenors, I will recognize the hon. member for Windsor West for his right of reply.

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Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues and you for being part of this. Bill C-248 is really from the community. It is not my idea. It is something that we have been fighting for, and for a long period of time.

As a member who has been here for 20-plus years now, it is exciting to me when we can actually bring unity to the House and work on projects that can help define our country and our communities.

I have a list of people to thank, and some of them I am going to have to abandon because I do not have enough time.

First and foremost, I want to start by thanking Janet and Dave from the Wildlands League. They were part of this process from the beginning and helped give inspiration. They understand the park system's green spaces connectivity and have been very special and very positive going through this. On top of that, I want to also thank Chief Mary Duckworth. Chief Duckworth was here in the House of Commons, outside this chamber with me, to push this issue before.

For this to be made up as some type of thing that is circumventing first nations is unbelievable to hear. It is terribly disrespectful. I brought Caldwell First Nation people down to this site as they were deciding about where they were setting up their reserve. Now it is actually closer to Point Pelee, which ironically is the place that they should have had historically. It is one of the most beautiful stories that we have of reconciliation taking place, and it is amazing.

Chief Duckworth and all of the energy there are supporting this, and they explicitly asked to go to committee to tell the story of why they support this. This is part of their heritage, and they want to share it through the vision of a national urban park for all. It is a terrific story in itself because of the tragedy of the way it started, but also it is where they are going in the future.

It has been interesting, because Mayor Dilkens and the city council have been working on trying to get this land on the Ojibway shoreline protected for a number of years. It was going to be bulldozed and cut down. Finally, during this process, after seven years, I was told that they could not transfer it to Environment Canada. A few weeks ago, they finally transferred it to Environment Canada.

We are happy for that. They wanted the city of Windsor residents, at one point, to pay millions of dollars and then give it back to the federal government. How absurd is that? How absurd is what the Liberals wanted to do with that? I am thankful that they finally reversed their position on that.

The reason this bill is necessary is that every national park has its own legislation. Every national park is secured in that way. What we have done is put the pieces of property together, and there has been consultation constantly. Most importantly, there has been consultation with the children, the youth, the advocates, the environmental people, the unions and the companies, all in Windsor for several different years. That is why we actually have the defined geography in the bill to start with.

I do not understand the Liberals who are opposing this. Why not send it to committee? Why is there resentment from some, maybe

not all, members of the Liberal government over actually sending this bill to committee to bring up concerns?

The Conservatives had some concerns about private property being involved; we did not include that. In the case of the Bloc, we want to make sure this is a special thing because the Bloc members have some very legitimate questions about the province. Those things have been taken care of as well.

The province right now is going through an election, but provincial officials have been talking about this and supporting it. The local member of the provincial parliament, Lisa Gretzky, is in favour of it, and of course the City of Windsor. We are looking now at getting this to committee to define those areas and have a chance to speak and to showcase why this is so important.

I do not understand. I have been here for a while. I have been trying to work, especially when we were sent back to Parliament, in a constructive way, and that is why I chose this bill. I chose it because it should survive the test of mettle to get to committee at least. How could they want to shut down this beautiful process, which has been grassroots every single step along the way, without even allowing people from Windsor and Essex to have their voice?

I will conclude with this. There have been so many people. Some of them even passed away during this process. It is going to be right next to the Gordie Howe international bridge.

I had my first public meeting for a new border crossing back in 1998 at Marlborough Public School as a city councillor. We are finally getting a bill. We do not need another 20 years to do the obvious. This should be done. It is grassroots and, most importantly, it defines us on the doorstep of America.

• (1925)

The Deputy Speaker: I thank everyone for their interventions. 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 ask them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

The hon. deputy House leader.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: I request a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 8, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS***[English]***COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 31, the House will now proceed to the consideration of a motion to concur in the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, presented on Monday, May 30.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all members of this House for taking the time to hold a debate on what our government sees as a critical priority for Canada's foreign policy: our strong support for Finland and Sweden's accession to NATO.

However, I want to begin by speaking to the gravest threat to international peace today: Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It has been months since President Putin unleashed his war of choice on Ukraine. With every day that passes, the number of civilians, including children, killed and wounded continues to climb. We have witnessed Russian attacks on apartment buildings, public squares, theatres and maternity hospitals. In addition, the reports and images of what Russian forces carried out in Bucha are horrifying and deeply shameful.

Let me be clear: We believe that this amounts to war crimes and crimes against humanity, and we are committed to holding President Putin and those supporting him accountable for their actions. Canada and our NATO allies are responding to Putin's aggression with unprecedented coordination, as we continue to support the men and women of Ukraine as they defend themselves and fight for their country, communities and families. We have announced round after round of sanctions and will continue working across our alliance and with international partners to suffocate the Putin regime. This reality provides even greater urgency to the debate we are having tonight.

I forgot to mention that I will be sharing my time with the member for Cambridge.

Since its foundation in 1949, NATO has been a cornerstone of Canada's international security policy. Along with 11 other founding nations, we established the alliance to promote the collective defence of its members, maintain peace and security in the North Atlantic area, and safeguard the freedom of its people based on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law.

Since then, the alliance has increased from 12 to 30 allies. NATO's door is open to any European country in a position to undertake the commitments and obligations of membership and contribute to Euro-Atlantic security. Canada has a long tradition of fully supporting NATO's "open door policy", based on article 10 of the Washington treaty. This is why we strongly support Finland and Sweden's decision to pursue NATO membership, and we wholeheartedly endorse their application without reservation. We also believe that every country has the sovereign right to chose its own

path and its own security arrangements, and we stand with the people of Finland and Sweden, who have made their choice clear.

We have always welcomed Finland and Sweden's close partnership with NATO and their contributions to Euro-Atlantic security. We enjoy a long history of excellent bilateral relations with both countries, as demonstrated by our extensive co-operation and our shared values and priorities. The Canadian Armed Forces has worked extensively with their armed forces on training exercises, as well as in NATO's training mission in Iraq. Our troops have also fought alongside one another on operations from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Kosovo, Afghanistan and Libya.

Canada also has a strong presence in Europe, and we are currently deploying 1,375 Canadian Armed Forces members across NATO's eastern flank, along with two frigates and accompanying patrol aircraft, in support of the alliance's strengthened deterrence and defence posture. These deployments fall under Canada's Operation Reassurance, which includes NATO's enhanced forward presence, the standing NATO maritime groups and NATO air policing.

Canada has full confidence in Finland and Sweden's ability to integrate immediately into NATO and make meaningful contributions to our collective security. Both their militaries are strong and, in areas such as whole-of-society engagement on security, allies have much to learn from them. Finland and Sweden are some of the alliance's closest and most active security and defence partners. They share the alliance's commitment to upholding the rules-based international order. They are committed to the principles of state sovereignty and territorial integrity, and their militaries are highly qualified and very capable.

Sweden and Finland are also strong proponents of advancing the women, peace and security agenda. Gender equality and inclusive peace processes build more stable societies and are critical preconditions for a peaceful world for people of all genders. The full, equal, and meaningful participation of all women and girls in preventing, ending and recovering from conflict benefits us all and is essential in achieving sustainable peace.

● (1930)

As a close friend and security partner, Canada will support Finland and Sweden through the accession process, including against threats to their security. We are working to expedite our domestic processes in order to facilitate the accession of both countries without delay. We encourage all allies to do the same and approve their application for NATO membership as quickly as possible. Finland and Sweden are strong champions of the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law that the alliance was founded upon. Their accession will strengthen our collective defence.

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The consequences of President Putin's reckless war of aggression extend far beyond Ukraine's borders. His unprovoked and unjustifiable invasion of Ukraine constitutes a significant threat to Euro-Atlantic security and the rules-based international order as a whole. Putin's brazen attack on a neighbour, on a sovereign country, supported by a campaign of lies and disinformation and carried out with devastating impact on civilians, has shattered peace in Europe. This is not just an attack on Ukraine. This does not only impact Europe. This is an attack on the UN charter and the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, and it impacts democracy, freedom and human rights for the foreseeable future.

However, in the face of this war, NATO's resolve is as strong as ever. NATO allies and partners, including Finland and Sweden, are increasing their support for Ukraine as it continues to defend itself against Russia's full-scale invasion. Thousands of anti-tank weapons, hundreds of air defence missiles and thousands of small arms and ammunition stocks are being sent to Ukraine bilaterally by Canada, our allies and our partners. Sweden has provided anti-tank weapons, demining equipment, personal protective equipment and financial aid to Ukraine. Finland has sent small arms, ammunition, anti-tank weapons and personal protective equipment.

NATO has also increased efforts to reinforce the alliance's eastern flank to deter and defend against Russia's aggression. The alliance strengthened NATO's enhanced forward presence with additional battle groups in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. Canada remains steadfast in its commitment to bolster NATO's eastern flank and support our eastern allies.

It is the sovereign right of Finland and Sweden to choose their own security arrangements. They have made the decision to join NATO with the strong and unprecedented support of the Finnish and Swedish people. The Minister of Foreign Affairs has been in close contact with her Swedish and Finnish counterparts, as has the Prime Minister, and we have assured them of Canada's complete support through this process.

We also continue to underscore, in the face of Russian disinformation and threats, that NATO is a defensive alliance and does not seek confrontation, nor pose any threat to Russia. NATO and transatlantic security are more important than ever, and Finland's and Sweden's accession will increase our shared security, including in the Baltic Sea. Their decision to join NATO has been warmly welcomed by neighbouring allies, such as Denmark, Norway, Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia.

Canada will continue to support the principles that have kept the countries on both sides of the Atlantic safe, free and prosperous for over 70 years. We look forward to welcoming Finland and Sweden to the alliance and our continued close co-operation and friendship.

I will end simply by stating the facts. Time is of the essence. We encourage all NATO allies to work to support their membership rapidly. There is no time to waste.

• (1935)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, we in the Bloc Québécois support this motion and, of course, we support Finland and Sweden in their bids to join NATO.

There is one problem, however, that everyone will need to work on collaboratively. That problem is Turkey. Turkey is opposed to Finland and especially Sweden joining NATO because of diplomatic frictions related to certain Kurdish groups.

I would like to know how the government plans to address this issue. Will it show leadership in relation to Turkey and its opposition to Sweden and Finland joining NATO?

[*English*]

Mr. Maninder Sidhu: Madam Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs has discussed this matter with her Turkish counterparts. Sweden and Finland will undoubtedly be assets to the alliance. We encourage our allies to promptly support their membership. As I said, there is no time to waste. It is very important that we support our allies in this application.

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague from the Bloc touched on one of my questions. I am just wondering if the member might be able to expand a little bit more on that aspect. We see what is going on here with the great nations of Sweden and Finland. We would love to see them as part of NATO. We want them to be together. Those steps need to be done.

The member indicated that we are going to act on this as quickly as possible. I wonder if there is any way that he can possibly give us a timeline or some information about how quickly that might be.

• (1940)

Mr. Maninder Sidhu: Madam Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs has been dealing with and speaking to her counterparts for the NATO accession. We know that in Canada here, we are fully in support of their application. We all know that both countries are strong champions of democracy and, of course, the rule of law. Their addition to NATO would be a huge benefit to many of our alliances.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member talked about gender equality. We know, for sure, that Sweden is a very strong proponent of gender equality and actually has some of the strongest percentages of women in Parliament.

I wonder if the member could speak a little bit about how the inclusion of Sweden and Finland will affect NATO in the gender equity equation.

Mr. Maninder Sidhu: Madam Speaker, we have a lot to learn from our allies, and the member rightly mentioned their processes and their firm commitment to gender equality and empowering women. Even when a delegation came from Sweden recently, they spoke about these things.

There is a lot we can do together, collectively, as two like-minded countries. That is why it is important that we continue to support their application.

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, I do not have a question, as much as just a comment for the parliamentary secretary to get on the record here.

Having served and been with the members of the armed forces of both Sweden and Finland, I can attest to their competency and professionalism and the asset they will be when they join NATO. It is just something that I warmly welcome. I know they will be a great addition to the NATO alliance, and it is something that I think is so vital, considering Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine.

I just wanted to get that on the record. I think this is the right thing for us to be doing as a Parliament and as the House of Commons. I appreciate having the opportunity to speak to it tonight.

Mr. Maninder Sidhu: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound for his service to our country. I really do appreciate his comments and his support in terms of supporting our allies in their NATO application.

It is important that we continue having these conversations so that we can ensure that Sweden and Finland are supported.

Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canada has long held the position that, in times of uncertainty, discord and doubt, our international relationships are more important than ever.

For over 70 years, the NATO alliance has afforded member states the opportunity to work together on our largest shared defence and security challenges, both on the battlefield and in the boardroom. Its impact and influence can be felt here in North America, across Europe and beyond.

We know how important this alliance is to our safety and global stability, so we, of course, welcome any changes that will make it stronger and safer, including the admission of Sweden and Finland into the alliance. As the Prime Minister recently noted, both countries have long-standing ties to NATO, making important contributions to NATO exercises and operations. We also closely align in our values, on the importance of peace, territorial integrity and upholding the rules-based international order.

It is clear that Europe and the entire world is under threat from Vladimir Putin's reckless and unprovoked war in Ukraine. This war is not just an attack on a smaller democratic neighbour. It is a very real threat to our rules-based international order, and the biggest threat since the end of the Cold War. It is also symptomatic of the resurgence of a great power competition, and the return of authoritarian states vying for influence and control through military might. These geopolitical shifts have reinforced just how important it is for all of us to work together to stand united against those who seek to redraw maps and rewrite history to suit their own needs.

In the face of these threats, the work we do as part of the NATO alliance is more important than ever. This includes the military support that Canada provides on land, sea and in the air to NATO missions in Europe and around the world. Our largest contribution is through Operation Reassurance, supporting assurance and deter-

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rence measures in central and eastern Europe, letting our allies know that we will be there for them in good times and bad, and standing together against those who would seek to undermine our alliance or member states' security and sovereignty.

As part of this mission, we have almost 700 Canadian soldiers leading NATO's enhanced forward presence battle group in Latvia. Canadian military personnel stand shoulder-to-shoulder with soldiers from 10 NATO countries, demonstrating the strength of our alliance and protecting stability in the region.

Canada has played an important role in Latvia for five years, and we have recently expanded our efforts by deploying a battery of M777 artillery guns with forward observers and an electronic warfare troop. As part of our sea component of Operation Reassurance, we also have HMCS *Montreal* and HMCS *Halifax* deployed to Standing NATO Maritime Group One. In the air, we have a CP-140 Aurora long range patrol aircraft, and two CC-130 transport aircraft operating in the Euro-Atlantic area, and we look forward to resuming our enhanced air policing mission in Romania later this year. We also have 3,400 CAF members standing by for the NATO Response Force, should their support be required.

Our support for global peace and stability does not stop at NATO's borders. Since February 2022, we have committed hundreds of millions of dollars in military aid to Ukraine, including anti-tank weapons, rockets, M777 howitzers, drone cameras, 155 millimetre ammunition, rifles, armoured utility vehicles, satellite imagery and communications equipment. Some of this aid has already been delivered, and we are working hard to provide the rest as quickly as possible.

I am pleased to say that some of the military aid delivered comes from the \$500 million that our government announced in the last federal budget. This is the case for the 20,000 rounds of 155 millimetre artillery that the Minister of National Defence recently announced, at the cost of \$98 million, which will be crucial in Ukraine's fight to defend its eastern territory.

● (1945)

Prior to the war, we also helped train over 33,000 members of the Ukrainian security force through Operation Unifier, learning valuable skills from one another and supporting Ukrainian efforts to become stronger and better prepared to respond to Russia's aggression.

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While Ukraine's success in holding back Russia is entirely its own, I know many CAF members are proud to have worked alongside those who are now on the front lines fighting for their freedom. We are all inspired by their bravery and their dedication. As I mentioned earlier, Finland and Sweden have long-standing ties to NATO and are among the alliance's most active partners. They are two of the six countries under the partnership interoperability initiative, which includes Ukraine and which makes particularly significant contributions to NATO.

Both countries field strong and capable militaries, whose soldiers have fought alongside ours in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Libya. Other armed forces have worked extensively together on training, including NATO missions in Iraq. Our ties run even deeper. As Arctic nations, our long-standing co-operation has contributed to peace and stability in the Arctic. For these reasons and more, Canada unreservedly and enthusiastically supports Finland and Sweden's decision to pursue NATO membership.

In Ukraine, across Europe and around the globe, Canada supports our allies and partners, both on and off the battlefield. As we move forward, we will continue standing with them in the name of global peace and stability.

We know, as our biggest defence and security threats evolve, so too must the alliance evolve. To support these efforts and to keep peace with our allies, Canada is making new investments in defence, here at home, in North America and across the globe. In budget 2022, we announced a new investment package for defence worth \$8 billion, as well as our plans to update Canada's defence policy, to become more responsive to the current defence and security environment.

Through these efforts, we will ensure that our people have the modern fit-for-purpose equipment they need when they deploy. We will also keep supporting NATO's diplomatic efforts, including welcoming Sweden and Finland into the alliance. We know we are stronger and more capable of tackling our biggest defence and security challenges when we work together with our like-minded allies and partners. Canada was one of the original founding members of NATO when the organization came into existence in 1949, and we remain just as dedicated to its success and to global peace and stability today.

In missions across the globe, including in central and eastern Europe, we work alongside NATO allies and partner countries to safeguard the alliance against external threats, including those stemming from Russia's aggressive actions in Ukraine.

While we live in a defensive and security environment defined by uncertainty, I remain optimistic that the values like peace, freedom, and adherence to the rules-based international order will win out against authoritarianism, doubt and division. The addition of two like-minded countries to our alliance makes this outcome all the more likely, and we are looking forward to supporting Finland and Sweden through the accession process.

● (1950)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech. We have heard

two speeches from the government and we have been told twice that we must act as quickly as possible. I agree with that, but we have not yet heard how the government is going to deal with Turkey, apart from mentions of talking to people.

The member tells me that we need to act as quickly as possible. We know that it took the government three months to charter three planes to help Ukrainian refugees get out of the countries bordering Ukraine. If that is what the government calls acting quickly, is it going to take that long in this case, or is there actually a plan in terms of the timeline for Sweden and Finland to join NATO?

[*English*]

Mr. Bryan May: Madam Speaker, Sweden and Finland will undoubtedly be assets to this alliance. We know this. We encourage our allies, all of our allies, including Turkey, to promptly support their membership. We are moving quickly. I would point out that the fact we are speaking here today on this to move the process through as quickly as possible is proof of that. There is no time to waste. We know that this is usually a very lengthy process. Speeding up this process as much as we possibly can, as quickly as we can, is what we want to do here today.

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member talked a little about Latvia, about our military and their great military. My father was a major general in the Canadian Forces. My brother was a colonel. My sister was a nurse. My brother-in-law was a full colonel. My nephews are presently serving in the Canadian Forces, and they do tremendous work. They do tremendous work with our allies in Finland and Sweden.

We have talked about how unreservedly we are here to try to support that. However, as my colleague from the Bloc has indicated, and as I think people have heard, there are concerns about how quickly this could be expedited and how quickly we can step forward with these moves that we need to do.

I am wondering if the member could indicate if there is strong support, at least within his caucus, to push this forward as quickly as possible.

● (1955)

Mr. Bryan May: Madam Speaker, the short answer is absolutely. There is support throughout not just our caucus but I imagine throughout the House to move forward on this as quickly as possible.

If I could just take a moment here, I want to thank the member opposite and ask him to thank his family for their service. The commitment in that family sounds quite impressive.

It is that commitment that we are talking about here today. It is about recognizing the need to focus on getting this done, getting it done right and getting it done quickly.

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to my colleague's remarks.

Could the member provide his thoughts on what he hopes tonight's debate will result in, and what bearing it would have on the course of events over the coming weeks and months?

Mr. Bryan May: Madam Speaker, I hope I speak for all of us in the House when I say that this concurrence debate sends a very strong message to Vladimir Putin. It also sends a message to our NATO allies that they need to continue to have conversations in their houses and their parliaments that recognize the importance of getting this done.

I will go back to the fact that in the face of Russian aggression we stand united with our allies, our partners, in the defence of freedom for democracy and the right of people to determine their own futures. If not now, when would we try to band together like this? I recognize there has been criticism of NATO in the past, maybe of it being divided, but if we think of ourselves as an open hand, Vladimir Putin has accomplished making us into a fist.

We are committed. We are together. We need to move forward as quickly as possible.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

[*English*]

I am in support of concurring in the fourth report of the Standing Committee of the Public Safety and National Security, which expresses its strong support for Finland's accession and Sweden's accession to the NATO alliance, and which calls on all NATO members to approve their application for NATO membership as soon as possible.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24 was an illegal act of war. It was an unprovoked attack on a European democracy. It marks the first war between European states since 1945. It shattered the relative peace and security that we in the western alliance have enjoyed for the last eight decades, since the end of the Second World War.

Russia's war on Ukraine has actualized something that was once only theoretical. An authoritarian state led by an autocrat directly attacked—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Could I ask for silence, please? We had silence for the previous speeches. Could I ask that conversations be taken outside, please?

The hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

Hon. Michael Chong: Madam Speaker, Russia's war in Ukraine has actualized something that was once only theoretical. An authoritarian state led by an autocrat has attacked a democracy: It has demonstrated that it is willing and able to attack a democracy. It has made clear that democracies that stand alone and are not part of military alliances are most vulnerable. That is why it has become necessary to bring both Sweden and Finland into the NATO alliance.

This is an urgent matter. It is urgent because Sweden and Finland are now very vulnerable. They sit in between a period when they were neutral states and full NATO membership, which would guarantee their security and protection by other NATO members under article 5. That is why this debate is so important and why I hope the House will add its political support to the Government of Canada's decision to support Finland and Sweden's accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

It is also an urgent matter because now that Sweden and Finland have indicated that they wish to join the NATO alliance, Russian disinformation will no doubt accelerate through media sympathetic to Russian disinformation and through political actors sympathetic to Russian disinformation. That is why it is important that we here in the House speak clearly and categorically about our support for both Finland and Sweden's entry into the NATO alliance.

It is also important that the Government of Canada puts pressure on NATO members that are resistant to Finland and Sweden joining the NATO alliance. Both Turkey and Croatia have indicated concerns, if not outright opposition, to Finland and Sweden joining NATO. The Government of Canada must make clear, through its ambassadors as well as through discussions between foreign ministers and heads of government, Canada's position.

Canada supported Turkey's accession to NATO in 1952, and Canada should now ask Turkey to clearly support Finland and Sweden's accession to NATO in 2022. Canada should note that it supplies military equipment to Turkey, particularly key technology for Bayraktar drones. Canada supported Croatia's entry to NATO in 2009, and now Canada should ask Croatia's President Milanovic for his support for Finland and Sweden's accession into the NATO alliance in 2022. The government should note that continued opposition could have negative repercussions for Canada-Croatia relations, which could impact everything from youth mobility arrangements to the promotion of two-way trade and investment.

The Government of Canada also needs to make clear to Finland and Sweden that both Canada and Turkey work together to combat terrorism, and it should indicate that there are groups that both Canada and Turkey consider terrorist entities as listed under the Canadian Criminal Code.

The Canadian government should do as the United Kingdom government recently did, and provide interim security guarantees to both Finland and Sweden in the interim period where they are the most vulnerable before their accession to the NATO alliance to counter any plans that Moscow may have to try to block and intimidate these two countries.

Routine Proceedings

I had the pleasure of meeting Ann Linde, Sweden's foreign minister, on May 5. We discussed Sweden's application to join NATO, Russia's war in Ukraine and its implications for defence, energy and Arctic sovereignty. It was clear during our discussion that it was in Canada's interests as well for Finland and Sweden to join the NATO alliance. Their membership would help bolster Arctic defence and security in a region that Russia considers its most strategically important. It is a region in which Russia has invested considerable resources in recent years.

Finland and Sweden also have robust militaries that could bolster Canada's contributions to the military alliance. Finland demonstrated its fighting spirit during the Winter War of 1939 and 1940, when brave Finns fought back advancing Soviet tanks by running up to the tanks with tar-coated bombs and slapping those bombs onto the track treads of those Soviet tanks, disabling them.

● (2000)

They used nothing more than their bodies and simple, homemade, handmade bombs to stop the Soviet army in its tracks and they eventually repelled the invaders.

The Swedes have a robust domestic military industry. They produce the Gripen fighter jet. Therefore, it is in Canada's interests that both Sweden and Finland join the alliance, helping us to bolster our military capabilities both here and abroad.

Finland and Sweden and their desire to join NATO have demonstrated how much the world has changed since Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24. For some 200 years, Sweden has had a policy of neutrality. This is longer than the confederation of Swiss cantons. It is longer than Switzerland's policy. Its position of neutrality dates back to 1812, when it lost territory to Russia as a result of the Napoleonic wars.

The fact that after two centuries of neutrality Sweden has formally applied to join a military alliance reveals how much the world has changed in the past three months, and that should be a wake-up call for the government. The world has changed, but the government has been slow to react to that change. Russia's invasion of Ukraine makes it urgent that the Canadian government meet its commitment to spend 2% of Canada's gross domestic product on our military. This is something it committed to before the most recent budget. It is something the most recent budget fails to deliver on, and our allies are increasingly making note of our failure to uphold our defence spending commitments.

Just this past week, U.S. Ambassador to Canada David Cohen said, "In the public discourse leading up to the release of the budget, the rhetoric from senior Canadian government officials implied that there would be a significant increase in defence spending." He added, "It's fair to say that although \$8 billion is more money, it was a little disappointing as matched against the rhetoric that we heard leading into the release of the budget."

Finland and Sweden understand that the world has changed, and that is why they are urgently seeking to join NATO. Germany understands that the world has changed, which is why Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who heads a centre-left coalition, announced on February 27 a dramatic U-turn in decades of German foreign and defence policy by immediately committing to increase German de-

fence spending to well beyond 2% of gross domestic product, with an immediate commitment to spend \$140 billion Canadian on German defence spending. Other NATO allies understand that the world has changed, but the government has not and it has been slow to react.

Let me finish by stating clearly and categorically that we as Conservatives support Sweden and Finland's accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. I encourage all members of the House to do the same to ensure that the Parliament of Canada adds its clear voice of support to the Government of Canada's decision to support Finland and Sweden's accession into the NATO alliance.

● (2005)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member across the way is also my geographic neighbour, with Guelph and Wellington—Halton Hills being so close together.

I was listening with interest to his discussion of the neutrality of Sweden and Finland. They have had a formal neutrality for many years, but in 1995 they joined the EU and I think in 1995 they clearly indicated that they were becoming part of an economic alliance that we already have. In fact, our government has signed a trade agreement with Europe: the CETA agreement. We have a formal economic tie with the EU members.

Could the hon. member comment on how having that economic tie can also benefit the alliance through NATO that we are looking at now?

Hon. Michael Chong: Madam Speaker, I think that democracies need to work more closely together not just on diplomacy or the military, but also on economic issues. An example of that is precisely in Sweden and Finland. Finland is a global leader in telecommunications technologies.

The Scandinavian countries have long produced telecommunications giants, such as Nokia and others, that could help us develop 5G and 6G technologies that would help us build a secure national communications infrastructure to ensure that we were no longer threatened by authoritarian states, such as China, that have their own 5G systems through companies like Huawei, which the government has recently banned. I note that Sweden has a robust domestic defence industry. It produces the Gripen fighter jet.

There are many other economic strengths that Canada could take advantage of by working more closely with those two countries.

● (2010)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills has once again demonstrated his thorough understanding of international geopolitical matters. It is a pleasure to hear him speak.

Routine Proceedings

He talked about how Turkey is a problem in the context of the motion we are debating. Today, he said the government should take the lead on resolving this issue. My colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills knows more about the government's leadership on international matters than most members of the House. In February 2021, when he moved his motion to denounce and condemn the Uighur genocide, all the ministers and the Prime Minister abstained from voting. That is not what I call leadership.

How confident is my colleague that the government will show leadership and deal with the problem with Turkey?

Hon. Michael Chong: Madam Speaker, I think the government needs to manage Canada's relationship with Turkey better than it has been. This government has made a lot of mistakes in managing our relationship with Turkey. It made mistakes with export permits for drone technology, for example. I think it needs to improve its relationship with Turkey. It needs to make it clear to Turkey that we are interested in bringing Finland and Sweden into NATO.

[*English*]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, we know that NATO is in fact a security alliance of some countries. The member talks a lot about the investment in NATO, but what about investment in other multilateral institutions that would work toward a more peaceful future and not just peace-keeping but peace-building? Would he be as supportive of investment in those institutions as he is of NATO?

Hon. Michael Chong: Madam Speaker, I would point out that I have been quite critical in recent years of the government's spending on official development assistance. I noted that in the period from 2016 to 2021, the Government of Canada actually reduced official development assistance by 10% compared with the previous government. Ambassador Bob Rae noted that in the report he did for the government that was posted in August 2020 on the Government of Canada's website. We are supportive of the government doing a better job in the areas of official development assistance, peacemaking and climate change, but we also believe the government needs to do a much better job in the area of military and defence commitments.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Madam Chair, by happy coincidence, I recently returned from a four-day stay in Vilnius, Lithuania, where I attended a meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization that included discussions about whether or not to bring Finland and Sweden into NATO. My speech this evening could therefore not be more timely for me.

The Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security has tabled its fourth report. We are debating concurrence in that report and, specifically, two important points, the two recommendations in the report: expressing our strong support for Finland and Sweden's NATO membership, as Finland and Sweden are among NATO's closest partners; and calling on all NATO members to approve their application for NATO membership as quickly as possible.

I am happy to speak to this topic in the House today and to express my support for the committee's recommendations. I will also

talk about comments on the subject that were made during the meetings in Lithuania.

The admittance of Finland and Sweden to NATO has long been debated. We heard arguments from Matti Vanhanen, Speaker of the *Eduskunta Riksdag*, Finland's parliament, and Andreas Norlén, Speaker of the *Riksdag*, Sweden's parliament. First of all, it is important to note that Finland and Sweden formally submitted their application for NATO membership on May 18, 2022. During the speeches from the Speakers of the Finnish and Swedish parliaments, the message was very clear: Both countries are formally asking to become NATO members. In recent decades, they have not wanted to be militarily involved and have always chosen to maintain their independence. However, with Russia's sudden violent aggression towards Ukraine, both countries see that they really have no choice. They felt an urgent need to ask to join NATO.

As my colleagues know, Canada has been a member of NATO for 73 years. Canada is a founding member. The most important article of the North Atlantic Treaty is article 5. That article deals with collective defence and states that an attack against one NATO member is an attack against them all. Considering what is going on right now, Sweden and Finland realize this. They really understand the importance for their respective countries to be part of a group like NATO.

I feel compelled to point out that there have been times over the past few years when some have questioned NATO's relevance. The former U.S. president questioned it. In the end, what the former U.S. president was doing was more about rattling the organization. I know this from experience, having attended several NATO meetings over the past few years. It was a way of rattling the organization, telling everyone to wake up, to invest more in defence and to be prepared. Indeed, one never knows what might happen. This was proven on February 24 with Russia.

That is why Finland and Sweden are applying for membership. Finland is especially anxious to join, because it borders directly on Russia for just over 1,000 kilometres. The two countries could not be any closer together. Finland is a country that has always managed to preserve its sovereignty through military means by maintaining a strong military posture. However, having seen what is happening in Ukraine, the Finns realized that NATO membership would give their country a major strategic advantage. It would give them additional security guarantees.

It is sad for Ukraine, but this explains why we are here today: For many years, Ukraine has been asking to join NATO, but it has never been admitted. The decision has always been put off. The same goes for joining the European Union, although that is a European issue. When it comes to NATO, Ukraine never managed to get in, despite what happened with Crimea in 2014 and then what followed this year, despite Russia's microaggressions and the fact that Ukrainians were scared. NATO did not accept their application.

Routine Proceedings

Everyone knows that it is impossible to admit Ukraine now because it is at war. This would automatically become a war for NATO. This is a complicated issue, but unfortunately, that is how things stand for Ukraine. That is why Finland and Sweden quickly held a vote in their respective parliaments. They demonstrated that they had the necessary capabilities, and they provided proof. That is why they are calling on NATO and the member countries to admit them.

• (2015)

The other advantage for NATO, and for Canada in particular, is the geographical location of Finland and Sweden. Norway is already a NATO member, but having Sweden and Finland as NATO partners in the Arctic region is extremely appealing and important to Canada. These two large Arctic countries could work with Canada, the United States and Norway for NATO-style mutual protection.

When it comes to admitting new members, consensus among the 30 existing members is a problem. Turkey has already expressed significant concerns about allowing Sweden and Finland to join. When I was in Vilnius on the weekend, I spoke to three colleagues who agreed that this was a problem. Allow me to explain why.

Al Jazeera reported that Turkey's foreign minister is demanding that Finland and Sweden amend their laws, if needed, to win Ankara's backing in their historic bid to join NATO, threatening to veto an expansion of the alliance. Echoing recent comments by President Erdogan, minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said on Tuesday that Turkey, which has been a NATO member for seven decades, would not lift its opposition to the two Nordic countries' accession unless its demands were met.

The reason is that Ankara, Turkey's capital, is accusing both countries of harbouring people linked to groups it deems to be terrorists, including the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK for short, and takes issue with their decision to halt arms exports to Turkey in 2019. Turkey is demanding that Finland and Sweden end their support for the PKK and other groups, bar them from organizing events on their territory, extradite individuals sought by Turkey on terrorism charges, support Turkey's counterterrorism military operations and resume arms exports.

Clearly, geopolitics has always been complex, and the current NATO situation is no exception. The vast majority of NATO members want to bring Finland and Sweden into the fold, but for its own reasons, which are largely related to domestic terrorism, one member has issues with that.

That is why the Conservatives are very much in favour of these two countries joining NATO, but we also have to understand where Turkey is coming from, so the government needs to make an effort to find a diplomatic solution that will satisfy the Turks and expedite the process of bringing these two countries into our great organization.

It is complicated. At the end of the day, I would not like what is currently happening in Ukraine to happen in Finland, for example, because there is no telling what Vladimir Putin might do. He might suddenly decide to send some tanks into Finland for fun because

that country is not a member of NATO. It would be easy because the two countries share a 1,000-kilometre border.

What happened in Ukraine must not happen anywhere else. We must work on getting the Turks to soften their stance and find a way to get along. That is a role our government can play.

Based on my experience at the meetings with my colleagues, I realize that it is easy for us, as Canadians, to form an opinion on what is happening in Europe and to tell other countries that they should do this or that. However, while I was over there, colleagues from every European country told me that the dynamics are different and that we need to understand that.

The role Canada can play is the one it has always played: using diplomacy to find a way to help the different European countries get along in a Canadian way.

• (2020)

[*English*]

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was picturing the Nordic alliance that Sweden tried to form after the Second World War. Denmark and Norway instead went into NATO. There was an economic isolation with Finland and Sweden.

Now, with their economic ties with the EU and the EU's economic ties with Canada, could the hon. member comment on the coverage that we are giving for this economically so that militarily they can join the military alliance?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned in my speech, this membership will strengthen our collective ability to address threats, for example in the Arctic. By having Finland and Sweden as NATO partners, we will be politically and militarily united under the NATO umbrella. They are two major partners. In addition, Sweden and Finland are countries with very efficient and well-equipped armies. These partners will also be able to participate in NATO missions, as we are currently doing in Latvia or as our other partners are doing in Lithuania. The Swedes and the Finns will be able to participate with us as members of NATO.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, for Sweden and Finland to join NATO there must be consensus among the current 30 members, and their membership must be ratified. I think that Canada has been quite proactive so far. As soon as Sweden and Finland raised their hands, the Minister of Foreign Affairs said that she wanted quick support for this decision. A motion was tabled in the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. Everyone here also seems to be acting in good faith and in agreement. I do not know about the other member countries. What is the status of the process?

We are talking about Canada's leadership role. What should that role be?

Routine Proceedings

We know that Turkey has expressed its opposition to Sweden and Finland joining NATO. I think Canada has a role to play in this. The member mentioned this in his speech, but I would like to know how this diplomacy should take shape.

Should we get together with the European countries to discuss this? Do we have any idea what positions other member countries are taking at this time? Is the same process taking place within their democratic institutions? What is Canada's role in facilitating this process and what should that role look like?

• (2025)

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Madam Speaker, I thank my excellent colleague for her good and long question.

As I mentioned in my speech, from what I and my other NATO colleagues can tell, at present, there is virtually unanimous support for the principle of admitting Finland and Sweden. The only exception is Turkey, for the reasons that I mentioned.

What is Canada's role? Given the war in Ukraine and the supply of gas, which could become problematic for those cutting ties with Russia, I noticed that several European countries have their own problems. Countries are nervous about the issue of supply. For example, Hungary told the European Union yesterday that it did not agree with imposing new sanctions because it wants to protect itself. I believe that Europe is currently under stress.

As Canada is somewhat removed, it has a diplomatic role to play. It is up to our government to intervene with the best possible diplomacy, which I hope it can do, by talking with Turkey and finding ways to calm the waters and ensure the consensus of NATO countries.

[*English*]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to follow up on a question that I asked earlier this evening of the member's colleague. He talked about how the spending on ODA is lower now under the current administration than it had been under the previous administration. In fact, under the previous administration, it was 0.26% of GNI. Now, with COVID, we are still at the disgustingly low number of about 0.31%.

Why are the Conservatives so eager to invest 2% in NATO and defence spending but are so unwilling to invest in international development, humanitarian aid and peace-building? Would the member agree that it would be useful to tie international development spending, ODA spending, to defence spending? It would be 2% on one side and 2% on the other side. Would he agree with that?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Madam Speaker, I was not in government then, but to my knowledge, the Conservative government at the time spent more on international aid.

That 2% target is part of what NATO expects of its members. Of that 2%, 20% is used to purchase military equipment. I think we can make a pretty good case right now for why we need to be ready. With guys like Putin invading Ukraine, we need to make sure our armed forces are ready and supplied with state-of-the-art equipment. At the moment, Ukraine is able to fight Putin and the

Russian army because it has been supplied with cutting-edge equipment, which is taking a toll on the Russian invaders.

If we want peace, we must prepare for war.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I, too, am pleased to rise this evening to speak to Sweden's and Finland's membership in NATO. I will share my time with the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

Like my colleague from Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, I recently got back from the NATO Parliamentary Assembly session in Lithuania, where this issue got a lot of airtime. In addition to what my colleague shared about what we learned, certain remarks and comments really made an impression.

Something that Viktorija Cmilyte-Nielsen, the speaker of the Seimas, Lithuania's parliament, said really stuck with me. She asked us if, given their proximity to Russia, the Baltic countries would have the resilient democracy and flourishing economy they enjoy today if they were not members of NATO.

Lithuania, where the meeting took place, is sandwiched between Belarus and the increasingly militarized enclave of Kaliningrad. We have to wonder if it would be as secure as it currently is without its NATO membership. Similarly, granting NATO membership to Finland and Sweden really would afford them additional security in light of Russia's recent aggression in Ukraine.

We know that Finland and Sweden already meet the basic criteria for NATO membership. They have healthy democracies, the ability to make a military contribution to the alliance and viable economies. These two countries would also bring a strategic military contribution in the Baltic Sea region, which we would not want to see fall into Russian hands for all intents and purposes, jeopardizing the Baltic states.

These countries had decreased military investments in the past, but for obvious reasons they are starting to make renewed efforts in that area.

Although Finland has only 12,000 professional soldiers, it trains 20,000 conscripts a year, giving it additional strike force and the ability to quickly build up an army of 280,000 people, plus 600,000 reservists. The country wants to increase its defence budget by 40% by 2026. Finland already has a fleet of 55 F-18 aircraft, which are supposed to be replaced by American F-35s soon, and it has 200 tanks and 1,700 artillery pieces.

Sweden has an army of about 50,000 soldiers. Compulsory military service, which had been abolished in 2010, was brought back in 2017. Sweden had decreased its investments in defence in recent years but has reversed this trend, with defence spending now at 2.6% of its GDP.

Routine Proceedings

When we were in Vilnius, we also had the pleasure of meeting with Ukrainian parliamentarians. We asked them a few times how they felt knowing that Finland and Sweden's application to join would probably be dealt with quickly, while Ukraine, for its part, still has not managed to finalize its membership, despite the promise made to the country in 2008 at the Bucharest summit. They said that it obviously bothered them to be somewhat sidelined, but they hoped that Finland and Sweden could quickly join the alliance.

Ukraine knows that eventually it will have to become a member too. It knows that membership is currently not within reach, since it is at war. The Ukrainian parliamentarians told us that time has always been a factor at any point in history, especially recently.

In 2008, Ukraine was not admitted into the alliance. If the process had been quicker, things might not be where they are today. The same is true when it comes to the military equipment being sent to Ukraine: Every day that goes by is another day that costs a lot of money. Ukraine has a monthly budgetary deficit of \$35 billion and the war could cost at least \$100 billion. The longer it goes on, the worse it will be.

● (2030)

Every time we want to help Ukraine, we must also consider the fact that we must train the people who will be using the military equipment provided. A bit of predictability will help them.

For Ukraine to eventually join NATO, there also needs to be a long-term vision. Ukraine is telling us that it may need the equivalent of a Marshall Plan to rebuild and get its infrastructure up and running again. It will need psychological support for the women and children assaulted by Russian soldiers. It will need a great deal of help to clear mines, because the Russians unfortunately left behind what they call “gifts”, booby-trapped toys and cars, and mines buried in fields. We know that Ukraine is a major grain producer.

Ukraine will need our help quickly. In a way, what I hope will result from this evening's debate, is that we think about the urgency of the situation.

In 2008, we collectively missed an opportunity. We promised Ukraine that it could join NATO, but it was not even offered a road map for joining, in other words, the action plan that must be put in place.

Ukraine has unfortunately been forced to take a step back because of the war. It will have to rebuild in order to be able to meet the criteria of a vibrant democracy with the potential for military support. Unfortunately, it will have served as a practice ground of sorts for war for the west. Ukraine now has a great deal of knowledge about how Russia wages war. It will therefore need support to rebuild and then join NATO, and when it does, it will become an invaluable resource for that organization.

The Ukrainian parliamentarians also told us that the end of this war, a war that hopefully Ukraine will have won, might not be the end of aggressions. We can expect another incursion from Russia, another attempt at aggression. Where will that happen? No one knows. However, it will be important to have as many actors as possible involved at that time.

As I said earlier, the Speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament wondered what would have happened to the Baltic states if they had not joined NATO. That is something we have to keep in mind if we want a strong west and resilient democracies. Part of NATO's mission is to ensure that democracy is healthy everywhere. This includes better protection of the Baltic Sea and NATO membership for Sweden and Finland.

I hope that the message we all take away this evening is that there is absolutely no time to lose, generally speaking, whether we are talking about the military support that we are currently giving to Ukraine, support for future rebuilding efforts, or support for its future membership in NATO, as is now the case with Sweden and Finland.

In that context, we must remember that this is also important for the entire western world and democracy. During one of the summit's video conferences, the chair of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association reminded the Ukrainian defence minister that the war currently being fought in Ukraine is everyone's war. This is a war on democracy, and I think we need all the allies we can get. I hope that is the message we will retain tonight.

● (2035)

[*English*]

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this evening I have been asking questions relating to economic alliances versus military and other types of alliances. The member from the Bloc has given us a good intervention tonight. There were questions from the Bloc about Turkey's involvement in all of this, so maybe I could ask her about this.

The trade between Russia and Turkey is significant. I think Turkey is the fourth-largest export market for Russia. Turkey also does a lot of work with Russia.

Could the member comment on the need for economic ties between Turkey and western democracies to increase in order to bring Turkey back into the alliance militarily?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Madam Speaker, I would need a good 10 minutes to answer that question, but I will give it a shot.

The situation with Turkey is unique. It is wavering for reasons that are understandable, in a way. Turkey may have lost some trust in its NATO allies.

The United States, for example, used Kurdish soldiers in their war in Syria, which was an affront to Turkey. Since Turkey purchased weapons from Russia in 2019, the U.S. removed Turkey from the F-35 program. In response to Turkey's intervention in Syria, Finland and Sweden stopped selling it weapons. Turkey is therefore generally distrustful. It is also heading into an election soon, with inflation rates exceeding 70%, according to official figures, and the actual figures are likely much higher than that.

Turkey is extremely distrustful. We probably need to take a hard line and threaten it with sanctions, while also providing motivation by rebuilding economic ties to help Turkey regain confidence and to secure its support for Finland and Sweden to join NATO. This needs to be done quickly.

With respect to the ratification, we cannot forget that each country individually—

• (2040)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member. I would like to give her five minutes, but that would not be very fair.

The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am sorry. I will not be speaking French because it is too difficult to talk about NATO in French.

[*English*]

The member spoke about the initial invasion in 2008 and how we need to act to ensure that the escalation we have been seeing since February 24 does not continue. In the member's opinion, what are some of the other steps we can take to ensure that what we do now does not result in a further invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation in another six years?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Madam Speaker, unfortunately, I get the impression that there is absolutely nothing we can do to guard against a Russian invasion. These invasions are often irrational and are becoming increasingly illogical. Apparently some close to President Putin are starting to very much question the strategy.

In a context where prevention is not possible, we must nevertheless be prepared for attacks, hence my point on the resilience we must restore in Ukraine when it comes to its infrastructure. That requires funding, but also support for countries that want to join NATO, such as Finland and Sweden, which could contribute to defence on the front lines with Russia.

[*English*]

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's quite forthright talk about the challenge that Ukraine had in joining NATO so many years ago.

Our colleague asked a question on Turkey, and we now see challenges for Finland and Sweden and the steps that need to be taken along those lines.

Routine Proceedings

I am wondering if the member could talk a little more about that, because both of these countries are basically Arctic countries and are very much affiliated with and close to Canada. What steps can we as Canadians take to further encourage that and encourage Turkey to further support them?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Madam Speaker, I think that the debate we are having this evening is in some small way part of the solution. We have a consensus on the membership of Finland and Sweden.

Given that Finland and Sweden meet NATO's admission criteria, I believe that we are sending Turkey the message that it will be accountable for its actions if it votes "no". There is no reason to do so other than purely personal reasons.

Turkey is trying to successfully navigate a situation that is difficult for the country, but it is not doing so for the right reasons. It is not doing so for reasons related to article 10 of the Washington Treaty on accession to NATO. It may have to answer for that.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is difficult to speak after my colleague from Saint-Jean. We can see how knowledgeable she is about this file. Although it would be impossible for me to match her presentation, I will try my best.

I just want to say that having this debate tonight is a good thing. It has been quite some time since we have had a debate where the five parties in the House, and I imagine that this is also the case for the Greens, all agree. We can really feel it. Yes, there are some details that will have to be worked out, but I believe that everyone here is ready to work together on that. It is fantastic, because this has not happened for a long time.

Unfortunately, it took a war to get everyone to agree. That is not as pleasant, but I will get back to my speech.

I think that the debate over allowing a new country to join NATO will be the hot topic of 2022. There was the west's dithering over Ukraine's future in NATO. Vladimir Putin may have used that as an excuse, but we are learning. I join all of my hon. colleagues in welcoming Sweden and Finland to our alliance. Based on what I have heard tonight, it is pretty clear that everyone agrees on this.

A number of people expressed doubts about this alliance recently. Now it is hard to question why it exists. It is more relevant than ever, especially in the face of a rogue state that is disrupting the world order we have been working to build for the past 30 years. NATO now serves as an umbrella organization for our allies to guarantee the safety of Europe, the Atlantic and, as my Conservative colleague mentioned, soon enough the Arctic.

The two membership applications that were submitted come from allies to Quebec and Canada. These countries are objective allies of NATO and of our interests in the Far North. Their application also serves as a powerful message against Putin's authoritarianism and the warmongering policies of his Kremlin. I say that it is his Kremlin, because it certainly does not reflect the people of Russia.

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Traditionally, Finland and Sweden have been non-aligned countries. For more than 75 years, they have held fast to their neutrality—all through the Cold War, the fall of the USSR and the realignment of world powers. Setting aside this policy of neutrality is not insignificant. It is evidence of how serious the situation is and how important it is for countries bordering the Russian behemoth to ensure their security and safety. Considering the recent history and geopolitics of the region, it is clear that this is a legitimate and well-founded concern.

Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin said it better than I can. She says that everything changed when Russia attacked Ukraine. She personally thinks that no one can assume a peaceful future on Russia's borders. In her opinion, joining NATO is an act of peace so that there will never be another war in Finland.

The Swedish Prime Minister also sums it up well. To paraphrase her words, the best way to ensure the security and safety of the Swedish people is to join NATO with Finland.

When I hear these women say they want to join us, to join NATO, I have no choice but to listen. We all have to listen. To the south of us, the U.S. Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, also said that the United States supports Sweden's and Finland's applications. This is a strong endorsement that reaffirms my position and that of my political party. We must allow Sweden and Finland into our alliance.

The truth is, they already have a foot in the door. There is no reason to oppose this, because it is what they want and they meet the conditions. More importantly, their troops have already been participating in NATO exercises for decades. If these two allies join, it would certainly be a historic event that will define the political dynamics of the region. Hopefully, this will be the case for a long time to come. Let us also hope that it will curb Vladimir Putin's madness.

The strategy of accommodating Russia and pandering to its interests is well and truly over, and of course must never be repeated. Pressure on Russia is turning the tide in the war. The entire mobilization of the west for an independent, whole and sovereign Ukraine is our most powerful weapon. Dictators cannot imagine the power of unity. It is our duty to show them.

● (2045)

Bringing more countries into NATO signals unity. Let us be a parliament that shows leadership on this front.

There is a reason why I am talking about leadership. Too often, this government follows in other countries' footsteps. Consider my Conservative friends' 2021 motion on the Uighur genocide, which the Prime Minister and his cabinet abstained from voting on. I would actually like to thank the member for Wellington—Halton Hills once again for kindly allowing me to amend his motion in a gesture of solidarity with the Uighur people. Unfortunately, those on the other side of the House did not do likewise.

When we requested an airlift for Ukrainian refugees, we were told it would happen soon, but it was not until April, a month after the war started, that an announcement was made. A month later, there were still no flights. The war has been going on for three

months now, and there have been only three charter flights. This government has an international leadership problem.

However, I have hope, because the government was quickly on board when Finland and Sweden asked to join NATO. We are here this evening because a motion was quickly moved by a government member. There is hope, then.

Let us look at what was done in the past. It is not often that a sovereignist boasts about this country's former federalist prime ministers. There was Lester B. Pearson, a Liberal, who established peacekeeping. That is a fine example of leadership. I want to be fair towards my Conservative friends and so I will mention Brian Mulroney, who seized the opportunity after Montreal's mayor, Jean Doré, spoke out against the apartheid regime in South Africa. The mayor was the first person to declare that his city would boycott South Africa. Brian Mulroney followed suit as head of government and declared that Canadians would join the boycott. At first, Brian Mulroney had few allies, but he spoke to Great Britain and the United States. That is an example of international leadership.

Now I am pleased to see that my friends in the government want to show leadership in the debate we are having this evening. I hope that this will continue, and I hope that it is not just lip service. I think that Canada does have a role to play in convincing Turkey not to stand in the way of Finland and Sweden joining NATO.

It is vitally important for these two countries to become members of the alliance. Earlier, my colleague from Saint-Jean demonstrated the geopolitical importance of letting them join, given the message this would send to the rest of the planet, especially Russia.

What goes for Russia goes for China as well. That too is important to note. By acting quickly, we are sending a message to Russia, China and the other dictatorships in the world that are currently violating the human rights of their own people.

This would be a good way to show leadership, and I think that we are on the right track. That is why we are here in the House this evening and seeing some cohesion between all the parties.

As I often say, when I get up in the morning, I see a little note on my bedside table that says, "Who do you work for?" I work for Quebeckers and for the people of Lac-Saint-Jean.

I know that my constituents value human rights, democracy and freedom. I will continue to work in support of these values for them, and I am pleased to see that everyone in the House is doing the same.

• (2050)

[English]

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague's comments on leadership had me reflecting on the notion of collaborative leadership and how Canada plays a role and has always played a role by collaborating and bringing countries together. I thought it might be interesting to have the Bloc's perspective on how leaders do not go it alone. Leaders do work with others and build on the strengths of the people around them in order to combine goals, such as we are doing in this discussion on NATO.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague. Leaders cannot go it alone. What we need is multi-lateral action, which involves several countries working together at the same time. Leaders set an example, take the lead and inspire others to join in multilateral action.

Based on what we are seeing this evening, I think Canada can be a leader and inspire others to join in. I only wish it had reacted the same way to the Uighur genocide that the current Chinese regime is committing.

• (2055)

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to both thank and congratulate the member for Lac-Saint-Jean once again for the quality of his speech. He talked a lot about leadership. I would be remiss if I did not point out the leadership he showed some time ago in pushing for an airlift to bring refugees here. I say that with all the pride and honesty that comes with being a member of Parliament. We are all very pleased that three planes have arrived. As the saying goes, this is just the tip of the iceberg. We hope it is just the beginning.

The member highlighted the fact that Canada has distinguished itself over the years by always being on the right side of history and in fact by leading the charge on the right side. One example that comes to mind is Mr. Pearson and the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney's efforts to fight apartheid, even though it upset our main allies, namely England and the U.S.

The member spoke about leadership. What urgent action does he think the government should be taking to help the Ukrainian people?

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for my colleague, and I sincerely thank him for his question. I am sad that he is not a member of my party, but perhaps that will happen one day.

It is an important question. What should the government do for Ukraine? We must be realistic. Canada is not a military power.

What can we do to get things moving, play a role and influence what is currently going on in Ukraine? First, we must help the refugees. Canada is a welcoming country, so we must make every effort to help them. At present, 200,000 Ukrainian refugees have applied for authorization to come to Canada. To date, about 100,000 applications have been approved, but the people are not arriving. Ukrainian mothers and their children have been authorized to come here. Unfortunately, these women have been living on their meagre savings for the past three months. They cannot afford the

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airfare. It is one thing to authorize people to come, but now they must get here one way or another. That is one thing we could do.

In addition, through diplomacy, Canada should obviously gather as many allies as possible to ensure that Sweden and Finland join the NATO alliance.

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know my colleague cares deeply about people around the world. We have worked together on many files looking at human rights around the world. In fact, today we were on a panel looking at the atrocious war crimes that are being committed in Ethiopia in the Tigray region, and I am delighted to hear at least the words of the government, if not the actions, in support of Ukraine.

However, I wonder if the member could comment on how he feels the government has sent a message, and what that message is, to other places around the world where dire humanitarian crises are happening and the government has not responded at all.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Chair, that is such an important question. Why was our response to the present conflict in Ukraine so rapid compared to other natural disasters and armed conflicts around the world? Right now, people are experiencing actual genocide. As a signatory to the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, there are two things we must do when we know that genocide is occurring. We must either prevent it or punish those perpetrating it. What is happening right now in the Tigray is genocide. What is happening with the Uighurs is genocide.

Many of us here voted in favour of the motion moved by my colleague from Edmonton Strathcona on the genocide in Ukraine, but when I wanted to move a motion barely three weeks ago calling on the House to unanimously condemn the Uighur genocide, the party in power rejected my motion. I am still upset about that.

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time this evening with the member for North Island—Powell River.

I want to begin my remarks tonight by stating unequivocally that the New Democratic Party supports Sweden and Finland in their bid for membership in NATO, and that New Democrats call on all NATO members to approve the application as quickly as possible to address the urgent situation that is facing both countries, including the very real threats made against both Sweden and Finland by the Russian Federation.

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New Democrats strongly believe in the legal right of self-determination and the right that all people must have to decide their own destiny within the international order. Self-determination is a core principle of international law. It is enshrined in the United Nations charter and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

All countries must have the opportunity and independence to determine their own fates, and all democratically elected governments must decide what is in the best interests of their citizens. Clearly, the people of Sweden and Finland have decided that, as a result of the illegal war of aggression by the Russian Federation in Ukraine and the very clear indication that Vladimir Putin has no respect for national sovereignty, for multilateral institutions or for international law and order, the people of Sweden and Finland must do what they can to prevent their countries from being threatened further by the Russian Federation. Everyone in the House agrees that Sweden and Finland should be allowed to join NATO and that we should do what we can as parliamentarians to expedite that accession.

I want to take some time today because, of course, since we all agree on this basic principle, we really have an obligation to look at how we got to this position. The illegal invasion and criminal war of aggression that Vladimir Putin and the Russian Federation have inflicted upon the people of Ukraine since 2014, with obvious massive escalation of aggression since February 24 of this year, is why we are here today. Prior to the further invasion of Ukraine, support for NATO membership was around 20% to 30% in Sweden and Finland. Now, 76% of Finnish people support joining NATO. Very simply, Vladimir Putin and the aggression of the Russian Federation are responsible for escalating tensions in the region and leading Sweden and Finland to seek NATO membership.

The war in Ukraine is horrifying and will have massive implications for all countries. The reports of Putin's war crimes against Ukrainians are appalling. We are hearing stories of children's toys being mined. We are hearing stories of such gross and horrific crimes against women and children that it makes my skin crawl.

I welcomed yesterday's announcement by the government to inflict further sanctions on the Russian Federation. However, currently, we do not know how these decisions are being made, if these sanctions are being enforced or why they are taking so long to implement. I asked an Order Paper question recently on this exact issue, and the government response from the parliamentary secretary on foreign affairs was to say that the government could not share any information because it could not confirm that the information would be correct. As a parliamentarian, I cannot get the information I need to do my job because the current government cannot guarantee that it will be correct, so it will not give us any information.

While properties, business assets and yachts are being seized by other countries, we have almost no information about what is happening in Canada. We know that the sanctions have been too slow and we know that they have been implemented too late. For example, why was Igor Makarov permitted to move \$120 million out of Canada before he was added to the sanctions list? That \$120 million was money that should have gone back to Ukraine to help build Ukraine. That was \$120 million that should have gone to Ukrainians in Canada to help them settle in this country.

We need a full review of Canada's sanctions regime. The last time the Parliament of Canada reviewed Canada's sanctions regime was five years ago, when the foreign affairs committee found it lacking in transparency and accountability. Why is it that Canadians do not know how sanctions are decided, how they are enforced or why the enforcement of the sanctions is so poor?

• (2100)

I will be calling on the foreign affairs committee to review the government's implementation of the recommendations in the 2017 report on Canadian sanctions and assess the need for changes since then. We need this review. The government must do better when it comes to sanctions.

I want to make another point about NATO. I want to reiterate that I support Sweden and Finland's bid to join NATO, but I want to talk about the bigger picture of how the global community must work together and how we must increase support for our multilateral institutions. Multilateralism is the most effective way we have to ensure peaceful global order.

Ultimately, what is NATO? NATO is a defence and security alliance, and its purpose is to guarantee the freedom and security of its members through political and military means. As we have seen since February 24, there is a role for NATO to play. In fact, as Canada's Arctic becomes more accessible, we need greater protection in the north and we need to be a part of NATO, but we need to do more than invest in just security. We need to invest in peace.

I have learned a great deal from my mentor, the honourable Douglas Roche. If he has taught me anything, it is that war is a failure to build peace in this world. War is never a solution that we can depend on. We always have to be pushing for peace. I have spoken to Doug about the need to develop a declaration on the right to peace.

In 2012, the UN Human Rights Council began a study to draft a human right to peace. This is vital work that we need to be doing. As a species, we should be promoting peace as a basic human right, and I will continue to work with any member in the House who is interested in working towards that goal.

What we need right now is dialogue, diplomacy and pluralism that puts the common global good at the forefront. Climate change, global health pandemics, food shortages and nuclear war are global challenges that will require global solutions. We need multilateralism to solve the biggest challenges facing humanity right now.

We need United Nations reform. I know many people are working very hard on United Nations reform. We need to make sure the UN has a strong set of institutions that can protect all people and all countries.

We need to look at the Security Council. The Russian Federation invaded Ukraine while they were chairing a Security Council meeting. What is the obligation of the United Nations General Assembly when the Security Council is no longer able to meet its mandate? What is the obligation of all the other countries in the world to stand up and say that it is not okay?

We need to work to reform our multilateral institutions. We need to work to make sure that the investment we put into foreign security and into defence is echoed in our investment into diplomacy, our investment into peace and our investment into making sure that the world is fair and equitable for all people, regardless of which country they come from.

We want to see stronger support from Canada for the International Criminal Court. We were glad to see Canada's decision to refer the situation in Ukraine to the International Criminal Court. We support the government's decision to send resources. I was proud to see the support going to prove that what is happening in Ukraine is genocide. Every member in the House supported my resolution on that.

However, I have to say that Canada has a long history of picking and choosing when human rights matter, and a long history of deciding when the International Criminal Court is applicable and when it is not. I am shocked that Canada does not support the investigation into Israel and Palestine and what is happening there. This would look at crimes being committed by Israelis and Palestinians.

Canada has to start playing a better role by being universal in its approach to human rights. This is a great place to start.

• (2105)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, when I think of Canadians, there is no doubt in my mind that the concept of world peace is a wonderful thing. There is no doubt that anything we can do to move in that direction is a positive thing.

When we think of the NATO alliance and its important role, which has really been amplified because of what is taking place in Europe today, one of the greatest demands that came from Ukraine was getting lethal weapons. Over the years, Canada has been challenged to say that we need to increase our contribution to things such as lethal weapons by, it was suggested, 2%. I am very much interested in the member's thoughts regarding Canada's potential leadership role in investing that 2% of GDP.

• (2110)

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, I have many thoughts and I will not have time to get to them all, but here are a couple of them.

Let us tie our defence spending to our humanitarian spending. As soon as the government is ready to spend 2% on humanitarian diplomacy and overseas development, I would be happy to see that spending go into our defence budget. The other thing we could do, at the very low bar, is send a delegation to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in Vienna, which is happening in

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June and which we still have not heard from the government on. There is so much we could be doing on peace.

Trying to get a gotcha on the NDP on the 2% is a little gross, to be honest.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her excellent speech.

I want to correct the record. I think I said that Ukraine had a \$35-billion deficit, but what I should have said was that 35% of the country's economy is shut down, resulting in \$5 billion in losses every month.

My colleague spoke about sanctions. Many people are calling for the money that was seized from oligarchs to be used to help Ukraine. Canada announced that it had put several oligarchs on the list, but no one knows where the money is. The RCMP claimed not to know whether it was supposed to follow up and said it was relying on the banks to check whether the money had been frozen.

Did someone drop the ball here, costing us a golden opportunity to help Ukraine?

[*English*]

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, I would say that we have not lost track of where those sanctions have gone. We have never been told. Parliamentarians have never been given that information, and the opaqueness of our sanctions regime has been called out many times. The government is not interested in sharing it.

I have an interesting fact. If we need to know what was shipped to Canada from Russia, we can check with Russia, but we cannot check with Canada. We do not have those records available. The U.S. does, the U.K. does and Russia does, but Canada does not.

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canada is part of a coalition. We are in NATO, we support each other and we have a commitment to live up to. I am sure my hon. colleague understands what it is like to be committed in a coalition as her party supports the minority Liberal government.

If we do not support our NATO partners and if the NDP does not support the Liberals, what does she think would happen to it all?

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, I have to think about that question, but I will say one thing. Today in the House there was a coalition of parties that voted against supporting people trying to get access to a safe drug supply. The Liberals voted with the Conservatives to stop life-saving legislation from going forward. I do not really know if he understands what "coalition" means, if he understands the coalition that he is part of or if he is proud of that coalition. If there is anything else he wants to say about coalitions, it is up to him.

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Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to recognize the amazing work of the member for Edmonton Strathcona this evening. I really appreciate her thoughts on this issue and certainly hope that all people in this House listen to what she has to say.

I want to start this speech today by talking a bit about the fact that while growing up, I lived part of the time at my grandfather's house. He owned a large piece of property, and in the whole community, which spanned many acres, there were 25 people who lived there.

The reason that is so important to me is that as a young person I would go and visit Mary and Dobbie. They lived about a 45-minute walk from my house, and I would visit them regularly and help them out with things. As I got older, I started to understand that their accents were from where they grew up, which was in Europe, and the reason they were there was that during the Second World War, they fled Nazi Germany. I remember Mary telling me stories about her family being taken when she was young and how she had to hide in a suitcase to get through parts of Europe to eventually get to safety in Canada. She talked about the reason she lived in such a small house on such a big piece of land. It was because she always wanted an exit so that if anybody came for her again, she would be able to hide and get away, and there was enough space for her to do that.

I remember as a young person really being impacted by what that meant, understanding that for this person and her husband every day was a precious gift, yet every day they were slightly afraid of what they had lived through and afraid that it could happen again. I think of every Remembrance Day in my riding, when I go to multiple communities to stand and be with them to remember the history of the Second World War and understand how important it is that we create as much peace as we can.

I remember Mary saying to me one time, "I no longer believe in a god. I cannot believe in a god when I saw what happened in my community, when I saw people that I thought were friends tell on our family and get some of those people taken away." She said, "Even though I do not believe in God, I pray for peace unceasingly." Often when I think of her legacy for me personally, I think about peace unceasingly and I am really grateful for that lesson.

I too am one of the members who spent time in Lithuania just a few days ago with the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association. I think it is really important that as we sit in those rooms and listen to the interesting debates, discussions, education and papers that are presented to us, we always remember that even in those places where we are talking about security and how to stay safe, we also remember peace. I think about that space and about how many of us listened to ministers who were being televised from Ukraine, their images projected on the wall, and I think every single one of us who was there will never forget how exhausted those faces looked—how determined they looked, and how exhausted they looked.

I think of the deputy prime minister for European and Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine and government coordination of humanitarian aid, who spoke very passionately about the huge violations that were happening across her country and how she had to

wake up every day, when she could actually sleep, and deal with those issues again and again and try to find solutions, in a situation in which I think most of us cannot even imagine trying to think of solutions, knowing that her communities and people were not safe and that children and women in particular were being attacked.

I also think of the work that was done and presented to us on NATO's approach to women, peace and security. I think we need to keep talking about these things. We know that when there is an investment in women in all of these situations, whether it is an act of warfare or international aid while people are rebuilding, if women are not lifted up, given supports and given power, things do not get better. In fact, they get worse. We heard very clearly that women play such a large part in communities, in leadership and in resources, and that when there are limited resources, they are better at negotiating so that everybody can be okay. I think about that a lot.

• (2115)

I also think of a presentation from Konstantin von Eggert, who is an independent journalist recognized in many countries for the profound work he has done, especially in relation to Russia. He talked about how one of the biggest challenges that we have in building up understanding and knowledge of Russia is people's indifference, because their focus is so much on survival and getting through day to day that they really do not have the energy to even think about what is happening outside of those borders. They are dealing with a lot of propaganda that is very concerning, and we need to fight that misinformation, which is hard to do in trying to educate people behind Putin's walls.

He also talked a lot about continuing to expand sanctions and that this needs to keep happening. We have to build that unease. He talked so much about how much power Putin has within his own country and with the oligarchs, and how hard it is to build up that pressure. I think it is incredibly important that we remember that our process in terms of sanctions is still very weak in this country. We need to do much, much better so that we can have better accountability and of course make sure that resources that are coming in are going back home to Ukraine, which desperately needs them right now.

As we look at all of these things, one of the deep honours that I had on the trip was having a meal with some Ukrainian members of parliament, sitting down with them and again seeing how exhausted those faces are and understanding that not only are they working within their own country day by day, but when they leave their country, they are on a road show where they are talking to people, going from country to country and trying to get engagement so that they can continue to fight this fight.

One of the things that I was happy to tell them was that in my riding, people are gathering together. They are working so hard. I spoke specifically of Slav and Stefan in my riding, who are getting resources and sending them off to Ukraine every day. They are working so hard. I want to recognize that. I know that across Canada, so many people are doing that work.

One of the things we have to also be talking about is the rebuilding process. We do not know how long this is going to last. We need to do everything we can during this time, but the other part is, how do we rebuild?

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I remember that the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine came and presented to us and talked about reconstruction and development and how they are already working on that plan, recognizing the horrendous war crimes that have happened in their country, where they have seen many hospitals and schools and infrastructure that is core to communities completely obliterated, destroyed, and they have to figure out what they are going to do in the interim and later on as they rebuild.

I think one of the things that is so clear is how scary it is to think about rebuilding during so much uncertainty. It is, again, one of the things that we all need to think about in the House as we have these discussions.

I am very pleased to support having Finland and Sweden come into the fold of NATO. I think we are always better together. I think it is always important that as we come together in these ways, we hold one another accountable, as we should in all of the countries, to make sure that our human rights standards continue to be strong, that we are respectful, that we understand the relationships and how they will impact us.

I met with members of parliament from both countries, and we had conversations about the concerns that they are seeing and the things they want to do moving forward. We can do it better together, so I look forward to that discussion.

I want to close by saying that as we do these things, we must remember humanitarian aid. We must remember that stabilizing communities as they go through conflict and as they are trying to recover from conflict must be a priority. If those resources are not there, then we will all continue to deal with this, and we are, across this planet, so let us make sure that every system we use always focuses on peace.

• (2120)

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member and I were on the same trip, as were the members for St. John's East and Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, and I thought that I would like her to comment on the fact that the people of Lithuania raised \$5 million in the course of three days to buy a drone.

What does that mean in terms of their response to this brutal invasion by Vladimir Putin into Ukraine?

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question and of course really appreciated our time together. In terms of the NATO parliamentary association, this is an opportunity for members from all parties. We may have internal disagreements, but in this place we represent Canada, and it is important for us to work together.

I was really moved in Lithuania in seeing how many people had flags on their cars and how many stores had signs up and were taking money to donate even while we were there. The commitment is profound. We see the reality that these communities and countries are all so close together, and they know that a threat to one is a threat to all.

We have to remember that we may be far away on the other side of the ocean, but we are all connected. When we look at the realities that are happening in Ukraine, we must all stand together. I believe Putin needs to see that. Putin needs to see us all coming together in solidarity so that all countries understand that we will not put up with that kind of violence.

• (2125)

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member just made reference to the threat that Lithuania and other countries bordering Russia feel. I wonder what her thoughts might be on the fact that Canada borders Russia, and that with regard to Arctic sovereignty, we have almost no naval capacity or icebreakers to defend our north, as well as the fact that we are not meeting our NATO obligations of 2%. I wonder if she would make some comments on those points.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Madam Speaker, I agree that we need to continue to do the work in the Arctic. That is incredibly important.

I also want to say that I represent 19 Wing Comox. I know how hard those folks are working every day in my area to protect not only our region but the whole country. I also know that they are facing the reality of trying to repair planes when they cannot necessarily do so in a very safe way. It concerns me greatly. The NDP firmly believes that when we ask people to do a job, we must give them the equipment that they need to do it. Safety has to be paramount.

I will also go back to the idea that we need to see investment in humanitarian aid and support increased. If we are going to see military spending increase, it must be paired, because if we are not doing both, then we are not committed to peace.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from North Island—Powell River. I also travelled with her to Lithuania. A few of us here this evening travelled there. We are probably all still feeling a bit jet-lagged.

What I realized on the trip is that, as parliamentarians, we try to share our information with our foreign counterparts, but we are mostly looking for information. We then act as spokespeople, sharing our takeaways with our House colleagues, in order for the response to be much more concerted and collaborative.

I would like to know what my colleague's main takeaway from the mission was and where it came from. What message does she wish to share with our parliamentary colleagues so that we can follow up with concerted action?

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Madam Speaker, it was such an amazing event with so much information that it is hard to pick one thing after the many reports that we heard.

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When we hear from all the different countries, to me it is very important to make sure that people understand that the countries have different thoughts and opinions on working out issues. There is a lot of discussion today about Turkey and how important it is for all of our countries to start to work to get Turkey to the next step. That is why we have to focus on the idea of an alliance. An alliance is like having a big family. Sometimes people agree and sometimes people disagree, but if we are going to come together when we need to, we will have to work together.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is an honour and a pleasure to participate in this debate.

I will be splitting my time with the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. I am not quite sure how that got in there, but my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands and I are apparently splitting this time, and I am honoured to do so.

As members have heard, a number of us travelled to Vilnius, Lithuania, in the past few days to participate in the parliamentary NATO conference. It was truly one of those extraordinary experiences, which I had the honour of sharing with the members for Saint-Jean, Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, North Island—Powell River and Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, as well as Senator Cordy and Senator Bellemare.

As the member for North Island—Powell River indicated, it is an important element of our responsibilities to participate in these meetings, which extend parliamentary diplomacy and extend our values as Canadians as we try to wrestle with some of the most intractable issues in global politics.

When one lands in Vilnius and comes out of the airport, one sees a country that is sort of emerging from Soviet occupation. Some of the buildings are extraordinarily beautiful. Some are clearly classic, and others are this brutal Soviet architecture, which is just kind of falling down. When one gets to the hotel, one is in a revitalized area of the city, and as one emerges from the hotel, one is confronted with the history of the Baltics, the history of Lithuania. As one walks out of the hotel and goes to the main street, on the left are the parliamentary buildings, about three blocks away, where the issues are debated, which is essentially where we were for the three or four days that we were in Vilnius.

I must say that the presentations were absolutely extraordinary. They were pointed, detailed, very useful and very united. Interestingly, one of the speakers there was the defence minister from Ukraine, and, today, he received a threat of assassination. Nothing focuses the mind like that. However, this was the kind of atmosphere in which we spent, peripherally I would say, three or four days.

From the hotel, if one goes left, there are the parliamentary buildings, and if one goes right, about the same distance, three blocks, one gets to the Vilnius version of Lubyanka, which is where the Russians tortured and killed political prisoners. This one in Vilnius is now a museum to the genocide of the Soviet occupation. Our delegation did not have time to tour what has been turned into a museum of genocide, but as I walked down the sidewalk, in this beautiful, old town of the city, with a gorgeous park right across the street, I saw inscribed on the walls of this prison the names of the people who had been tortured and killed in that building.

● (2130)

What is even more extraordinary, when we read the birth dates and the death dates, is that these people were 23, 25, and occasionally 40 years old. Sometimes they were 21 years old, and sometimes they were even a teenager. Their lives were cut off at the beginning of their aspirations to live a full human life. The reality of these brutal occupations of the Baltic nations over the course of history just descends on us. This is where history and geopolitics merge.

The Baltic nations, whether Estonia, Latvia or Lithuania, have always been the highways to Hell, and whether it was German or Soviet occupations, they have been occupied. Lithuania has actually enjoyed relatively few years of independence, so for the average citizen of Lithuania, this is not an abstraction. It is not an academic discussion at Carleton University or the University of Ottawa political science department. This is reality for these folks, so when we talk about Finland or Sweden joining NATO, that means something, and that is a real security guarantee that, up to now, they have not enjoyed.

They are afraid, and for a darned good reason, of the Baltic Sea turning into a Russian lake because they would then be threatened not only from land borders, but also from the Baltic Sea, much like the Black Sea, which Putin is attempting to turn into a Russian lake. The joining of Sweden and Finland to the NATO alliance puts that whole enterprise in an entirely different light, and it enables citizens in countries such as Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia some measure of guarantee, which we, as Canadian citizens and North Americans, do not even understand. We do not get it.

For the Europeans, World War III has already started. They understand Bucha in a way that we do not understand it, because Bucha is on the main street to Vilnius. It is memorialized in the lives and deaths of those young Lithuanians, so we are, respectfully, quite naive about what this actually means.

My colleagues and I had some extraordinary experiences, but the one experience that really stayed with me was supper with the committee chairs of the Polish parliament, the German parliament, the Lithuanian parliament and a young Ukrainian MP who reminded me, frankly, of my daughter. I asked her how she was coping with this, and she said she was frozen inside because she had lost family and colleagues. She understood this in a visceral way that none of the rest of us do. The other experience that really hit on me was what the rest of us experienced, which was a young Ukrainian MP calling into the conference who had only five minutes. As she spoke, she said that her signal had been tracked and she needed to hang up the phone, and she went to the bomb shelter.

● (2135)

That is reality in the Baltic nations and Ukraine. I wish I could convey that to my colleagues and our nation.

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for his very insightful and interesting remarks. I have a great deal of respect for him.

I was born in Germany. My dad was in the air force. It was during the missile crisis. We were very close to nuclear war. It was during the time that the Berlin Wall was built. Then in 1989, the wall came down. People thought there was no more need for NATO. People cut their military expenses, including Canada. Obviously, we see now the importance of NATO. Finland and Sweden are putting their names forward. We are certainly supportive. We in the House are supportive.

Former Liberal member of Parliament Andrew Leslie, who was a lieutenant-general, said the Liberal Party is not serious and does not have a plan for our military or for NATO. I think that is cutting. I wonder if this has maybe brought about a change of thinking.

● (2140)

Hon. John McKay: Madam Speaker, I consider myself a friend of the Hon. Andrew Leslie, whose service to the nation is well respected.

In some respects, as my speech indicated, we do not get the seriousness of the threat that Putin-ism presents to us. Ukrainians are fighting for us as well as for their nation. Where we need to get our act together is in supporting them in a real and material way. I like to think, and I take note, and maybe the hon. member would not appreciate it, but the Ukrainian defence minister, in his presentation, noted Canada's defence minister and appreciated her contributions to the fight.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague is always so fascinating to listen to.

While we were in Lithuania, I heard something that has stuck with me. Lithuania's parliament building, the Seimas, is not particularly attractive. Some Lithuanians even called it ugly. However, they are particularly proud of it for what it represents, since people have put their lives, hearts and souls into that building.

Indeed, as my colleague said, after gaining its independence for the first time, Lithuania was occupied for several years, first by the Russians, then by the Germans to whom the Russians had given it, before returning to Russian rule until its independence in 1991.

Several times during our visit, the Lithuanians reminded us that they had warned us of what was going to happen. In my colleague's view, why did we not listen?

[English]

Hon. John McKay: Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague is right. It is not a particularly attractive building, but I was not going to use the word "ugly".

She is also right in the sense that we are not listening. We did not listen in 2008. We did not listen in 2014, and we have been slow to listen in 2022. It is not as if Vladimir Putin does not signal what he is going to do. He tells us what he is going to do. It is blindingly obvious that, if he is successful in Ukraine, then the Baltic nations are next.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member both for being my travel companion and also for his intervention in the House.

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I could not agree more. I was on a trip not too long with the veterans minister across parts of France, the Netherlands and Belgium. I stood in many graveyards that had children buried there, 16-year-olds to 25-year-olds. It got to the point that, when I saw somebody who was over 35, I thought they had had a long life. I think this is a recognition of why we must always work towards peace, because that is a very high price to pay.

I am just wondering if this member could talk a little about an election promise in 2019 to set up a centre for peace, order and good government here in this country, where we are with that, and if that is going to be happening.

Hon. John McKay: Madam Speaker, it is always the youth who pay the price for wars. Most of the generals are older and the people who are getting killed are frequently younger people. Boy, that was blindingly obvious in the prison in Vilnius, but also in the member's experience as well.

On peace, order and good government, I do not know where we are on that. It is a worthwhile initiative. One cannot separate diplomacy, aid and military abilities. It needs to be a team Canada approach in all matters. I would like to think we are making some progress on that, but I do not always know that we are.

● (2145)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, we are debating something that I think and hope we can look to some consensus on. I will confess that it is a tough issue for Green Party members to talk about NATO.

[Translation]

For us, questions about NATO are difficult and complicated because of our deep commitment to peace and the principles of non-violence.

[English]

I am part of a global party. It does not come up very often in this place that I am a member of Parliament in Canada, within a family of global Greens. One of those global Greens is Pekka Haavisto, who is Finland's Minister for Foreign Affairs and a very germane part of the debate tonight. Up until December, a friend of mine, Per Bolund, co-leader of the Green Party of Sweden, was Sweden's deputy prime minister, but the Swedish Greens just left the Swedish coalition, for reasons I need not get into here.

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As Greens, we have a profound commitment to peace and non-violence, which means, to say it just as clearly as I can, that I am no fan of NATO. Greens are not, generally, because it is a military. It is a defensive alliance, but it is not without issues for those of us who are committed to non-violence. It has been an issue for us to know that we absolutely, unequivocally believe that Vladimir Putin is solely responsible for Russia's attack on Ukraine and we are on the side of Ukraine and Ukrainians. We are supportive of every action our government has taken, but it is not without difficulty for us.

How do Greens feel about Canada being in NATO? In an ideal world, when the Warsaw Pact ended, NATO would have ended too. That is how we see it. NATO's continued involvement in the world does create tensions that we probably would not have needed if, and this is a big "if" and one of the main things I want to talk about tonight, we had had the former Soviet Union and the United States pursue nuclear disarmament. When Mikhail Gorbachev was championing perestroika and glasnost, he also picked up the phone and called former U.S. President Ronald Reagan. He asked, "Do you want to end nuclear weapons, because I do?" Ronald Reagan said, "I do too." By the way, the reason I know this is that Mikhail Gorbachev told that story to a small group of people in a room in Rio de Janeiro at Rio+5. I was there because I was part of a committee that Mikhail Gorbachev co-chaired.

However, in the years that followed, the efforts toward nuclear disarmament faltered. I believe that Donald Trump was a puppet of Vladimir Putin and the two of them decided, or at least Putin decided, "Let's not get rid of nuclear weapons. Let's slow down the talks. Let's not have nuclear non-proliferation discussions anymore. Let's not have nuclear disarmament discussions anymore." It has made the world less safe.

This is in the context of Vladimir Putin and Russia's completely illegal war. I mean, wars are generally illegal. It is hard to know when a war is exactly legal because many of them are founded on lies: the Vietnam War, the Iraq War. We can make up a story about why we need to attack this other country, but there are some wars that we know were morally justified, such as the allied forces confronting fascism in the Second World War. Many of our parents, my parents and many people in this room had family members engaged in that war. As the member for Scarborough—Guildwood just said, it is the young people who suffer in wars. It is the young people who die, but with some wars we can see the moral justification. In this case, supporting Ukraine really matters.

However, I question what Canada should be doing in NATO. I want to share that with all of my colleagues as I conclude my remarks. Spoiler alert, I will agree with the motion that Finland and Sweden should be supported in joining NATO, because that is what they ask for right now. As I said, my colleagues in the global Green Party, global Green parliamentarians, asked for that. We respect the decisions made within countries by our colleagues in the Green Party. There is no question from the Greens that we support that Finland and Sweden should be supported in joining NATO.

However, let me ask this question. The budget of 2022 said clearly that we are going to have a foreign policy review. In that foreign policy review, I hope we will ask this question: Should Canada stay in NATO?

• (2150)

[*Translation*]

Why is it an advantage for Canada to be a member of NATO?

It may be an advantage, but this century's greatest threat to our safety is not a military one. It is the threat of climate change. Climate change is a greater threat to our future than all the military powers of the world.

[*English*]

Why would we stay in NATO? I believe we should stay in NATO to advocate for nuclear disarmament. We would play an important role in saying to our NATO partners that the world is less safe because of nuclear weapons. If we had succeeded where Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan had hoped to go and where Lester B. Pearson would have hoped to go, and if we had moved to remove nuclear weapons, how much more effective would we be now to help Ukraine?

When President Zelenskyy asked us, in this space, on Zoom, for a no-fly zone, we knew we could not do it because we are NATO partners and Vladimir Putin has threatened the use of nuclear weapons. If we had been a non-aligned, neutral nation, could we have done more? NATO itself is, in a sense, muscle-bound. It has so many armies and it has nuclear weapons. It cannot confront Russia without threatening what we always heard about in the Cold War, the strategy of nuclear weapons and mutually assured destruction. There is no future or hope in that.

In this instance tonight, for the first time that I have ever had a chance to speak in this place about NATO, I would say to all of my colleagues here, let us look at what makes the world safer. The world will be safer when nuclear weapons are eliminated. We have now before us, and it has taken legal effect, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Enough countries around the world, nation-states, have signed on, but none of the nuclear powers have signed on and Canada has not even signed on to be an observer to the conversation.

At the end of this month, June 20-22 in Vienna, will be the first state-party gathering under the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. I know that my colleague here from Edmonton Strathcona and I, as well as a senator from the other place, plan to go to Vienna. We hope our government will be there as a delegation. We hope we sign on.

In the meantime, as we examine this question, Finland and Sweden have been made less secure by Russia's assault on Ukraine. We have to do two things at all times: We have to defend Ukraine and do everything we can to put pressure on Russia to get to a peace talk and to get to a ceasefire; and we have to look beyond the immediate conflict in Ukraine and say, "How do we make the world safer?" We make the world safer when nuclear weapons are abolished.

• (2155)

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to share an experience with the hon. member about NATO. I was travelling with John Manley, the then foreign affairs minister. Our itinerary was London, Paris, Riga and Berlin. When we were in Riga, the President of Latvia came into the room and she harangued John and me for 20 minutes about getting into NATO. This was in September 2001. She did not want anything else. She just wanted into NATO, because she saw NATO as her best security guarantee against the Russians. We went to Germany and, to John's credit, he put the Latvian question to the Germans. They had the same question: "What about the Russians?"

Is the hon. member prepared to assert her judgment about the utility of NATO against the President of Latvia's judgment about the utility of NATO?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, in the context of a nuclear armed Russia and Latvia, that is a concern, and I cannot second-guess what the President of Latvia said, but would her response have been different if we had done the right thing?

When the U.S.S.R. broke down and capitalism decided to declare capitalism had won and Communism had lost, why did we not do a Marshall Plan for Russia? Why did we not build the democratic institutions? Why did we leave the people of Russia to reduced life expectancy, to reduced economic opportunities and to the crony capitalism of Putin's friends? We let them down. We could have changed that, so I cannot answer the question because the context could have been so different if we had done more for the people of Russia.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I always enjoy the speeches given by my dear colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands. I am not the only one, as my father also adores my hon. colleague, and I think they have a lovely friendship. That is one of the reasons I want to ask her the following question.

My father, who was also an MP, always told me that we are free to take whatever position we want on a motion or a bill, but it must be for the right reasons.

I really like my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands because she is always very honest and genuine when she answers questions. From what I have understood, she will support this motion because the Swedish and Finnish Greens support it. Had they not taken a position on this motion, would she still have supported it?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague for the question. I thank him for his comments, especially

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those regarding the friendship between his father and me. It is so true.

If the greens in Finland and Sweden had not taken a position, our response may have been different. However, our foreign colleagues are clear: They are now under threat from Russia and Mr. Putin's regime, and they need NATO protection. That is why the Greens will of course vote in favour of this motion.

[*English*]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to echo some of my colleagues in this place and thank the member for her genuine honesty in her intervention today.

Two former prime ministers of Canada, three former foreign ministers, two former defence ministers and all members of the Liberal Party have endorsed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. In fact, they wrote a letter on September 21, 2019, rebuking NATO for its opposition to the treaty.

I am wondering if the member could tell us why she thinks the previous members of the Liberal Party could support that but the current government cannot?

• (2200)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, our government appears to be slavishly and unthinkingly willing to do whatever the U.S. administration wants.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is indeed an honour to join everyone tonight virtually to talk about NATO and the application for membership to NATO by Finland and Sweden. It is something I hope we can strongly support unanimously in this chamber to send a strong message to all allies in the NATO alliance and hopefully convince those who are somewhat hesitant to accept the membership applications from Finland and Sweden.

We know that Sweden and Finland have been closely co-operating with NATO and the European Union's collective defence agreement for quite some time. They have modern militaries, modern economies and very progressive societies that we all appreciate and admire. There is no reason to reject their applications to NATO.

We know that both Finland and Sweden have been non-aligned, neutral nations since the end of World War II, but that has dramatically changed with Putin's illegal invasion, Russia's war, and the war crimes and atrocities being committed in Ukraine. Of course, our thoughts, prayers and efforts are to help Ukraine win this war. We know that the entire NATO alliance is doing everything it can and is nervous about how this is going to play out.

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This means countries that do not have the ability to be part of the strong alliance we have through NATO want to join. Although there may be some naysayers out there who are going to say this is NATO enlargement pushing farther toward Russia's border, nothing could be further from the truth. These are independent countries that want to make sure they can take advantage of what we enjoy and take for granted here in Canada, which is deterrence through our collective defence.

Article 5 almost guarantees that no NATO member will ever be invaded by a foreign nation such as the Russian Federation. Vladimir Putin is at the helm of the Russian Federation and has control of the criminal organization within the Kremlin, the kleptocrats. He has been running a mafia-styled organization with a very disturbing philosophy and revisionist history that he is trying to force upon the world.

His demented reasoning for invading Ukraine cannot go unchecked, but that means the Baltic nations and Arctic nations that share space with Russia are increasingly concerned. That is why there has been a change of heart so quickly. In a matter of three months, we have seen Sweden and Finland make this historic application for membership 73 years after the beginning of the NATO alliance.

I want to thank the foreign affairs committee for doing this work, putting together this report and giving us this opportunity to express, as parliamentarians and ultimately as the Government of Canada, our support for their membership applications.

Let us look at why they are so nervous and why they made this decision to join with other Baltic nations that already enjoy this alliance, such as Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and Poland. We know that these nations have all joined over the last 25 years. We also know that Canada has been playing a major role in Latvia as part of NATO's enhanced forward presence, and increasing military deterrence activities within Latvia, leading several other nations in a battle group there.

● (2205)

The more we can do to bolster the defences of eastern Europe, the safer we are here at home. We are an Arctic nation; we share territory with Russia. It is good to know the United States, Canada and Norway, which are already NATO members, will now be joined by two more Arctic nations, Finland and Sweden, in this alliance. We can hopefully bring Russia back into a reasonable conversation, after it leaves Ukrainian sovereign territory, about how best to move forward to protect the Arctic, do search and rescue and make other investments in the Arctic area.

Canada needs to do more for Ukraine. We are watching this war on a daily basis, and it continues to pull at all our heartstrings. We know this is more than a tragedy: An atrocity has been committed.

We have been talking about Bucha and what has happened in Mariupol. Hospitals, schools, seniors homes and maternity wards have been intentionally targeted. We know that Putin and his henchmen within the Russian army have been committing these crimes against humanity, and they have been ordered from the top down. Everyone who is responsible for those atrocities must be held to account. I am glad to see that Ukraine's public prosecutor is

putting together all the evidence to take to the Hague in front of the International Criminal Court. Canada needs to assist in that every step of the way.

For quite a while, the Conservatives have been calling on the Liberal government to do more to help Ukraine. The humanitarian corridors need to be implemented by giving Ukraine anti-air and air defence systems so that it can ensure its airspace is protected and so that those fleeing war zones can get to safety and humanitarian assistance and relief can get into besieged cities such as Kharkiv.

We know that Ukraine has been asking for more armoured vehicles. We have asked many times in the House, and I asked it again just a couple of weeks ago, why Canada is not sending its about-to-be-retired light armoured vehicles: our Bisons, Coyotes, Kodiaks and M113 Tracked LAVs. All of those are going to be decommissioned over the next year, and the replacement vehicles are already built and sitting in London, Ontario, waiting to be accredited. In that tranche of light armoured vehicles, there are 32 armoured ambulances as part of the LAV II configuration that could be sent to Ukraine, which desperately needs them right now.

The government knows those light armoured vehicles would save lives, but for whatever reason, the Minister of National Defence and the Minister of Foreign Affairs have not moved on sending these LAVs, which could easily be donated by Canada as they are in good working order.

We have also asked the government to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We have a point of order from the hon. member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame.

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, I think my hon. colleague might have forgotten to mention that he is splitting his time.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am not sure if I caught it.

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

● (2210)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Then the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman has one minute and 30 seconds remaining.

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, I believe I did mention that I was splitting my time. I am sorry about that.

One of the other things we have been asking the government to do is supply our Harpoon maritime and coastal missiles. They would really strengthen Ukraine's ability to protect Odessa and other coastal cities. We asked for that and Canada did not do it; the U.K. did. We asked to send over our LAVs, like our M113s. Canada did not send them, but the United States and Australia sent M113s.

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We need to step up and do more, not less. I again want to reiterate that having Sweden and Finland join our NATO alliance speaks volumes, and I know we all welcome their applications.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I believe that Canada has actually been very supportive of Ukraine in every way.

Having said that, my question is more in regard to the importance of NATO and how NATO's role in the world has been amplified. I believe that going forward NATO is going to become a much healthier, stronger world factor. I am interested in hearing my colleague's thoughts in regard to how what has taken place in Europe has really amplified the importance of NATO to the world, and how as a Canadian government we need to support and work with our allies, and in particular with NATO.

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, we all know that NATO is by far not only the strongest defence alliance; it is also one of the most active political alliances in the world. Much can be done through deterrence measures because of the military strength that NATO possesses, and because of that it is able to come to the table as an organization and as a group of allies to talk about political realities, and it is able to bring about peace much more quickly than other international organizations.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, in his speech, my colleague talked about supplying weapons. We know that these days weapons are more and more technologically complex and people need training to use them properly.

I would like to comment on the need to provide as much predictability as possible when we send weapons, so that we can also link that to training for the people who will use them.

Can my colleague provide clarification on this?

[English]

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, I know we are sending sniper rifles that were bought by the Ukrainian military from Canada that are very advanced and require training. I agree that if we are going to send more technologically advanced weapons, it means we have to be able to move personnel who built the equipment to train individuals on it.

Not all of the equipment takes weeks and months to train on. It is not like selling them new fighter jets that they have not flown before, which would take years to master. A lot of this stuff only takes a matter of days or weeks before it is in operation.

That is why I would encourage the government, which has \$500 million earmarked in the budget to go toward military equipment for Ukraine, to buy the equipment that Ukraine already uses from the world market and get it there as soon as possible, so that we do not have to train the troops and they can actually put it into use immediately.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know that while we do not agree on everything on the response to Ukraine, my colleague and I both strongly be-

lieve that Canada needs to do everything it can for the people of Ukraine.

As a co-vice-chair of the Ukraine Canada friendship association, I admire his commitment to the people of Ukraine. I would like to ask him a question. We know that there has been about \$600 billion worth of damage done to infrastructure in Ukraine. What would the member like to see the Canadian government commit to, as a long-term strategy, to help Ukraine rebuild after this war?

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's strong support for Ukraine as well.

Canada needs to start planning ahead for a Marshall Plan to help rebuild all the infrastructure that has been destroyed by the Russian military in Ukraine. We know that there are a number of assets that have already been seized from Russian oligarchs and corrupt kleptocrats who have been hiding their wealth and own businesses here in Canada. Those assets need to be liquidated, and those are the first dollars that should be going into the rebuilding of Ukraine's hospitals, schools, roads and bridges.

• (2215)

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is, as always, an honour to enter into debate in this place, especially when it comes to important issues such as the motion we are discussing tonight.

Before I get into the substance of my defence for this motion, I would like to highlight a couple of things. The fact is that over the past number of months, we have seen the security situation of our world evolve dramatically. In the circumstances that I and many of the younger individuals in this place grew up in, I do not remember a time, other than on maps that maybe were not quite up to date that we had in our social studies classrooms, when there was a Soviet Union. I know from those who may have a little more grey hair than I do the stories and the geopolitical reality that existed prior to the dramatic changes that took place at the end of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties.

Over the past number of months, we have seen a dramatic change. The peace and security of our world and the rules-based international order have truly been put at risk. When Russia invaded the sovereign country of Ukraine, I would suggest it sent a shock wave across the world that a red line had been crossed.

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Debate has taken place in this place, and in parliaments and legislatures around the world, including, I would note, the Parliament of Ukraine. It has continued to function under what are circumstances that I am sure many of us within Canada's House of Commons, Canada's Parliament and many western democracies could hardly imagine. It has continued to function and ensure that, in the midst of what seem like insurmountable odds, democracy matters. It has continued to show that the rules-based international order matters. As we are specifically discussing tonight a motion that supports the entrance of Finland and Sweden into NATO, the treaty alliance that has demonstrated over its history that it has played a key and pivotal role in ensuring peace and security around the world, that peace and security, as I mentioned before, have been threatened.

I would note that my great uncle Ted gave something to me when I was 10 or 11 years old. He was a professor at the University of Toronto, who is now retired. He would visit us back home in east central Alberta. I would have a million questions when he would come during the summer, often spending a number of weeks. I would ask him questions about anything and everything. He happened to be a professor of Hebrew history, but was a very knowledgeable man on many subjects. In particular, one summer he brought a piece of the Berlin Wall and explained to me the significance of that piece of concrete, crumbling as it was.

When I got elected in 2019, I went, as I am sure many of us do, to the box where many things from my childhood and my past were stored and I got that old piece of concrete that was wrapped in plastic. I took it out and was able to get it put into a display. On that, I got a plaque with President Reagan's famous words asking Mr. Gorbachev to bring down that wall. That piece of the Berlin Wall sits in my office today as a constant reminder that this rules-based international order is not something that we can take for granted and that we have to continually and earnestly defend the peace and security that makes up our national democratic institutions. However, it is also a reminder that the world has enjoyed an unprecedented period of peace over the past seven decades or so, and of the significance of the disruption that is possible in light of what the developing circumstances are with Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine.

• (2220)

I certainly did not imagine, when I was elected to Parliament in 2019, that within a number of years we would be debating a war in Europe. The dynamics have certainly changed when it comes to where we find ourselves today. That is why it is so fitting to be able to debate and discuss what I hope will be an expedient admission of Finland and Sweden to NATO.

Only three months or so ago, even the talk of these two countries joining NATO would have been something that would have garnered international headlines and would have been called a provocation. We see how, in light of the circumstances our world finds itself in, that it appears to be, and I would suggest is, a necessity for the security of those two countries and the western world.

To provide context, although Finland and Sweden are not currently NATO members, I would like to note in the House this evening that they are active participants in the upholding of, as I

have referred to, the international rules-based order. They have been collaborators with NATO and many of our objectives throughout the course of NATO's history. It is those things that I would suggest build a perfect resumé for what should be a speedy admission. For other countries that are now tasked with evaluating whether or not they should support these two countries' admission, if we look at their history I would suggest that their record speaks very strongly in favour of their expedient admission.

My speech up to this point has talked a lot about the impacts of this motion and the results it would have on the world, but it has specific relevance here at home as well. When it comes to domestic impacts, we think about northern sovereignty and how we share thousands of kilometres of our north, although not a land border, with our next-closest neighbour, Russia. Certainly since I have been elected, and as someone who has followed closely the situation in our north, there is without a shadow of a doubt threats that are current and present that we need to take as a country in terms of bolstering our military.

The previous speaker from Manitoba spoke very eloquently about ensuring that we have the military requirements, about meeting our 2% target and about those sorts of things. However, we have to be able to respond in a way that will ensure our national sovereignty: not just the thousands of kilometres of Arctic tundra in our north, but the fact that our sovereign borders do border, although by sea, a nation that has shown itself unwilling to abide by the common precepts of what national sovereignty should look like.

I would call as a challenge to all parties in the House, and especially the government and members of the cabinet, that I have heard a lot of tough talk over the course of the past number of months regarding the situation in Ukraine, but that has to be followed up by equally significant and tough action. Tough talk without action makes good headlines, but does not actually help the people of our nation, the people of Ukraine, the people of Finland or Sweden and it does not keep them any safer.

As I come to the conclusion of my speech, I would simply appeal to this place and to members of NATO that we look toward an expedient admission of Finland and Sweden to NATO for the peace and security of both our nation and the alliance that has helped provide peace and security over the past seven decades in our world.

• (2225)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as my hon. colleague was speaking, I was reflecting on the different views that we have in the House of Commons, the Parliament of Canada providing a voice to this discussion on what is happening in the world and the value of the Parliament of Canada in this discussion to say that we need to have peace, order and good government in other countries.

Even though we might not agree with each other within these walls, I think that outside these walls our voice can be heard. It is being heard among ourselves, but now it will go forward from here.

Could the hon. member comment on the value of our combined voice on this issue?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, it is certainly significant that we are debating this motion and the opportunity for Canada's Parliament, the epicentre of Canadian democracy, in what I hope will be a strong, unified voice, to share with the world that this situation matters, that Finland's and Sweden's admission into NATO matters, and to continue to speak with a strong voice, united, and to share that although there are many political differences, we stand united with the people of Ukraine and for the rules-based international order.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, which was very interesting.

He talked about unity with the Ukrainians. I think everyone in the House agrees on that. He talked about territorial sovereignty and national sovereignty. I am always moved when I hear people talk about sovereignty. I dream of the day when Quebec will also be part of NATO, just like Canada. However I do not want to go there tonight, because I am on my last question of the day.

As we know, Turkey is proving to be problematic. It is one thing to say we support Sweden and Finland joining NATO. However, how does my hon. colleague think the problem with Turkey should be addressed when the time comes to do so? I think it will have to be done fairly quickly.

How should this be done?

[*English*]

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, the member brings up a good point when it comes to the situation regarding Turkey. Certainly I would suggest that the statement that this place, Canada's House of Commons, can make in terms of support for Finland's and Sweden's memberships in NATO is significant and can show, with a unified voice, that this conversation does matter and that there could be very real consequences, not only for Turkey but for the peace and security of our world, if it were to interfere with what appears to be, from my reading of the situation across NATO, the admission of these two countries into the alliance.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague spoke about unity and unity within this place. One of the things that I think is very important is that we show solidarity and unity with our colleagues within NATO and with colleagues within the Baltic states. I am wondering if he could tell me why the Conservative Party has blocked the foreign affairs committee from going to visit our partners in NATO in the Baltic states.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I am not a member of the foreign affairs committee, so I would urge that member to ask members of that committee.

I think that there has been an unprecedented show of unity within this place in support of the people of Ukraine and in support of ensuring that the international rules-based order is preserved.

I would suggest that although there are political differences on the role that Canada should have as a middle power, and I would suggest that Canada should be a stronger position as a middle power in our world, there are significant political differences, certainly,

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between the New Democrats and the Conservatives and other political entities.

We have, I think, a unified voice, and I would hope we will continue to see a unified voice in ensuring that we can stand with the people of Ukraine, and with our allies within NATO and around the world, for that rules-based international order.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 10:30 p.m., pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 31, the question is deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Thursday, June 2, 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.

• (2230)

[*English*]

HEALTH

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, back in April, I asked the Minister of Transport when he would allow Canadians to fly again and end the mandates. I pointed out that Canada is virtually alone in the world with these anti-flying mandates. Iceland, Sweden, Ireland, France, the U.K., Argentina, Costa Rica, Denmark, Hungary, Jamaica, Thailand, Mexico, Norway and Poland are just a few of the countries that have made it possible for their citizens to fly, and they have ended the vaccine mandates. Even Cuba, a country that the Prime Minister has an interesting relationship with, has more freedom to fly than Canada.

I know that the parliamentary secretary will talk about how everything is done to protect Canadians, and the Liberals say that it is all based on science, even though their obsession on the vaccine mandate for travel is a clear opposition to the science, and that stopped long ago.

I find it appalling that this Liberal government seems to be intent on preventing over seven million law-abiding Canadians from travelling just because they do not have a vaccine passport. However, it is quite content to allow Canadians who are convicted of child sex offences to travel abroad. Under the government, convicted child predators have more freedom to travel than Canadians who have chosen not to be vaccinated.

In 2015, the Conservative government amended the Passport Act to give the minister of foreign affairs the tools to refuse or cancel passports in order to prevent the commission of sexual offences against a child in Canada or abroad. Basically, it stops Canadian sex predators from travelling and exploiting youth, especially in underdeveloped countries.

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I have been keeping track of how many passports the Liberals have revoked or denied. From 2015 to 2018, in the first two years, there were only 13 cancellations or revocations and five refusals of passports to prevent sexual abuse of children abroad. Many of these were initiated, likely, under the Conservative government. Between 2018 and 2021, the government revoked zero passports to prevent child exploitation and refused only three passports.

Canada has 60,000 registered sex offenders, and 72% of them are child sexual predators. That is over 42,000 convicted child sex offenders. This government has only cancelled 13 passports and zero in the last three years, and it has refused only eight passports. Based on the organizations I work with, we are aware of convicted child sex offenders who had been convicted of the horrific offences against children and who received passports in the past few years from this government. They have been travelling abroad. I ask members to think about that.

The government is spending \$30 million to implement a vaccine passport in this country to prevent law-abiding citizens from getting on planes solely because they do not have a vaccine, but if a person is a convicted sex offender, as long as they get a vaccine, they are given a passport and off they go. For example, Donald Bakker, one of Canada's most notorious sex offenders, after serving his jail time, travelled to southeast Asia to abuse young children as young as seven years old. Under this government, he got his passport back and was travelling abroad to impoverished countries over the past few years. This is unconscionable.

With 42,000 convicted sex offenders over the past seven years, and only 13 passports cancelled or refused, my question to the parliamentary secretary is this: Why is the government so focused on keeping law-abiding Canadians grounded and prohibited from travelling while convicted sex offenders can get a passport and travel? Would the \$30 million not be better spent on ensuring that the passports are not being given to these sexual offenders?

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to talk about our government's response to the pandemic.

Vaccination is one of the most effective tools we have to combat the pandemic and keep Canadians safe. While the provinces and territories are responsible for establishing vaccination requirements within their jurisdictions, vaccine requirements and restrictions were introduced in the summer and fall of 2021 across a number of areas of federal jurisdiction, namely at the border, among federal public servants and within the federally regulated transportation sector.

Vaccine-related policies, along with public health measures, have helped keep Canadians safe. They have supported safe working conditions and spaces for federal public service workers and travellers on federally regulated transport and have reduced the risk and impacts of absenteeism for businesses.

At the time that federal vaccine-related requirements and restrictions were introduced, overall vaccination rates were significantly lower. There was strong scientific evidence from international and domestic sources demonstrating that vaccines were effective at preventing infection against specific COVID-19 variants such as alpha

and delta. There was also evidence that showed vaccines protected against severe illness, hospitalization and death from COVID-19. The benefits of vaccination continue to outweigh the risks.

It is also important for us to take stock of where we are, and have a more flexible and responsive approach in managing COVID-19.

Vaccines and therapeutics continue to be important cornerstones of our responses. We are fortunate that vaccination coverage rates in Canada are among the highest in the world, resulting in more lives saved in comparison with other countries, but there are still more opportunities to enhance our protection.

As of May 22, 2022, over 84% of the total population had received at least one dose, 81% had received two doses and more than 18 million Canadians had received a third dose. We know that vaccination does not give us full immunity from infection, but it does prevent us from getting very sick and reduces the potential need for hospitalization.

Our goal of minimizing serious illness and death is still the same; so too is our goal of minimizing societal disruption. We need to recognize that COVID-19 is not going to disappear. We have learned a great deal over the course of the pandemic, but there is still a great deal of uncertainty.

Thanks to Canadians' adherence to public health measures and high rates of vaccination, including booster doses, our outlook continues to improve. Individual public health measures, along with vaccines and therapeutics, will remain key in protecting individuals should a virulent or highly transmissible variant of concern emerge.

● (2235)

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, under the government, a convicted child sex offender has more freedom to travel in Canada than an unvaccinated Canadian. There are four million Canadians who cannot fly. El Salvador, Cuba, France and the U.K. are all countries that have allowed their citizens to fly once again. We are the only G7 country that is not allowing its unvaccinated citizens to fly.

If the government will not let unvaccinated people fly, will it at least start revoking the passports of child sex offenders? How many passports have been refused or revoked over the past seven years?

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Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Speaker, as Canada emerges out of the acute phase of the pandemic, the focus will shift toward ongoing management of COVID-19. Individual public health measures, along with vaccines and therapeutics, will remain key in protecting individuals should a virulent and highly transmissible variant of concern emerge. The Public Health Agency of Canada is working with its provincial and territorial partners to address the ongoing presence of the COVID-19 virus. Given the uncertainty, nimble approaches will continue to be required as measures are lifted.

JUSTICE

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I recently posed a question to the Prime Minister regarding abuse and non-compliance under the medical assistance and dying regime. Abuse and non-compliance are not hypotheticals. They are happening, and they are well documented. Vulnerable Canadians are falling through the cracks. Quebec's commission on end-of-life care, as well as the Ontario's chief coroner's office, identified multiple cases of Criminal Code non-compliance, which is hardly something that should be taken lightly.

In April, a 51-year-old London, Ontario, woman accessed MAID after she could not find adequate housing. Her condition was not irremediable as required by law. Last month, the RCMP opened a criminal investigation into the questionable MAID death of an Abbotsford, B.C., woman who suffered from depression.

Then there is the case of Roger Foley, someone who requires 24-hour care. He was pressured to get MAID not once, but on at least four occasions. In one case, he recorded a health practitioner pressuring him to access MAID because, as she said, his care was simply too extensive.

These cases are alarming and should concern the government. They are drawing international review, including from the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, who expressed serious concerns and called on the government to conduct full investigations to ensure there are appropriate safeguards in place to protect vulnerable Canadians.

Recently in the U.K., an article was published in *The Spectator* entitled, "Why is Canada euthanising the poor?"

In the face of all of that, I would have thought the Prime Minister would have expressed some level of concern and compassion in answer to my question. On the contrary. The Prime Minister engaged in the worst form of politics, claiming that anyone who would raise questions of abuse was "wrapped up in ideology". How insensitive. How beneath the dignity of this place. After all, we are talking about vulnerable Canadians. We are talking about an active criminal investigation into the death of a B.C. woman as we speak. We are talking about grieving families who have lost loved ones because the law was not followed. We are talking about vulnerable Canadians who are at risk absent the enforcement of safeguards.

Therefore, I ask the government again: Will it admit what everyone knows to be true, that there are serious abuses and instances of non-compliance, which put vulnerable Canadians at risk? What is it doing about it?

• (2240)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak about Canada's medical assistance in dying, including the role played by federal, provincial and territorial governments in the MAID regime.

As members know, Parliament is responsible for enacting criminal law and the provinces and territories are responsible for its enforcement. The federal government has always recognized that MAID is a complex and deeply personal issue. Parliament has enacted a MAID regime that reflects Canada's evolving needs and supports autonomy and freedom of choice while also protecting those who may be vulnerable. This is why the MAID law includes stringent eligibility criteria and safeguards within the Criminal Code.

For instance, a person may only receive MAID if their request was made voluntarily and without external pressure. Additionally, MAID providers must ensure that, one, the request for MAID was made in writing and was signed by an independent witness; two, that the person was informed that they may withdraw their request at any time; three, that a second independent physician or nurse practitioner provided a written opinion confirming that the person meets the eligibility criteria; four, that the person was given the opportunity to withdraw their request, and that if the request is not withdrawn, the person gives their express consent immediately before MAID is provided.

The Criminal Code also contains additional safeguards for persons whose death is not reasonably foreseeable. For example, at least one physician or nurse practitioner assessing eligibility must have expertise in the condition causing the person's suffering. As well, there must be 90 days between the time the eligibility is assessed and the day MAID is provided, and the person must be informed of the means available to relieve their suffering, including counselling services, mental health and disability support services, community services and palliative care.

As I mentioned, the provinces and territories are responsible for enforcing criminal law, including the MAID provisions. They are also responsible for the provision of health care and for the regulated medical professionals in their jurisdictions. The Criminal Code provides the needed safeguards to protect the vulnerable. However, it is up to the provinces and territories to investigate and enforce situations in which practitioners may not have followed the safeguards.

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Finally, the Criminal Code regulations for the monitoring of MAID are being updated to ensure that information is collected regarding race, indigenous identity and disability. Once available, this information will provide better insights into how certain groups may be impacted by our MAID regime, thus supporting the provinces and territories in the implementation of MAID and its enforcement.

• (2245)

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, despite empty words of concern, the government has simply washed its hands clean of issues of noncompliance with the so-called safeguards that were brought in by the government.

These are matters under the Criminal Code. They fall within the jurisdiction of the government, and the government has a responsibility to ensure that safeguards are adequate and that vulnerable Canadians are not falling through the cracks under the MAID regime.

Instead, the government has ploughed full steam ahead, seeking to rapidly expand MAID as vulnerable Canadians fall through the cracks. I would submit that if anyone is wrapped up in ideology, it is the government, at the expense of vulnerable Canadians. I listed a series of cases of noncompliance, and I would ask the parliamentary secretary to acknowledge that there are instances of noncompliance and to provide a better answer than—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Speaker, the federal government acknowledges that there are many complexities surrounding MAID and the necessity to protect vulnerable persons. This is why any federal action in this area is informed by evidence, experts and independent reviews.

For instance, as members are aware, adults whose sole medical condition is a mental disorder will be eligible for MAID in March 2023. In preparation for this, and to ensure that such an expansion is done safely, the government is considering the expert panel on MAID and mental illnesses' final report, which was tabled in Parliament on May 13, 2022.

The government is also looking forward to considering the special joint committee on MAID's review of the Criminal Code provisions and their application, as well as other important issues related to mature minors, advanced requests, mental disorders, the state of palliative care in Canada and the protection of Canadians with disabilities.

HEALTH

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to be here tonight to follow up on a question I asked the Prime Minister on May 18.

I think it is important in these late shows to give a little context for people who might be seeing this live, but more likely on social media after we post the clips from this. The late show is our opportunity to have a conversation in which we follow up on something where we feel like we did not get an adequate response from the government during question period. That is usually the case. We get

this opportunity to choose which questions we are going to follow up on.

The parliamentary secretary who will answer my question today, and who has four minutes to respond, knows the question I am going to refer to, and has the full power of the minister's office and the Prime Minister's Office to prepare the response. We would expect a fulsome response tonight, hopefully.

The very specific question that was asked of the Prime Minister on May 18 was:

Mr. Speaker, four times in the past two weeks I have asked questions about the Canada mental health transfer: an election commitment quite obviously broken by the Liberal government. The minister never even pretended to attempt an answer.

Page 75 of the Liberal platform clearly promises immediate funding of \$250 million and then another \$625 million in this year's budget. There has to be an explanation as to why the Liberals broke this significant promise to vulnerable Canadians. Could the Prime Minister simply tell us what that explanation is?

Of course, the Prime Minister did not tell us what the explanation was, so I am going to elaborate a little on this.

On page 5 of the Liberal platform, the document the party used to get elected about seven or eight months ago, the Liberals said that they would:

Commit to permanent, ongoing funding for mental health services under the Canada Mental Health Transfer, with an initial investment of \$4.5 billion over five years.

In the costing of the Liberals' platform, the timeline that they were promising was very clear, because on page 75 of the platform, under "New investments" and "Canada Mental Health Transfer" for 2021-22, they committed \$250 million, and then for 2022-23 it was \$625 million with ongoing funding for the next three years. It was very clear that the commitment was to begin immediately, yet in the budget and in any fiscal planning document that we have seen from the government since then, nowhere to be found is anything related to the Canada mental health transfer.

We had the opportunity to ask officials at committee, and they had no answers for us. On May 5, we asked the minister the question. I asked her, and she called my questions "annoying" and "despicable", and did not give an answer. I had the chance to ask the parliamentary secretary a week later, on May 12, and she clearly did not understand the question, because she talked about the suicide prevention hotline and did not talk about the Canada mental health transfer at all. By the way, the response to the question that I did not ask about the suicide prevention hotline was not an answer at all, even in relation to that thing. I then had the chance to ask the Prime Minister.

For the parliamentary secretary, what I hope today is for her to simply point us to a financial document of the government: a budget, budget implementation bill or some other document where it is clear that the government is spending the money that it promised during the election campaign for the Canada mental health transfer.

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• (2250)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to respond to my esteemed colleague this evening and to talk about what our government is doing to support mental health care across Canada.

[*English*]

We have made historic investments in mental health, including \$5 billion to the provinces and territories through ongoing bilateral agreements.

[*Translation*]

Budget 2022 proposes to provide \$227.6 million over two years, starting in 2022-23, to maintain trauma-informed, culturally appropriate services for indigenous people, to improve mental wellness, and to support efforts initiated through budget 2021 to co-develop distinctions-based mental health and wellness strategies.

[*English*]

A major challenge, one that existed for years even before the pandemic, has been the ability to access the right type of care where and when it is needed.

[*Translation*]

Sometimes people need information online. In some cases, they need peer support. Other times, they need therapy or more specialized care. We know that the pandemic has created even more challenges, as evidenced by the substantial increase in mental health needs.

[*English*]

That is why in the early days of the pandemic the government introduced the Wellness Together Canada portal.

[*Translation*]

To date, we have invested \$270 million in this portal to offer the most appropriate care, at the most appropriate time, in the most appropriate place, delivered by the most appropriate provider.

[*English*]

This means that Canadians can access online information on mental health issues, mental health programs they can do on their own or with counselling, immediate text support and even confidential individual counselling through phone, video and texting with social workers, psychologists and professionals. All of this is available 24 hours day, 365 days a year and in more than 200 languages for free.

[*Translation*]

We also know that helping Canadians calls for strong partnerships with the provinces and territories, indigenous communities, mental health practitioners, researchers, diverse communities and people with lived and living experience.

[*English*]

An important example is the partnership established between Canada, the Standards Council of Canada and other key stakeholders to develop new national standards for mental health and substance use supports.

• (2255)

[*Translation*]

This work is backed by a \$45-million investment over two years, and we are very pleased with the progress made in developing national standards related to integrated youth services.

[*English*]

We know national standards are needed so that Canadians know what to expect in terms of timeliness and quality of mental health and substance use services, treatments and supports.

[*Translation*]

I am sure my colleague knows that, in order to improve mental health care for Canadians, we have to work hand in hand with all our partners.

[*English*]

Our government wants to hear from them, understand their perspectives, identify the areas in need of more investment and get this right for all Canadians, no matter where they live and the care they need.

[*Translation*]

We remain fully committed to investing a further \$4.5 billion over five years to ensure that mental health care is treated as a full and equal part of Canada's public health care system.

[*English*]

Mental health care is health care and Canadians deserve—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin.

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, as we look to make progress on this issue, I am banking on the fact that Canadians who just heard my question and that answer will recognize that the response had nothing to do at all with the question I asked. I am going to ask it again, and I am hoping the parliamentary secretary will put away her notes and just answer the question.

In the Liberal platform that she ran on eight months ago, her party promised \$250 million for a Canada mental health transfer in fiscal year 2021-22, which we were already halfway through during the election campaign. Clearly the promise was for an immediate investment in a Canada mental health transfer, with a subsequent investment of \$625 million this year and then continuing for the next three years.

My question is simple and I think Canadians expect a response. Where can Canadians look to find the delivery of that promise?

*Adjournment Proceedings**[Translation]*

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière: Madam Speaker, the government has made a firm commitment to Canadians that it will develop, fund and implement this new permanent mental health transfer. To do that, we must work collaboratively with the provinces and territories.

I know that my colleague understands without a doubt that mental health is sharply declining across the country. We have to be able to provide promising and innovative practices to ensure that all Canadians have access to care that meets their needs.

[English]

Therefore, the government is taking an approach based on consultation and partnership to deliver a new Canada mental health transfer.

[Translation]

We believe that mental health is a non-partisan issue, and we will work with everyone to ensure that Canadians have the mental health services they deserve.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 10:58 p.m.)

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