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# House of Commons Debates

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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 16, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*English*]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), 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 will be tabled in an electronic format.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### DIGITAL CHARTER IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2022

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-27, An Act to enact the Consumer Privacy Protection Act, the Personal Information and Data Protection Tribunal Act and the Artificial Intelligence and Data Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts.

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

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## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

### INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the following two reports from the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology: the fourth report, entitled "Positioning Canada as a Leader in the Supply and Processing of Critical Minerals", and the fifth report, entitled "Development and Support of the Aerospace Industry".

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

[*English*]

### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on National Defence, entitled "An Interim Report on the Defence of Canada in a Rapidly Changing Threat Environment".

This is the first report of the defence committee, and it certainly will not be the last report on the rapidly changing threat environment. We started the report prior to February 24 and, of course, finished it off. However, this is an ongoing thing that the committee will maintain in its mandate and be seized with.

I want to comment as well that the members of the committee worked extremely hard to put this together. There was a lot of frustration about cancellations and votes, etc., to the point where it became very difficult to conduct proper committee hearings and all the work that goes into them. I just want to make that point because it is getting extremely frustrating, to the point of dysfunctionality of committees.

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

• (1005)

### VETERANS AFFAIRS

**Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, entitled "Incorporating Service Dogs into the Rehabilitation Program of Veterans Affairs Canada".

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

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### PEST CONTROL PRODUCTS ACT

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-287, An Act to amend the Pest Control Products Act (glyphosate).

She said: Madam Speaker, I rise today to reintroduce my private member's bill that aims to impose a complete ban on the use of glyphosate. My commitment to this issue remains the same.

*Routine Proceedings*

[Translation]

I want to thank my colleague from Madawaska—Restigouche for supporting this important bill, which will be beneficial for New Brunswickers.

[English]

The widespread use of glyphosate in New Brunswick forests and across Canada is a menace to plant and wildlife biodiversity. There is a growing consensus that glyphosate is not safe to use and that there are more effective and safer alternatives. Rather than allowing toxic chemicals to be sprayed in Canada until they are proven harmful, we should be exercising greater precautions and banning products until they can be deemed safe. Canadians have the right to breathe clean air, drink safe water and harvest healthy food from the land. We have a duty to protect our ecosystems, habitats and wildlife.

I want to thank the leadership of the tens of thousands of New Brunswickers who have fought for years for this ban to be implemented in the hope of ensuring safer communities and healthier forests for generations to come.

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

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**TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT**

**Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-288, An Act to amend the Telecommunications Act (transparent and accurate broadband services information).

He said: Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to table this legislation to improve access to transparent and accurate broadband service information. This legislation is a near copy of my private member's bill in the 43rd Parliament. Unfortunately, due to an unexpected election, Bill C-299 never had the opportunity to make it to second reading, despite a broad and ever-growing level of support from Canadians.

Canadians know how important access to high-quality Internet service is, but they also know that this essential service is out of reach for too many Canadians. For years, Canadians have been purchasing Internet services at sky-high prices, only to realize that the quality and speed they expected to receive are nowhere near what they actually receive. Rural Canadians, in particular, feel that they are not receiving the Internet service they are paying for. This bill would provide Canadians with more accurate and transparent information so they will have a better understanding of the Internet quality they will receive.

I sincerely look forward to working with all members of this House to advance this non-partisan legislation.

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

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**CRIMINAL CODE**

**Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-289, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (identity verification).

He said: Madam Speaker, Canada has a money-laundering problem. Experts say it is a \$100-billion-a-year industry. This money is fuelling crime across this country and contributing to the increasing cost of real estate by increasing the demand for houses across Canada. International criminals have flocked to Canada because of our weak laws. The Cullen commission report, released just yesterday, is an indictment of Canada's anti-money laundering regime.

This bill proposes to amend the Criminal Code to give authorities more tools to catch and convict criminals and deter money-laundering activity. This legislation has support from third parties, including Transparency International Canada, Publish What You Pay and the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, and it also addresses a problem identified by the C.D. Howe Institute in a recent memo.

We need to make life more difficult for money launderers and change Canada's reputation. I am open to amendments and look forward to working with members of all parties and the Senate to pass this bill and other legislation to fight money laundering.

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

\* \* \*

• (1010)

[Translation]

**PUBLIC SECTOR INTEGRITY ACT**

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-290, An Act to amend the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act.

He said: Madam Speaker, today it is with great pride that I introduce the public sector integrity act, which puts some teeth into the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act.

Public servants who witness wrongdoing must be able to speak out without fear, in the knowledge that their anonymity will be protected and that they will not be thrown under the bus. They need to know that they deserve thanks, not reprisal. They need to know that there will be an independent investigation into the wrongdoing reported, not just an internal review by people who may have an interest in covering it up.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates identified these issues five years ago, but the government has never addressed them. Last year, the International Bar Association found that Canada provides very little protection to its whistleblowers. Canada ranks dead last in this regard, behind countries like the Cayman Islands, Bangladesh, Rwanda, and Pakistan. That is the situation in the best country in the world.

This is what my bill addresses. It protects more people, including former public servants and contractors, and covers more cases, including political interference in the work of government professionals. It can trigger a real investigation by the Auditor General or law enforcement, because wrongdoing must be exposed, not covered up.

Public servants who expose fraud, mismanagement and undue political interference are heroes. Let us protect them.

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

\* \* \*

[English]

### PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (for the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons)** moved:

That, in accordance with subsection 53(1) of the Privacy Act, R.S.C., 1985, c. P-21, and pursuant to Standing Order 111.1(2), the House approve the appointment of Philippe Dufresne as Privacy Commissioner, for a term of seven years.

[Translation]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request a recorded division or that the motion be adopted on division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

The hon. House Leader of the Official Opposition.

[English]

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

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon:** Madam Speaker, I ask that the vote be deferred to immediately after the time provided for Oral Questions today, in accordance with Standing Order 45(7).

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

• (1015)

### PETITIONS

#### SENIORS

**Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC):** Madam Speaker, single seniors are getting left behind in our current income tax system. I am honoured to present a petition on behalf of Single Seniors for Tax Fairness, and supported by many Canadians, who raise the glaring point that single seniors do not have the same benefits as senior couples. For instance, single seniors often forfeit the age amount tax credit, and many of their savings are declared as income upon death.

Petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to level the playing field by implementing solutions such as offering a 30% reduction in income tax to single seniors.

#### INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

**Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have a second petition to present.

### Routine Proceedings

The Kawenní:io/Gawəni:yo immersion school plays a vital role in keeping the Haudenosaunee culture and languages alive at Six Nations of the Grand River, situated in my riding. This school does not have its own building and has had to move five times since 1985. It needs a permanent home. Unfortunately, the current situation makes it challenging to accommodate the demand, due to space limitations and health and safety regulations.

Being a strong advocate for this important cause, I am proud to present a petition that was originally signed by more than 1,500 residents, who call on the government to fund this shovel-ready project.

[Translation]

#### CLIMATE EMERGENCY

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to present a petition on the climate emergency.

It states:

The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C clearly communicates that the future of humanity is at risk without "rapid and far-reaching" changes...

[English]

We are almost exactly three years from the point when this place passed the motion, on June 18, 2019, that we were in a climate emergency.

The petitioners point out that any actions to suggest we understand this is an emergency cannot be detected from the current government response. In fact, the petitioners point out, Canada is on course to significantly overshoot the targets and to miss any chance of holding to 1.5°C. They call on all of us in Parliament and the Government of Canada to prioritize the elimination of fossil fuel emissions and to preserve a healthy environment. They call on us to eliminate single-use plastics and to commit to a rapid elimination of fossil fuels from our economy.

#### ELECTORAL REFORM

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, the second petition deals with the subject of our electoral system.

[Translation]

Canada's electoral system has been unfair and difficult from its very inception. It is a first-past-the-post system. Under this system, our democracy is under threat.

[English]

The petitioners ask us to consider immediately putting in place a proportional representation system so Canadians will have a reason to know they can vote because every vote will count.

*Routine Proceedings*

## COPYRIGHT LAW

**Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to present a petition signed by a number of constituents in my riding of Perth—Wellington, namely from the city of Stratford, on the important issue of the right to repair.

## PHARMACARE

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am presenting a petition today on behalf of several thousand Canadians who add their voices to the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who have already expressed themselves through various means asking us to take into consideration here in Parliament that there are millions of Canadians who have no access to affordable medication and hundreds of Canadians die each year because they do not have the wherewithal to pay for that medication.

As we know, these petitioners are also saying that a universal public pharmacare system would make a tremendous difference in providing medication, which is prescribed by their doctors, to Canadians right across the country. At the same time, it would save money compared to the existing system, which is full of holes and leaves millions of Canadians out. These petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to support the Canada pharmacare act, legislation that would create a universal, comprehensive and public pharmacare program for all Canadians, and to follow the recommendations set out by the Hoskins advisory council.

As we know, last year, Canada pharmacare was defeated in the House, but I am pleased to say that, with the confidence and supply agreement, the government is now obliged to present a new Canada pharmacare act next year. We believe, and these petitioners believe, that this is in the best interest of all Canadians.

- (1020)

## CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am rising today to present a petition on behalf of my constituents in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour. They are calling on the government to enact just transition legislation that would continue to reduce emissions while creating more green jobs and strengthening workers' rights.

I want to take a moment, publicly, to thank my constituents for their advocacy.

## CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of Canadians who are concerned about the government's use of values tests on programs and the potential that the charitable status of hospitals, houses of worship, schools, homeless shelters and other charitable organizations may be jeopardized for reasons of conscience.

They are calling upon the House of Commons to protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis, without discrimination on the basis of political or religious values and without the imposition of another values test. They are calling on the House of Commons to affirm the rights of all Canadians to freedom of expression.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to table some petitions.

The first petition I want to table is on a very serious human rights issue. It is on the situation in Pakistan, particularly Pakistan's blasphemy law. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom notes that the blasphemy law has “contributed to egregious human rights abuses and fostered an overall atmosphere of intolerance for religious minorities that often leads to violence and discrimination.”

Petitioners particularly highlight the case of Notan Lal, the owner and principal of a private school in Ghotki, Pakistan, who was detained and charged under the blasphemy law after a student made a false accusation. Petitioners note that a very high percentage of accusations of blasphemy target minorities, such as Ahmadiyya Muslims, Hindus and Christians, and that the arrest of Notan Lal was followed by riots and a violent attack on the school, as well as on a local Hindu temple.

Petitioners also note the abduction and forced marriage of women and girls from minority communities, in particular Hindu girls from the Sindh region of Pakistan, as being an element of the human rights abuses that we are seeing.

Petitioners therefore call upon the government of Pakistan to combat the abduction and forced marriage of women and girls from minority communities, to condemn the imprisonment of Notan Lal and to condemn Pakistan's blasphemy law.

## CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the second petition is about a 2021 commitment in the Liberal election platform to politicize charitable status determinations and to strip charitable status from organizations that take positions on abortion that the Liberals do not agree with. This is similar to the values test the Liberals previously imposed on the Canada summer jobs program, which would deny funding to worthy organizations that would not check a box with respect to agreeing with the government's position on that issue.

Petitioners also note that all Canadians have a right under the charter to freedom of expression without discrimination. They therefore call on the House of Commons to protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis without discrimination on the basis of political and religious values or the imposition of a values test and to affirm Canadians' rights to freedom of expression.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the next petition that I am tabling speaks to the carbon tax, particularly the cost that the carbon tax imposes on farmers and ranchers. This is particularly evident in light of increasing fuel prices. The cost is impinging very significantly on farmers.

There are a number of asks that are highlighted in this petition, such as immediately exempting all direct and indirect input costs incurred by farmers as a result of the carbon tax and also immediately cancelling the implementation of the clean fuel standard, which will have a devastating impact on the Canadian economy, including the agricultural sector.

## HAZARAS

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the next petition is returning to the subject of international human rights. This petition is about the situation in Afghanistan. This petition came in prior to the Taliban takeover, at a time when there were significant concerns about human rights challenges facing the Hazara community in Afghanistan, and sadly, the situation has gotten so much worse following the Taliban takeover.

Petitioners note the significant Canadian contribution to Afghanistan in development assistance, as well as men and women in uniform who paid the ultimate price. Therefore, petitioners want to see the government do more to support the Hazara minority, including formally recognize past genocides and designate September 25 as Hazara genocide memorial day.

## ETHIOPIA

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the next petition that I am tabling highlights ongoing concerns about human rights abuses taking place in Ethiopia. Some of the particular asks are dated, but there continue to be concerns about humanitarian conditions, as well as political violence, in the Tigray region of Ethiopia.

Petitioners want to see the government increase its engagement with the country of Ethiopia to support an end to any violence, support justice and human rights there, and support our consistent engagement within Ethiopia to combat violence. They also want the government to be noting the role of the Eritrean government and engage there as well to promote the advancement of human rights.

• (1025)

## HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the next petition I am tabling is in support of a private member's bill on organ harvesting and trafficking. It is a bill that has passed in the Senate and is currently before the foreign affairs committee. The bill would make it a criminal offence for a person to go abroad and receive an organ taken without the consent of the person who the organ is coming from. The petitioners want to see the bill passed. They note that a form of this bill has passed in the Senate unanimously three times and has passed in the House unanimously in the same form before. They hope this will be the Parliament that finally gets it done.

In closing, the petitioners also note that the bill amends the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act to create a mechanism whereby people could be deemed inadmissible to Canada if they were involved in the heinous practice of forced organ harvesting and trafficking. I commend that to the consideration of colleagues.

## Routine Proceedings

• (1030)

## HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the next petition I am tabling highlights the human rights abuses targeting Uighurs and calls for a stronger response from Parliament and government. The petitioners note a past Associated Press article reporting information on forced sterilization and abortion, coordinated campaigns of birth suppression, and mounting evidence that Uighurs are being subjected to political and anti-religious indoctrination, arbitrary detention, separation of children from families, invasive surveillance, destruction of cultural sites, forced labour and even forced organ harvesting.

It is estimated that up to three million Uighurs and other Muslim minorities in China have been detained in what are clearly concentration camps. This evidence is in alignment with the criteria in the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide for the international definition of “genocide”.

The petitioners want to see Canada step up on this and formally recognize that Uighurs in China have been and are being subjected to genocide and to use the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act, the Magnitsky act, to sanction those who are responsible for the heinous crimes being committed against the Uighur people.

Madam Speaker, by popular demand, the final petition I am tabling today is on the particular situation of a Canadian of Uighur origin, Huseyin Celil, who continues to be unjustly detained in China. The petitioners note that Canadians were very pleased to see the release of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor after 1,000 days of unjust detention, but note that there are at least 115 Canadians still being detained in China, including Huseyin Celil, who has been detained for over 5,000 days.

Mr. Celil is a Canadian Uighur human rights activist. He is being detained in China for supporting the political and religious rights of Uighurs. He is a Canadian citizen who was taken and sent to China while travelling on a Canadian passport to Uzbekistan. The Chinese government has refused to accept Mr. Celil's Canadian citizenship, and he has been denied access to lawyers, family and Canadian officials. He was coerced into signing a confession and underwent an unlawful and unfair trial.

### *Government Orders*

The evidence makes it clear that the Chinese government's treatment of Uighurs meets most if not all of the criteria for genocide outlined in the UN convention and Canada must not remain silent. The particular ask of the petitioners in this case are that the Government of Canada demand that the Chinese government recognize Huseyin Celil's Canadian citizenship and provide him with consular and legal services in accordance with international law, formerly state that the release of Mr. Celil from Chinese detention and his return to Canada is a priority of the Canadian government, of equal concern as the unjust detention of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, and appoint a special envoy to work on securing Mr. Celil's release.

Finally, the petitioners want us to seek the assistance of the—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Questions on the Order Paper.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

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### QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### JUDGES ACT

**Hon. Joyce Murray (for the Minister of Justice)** moved that Bill C-9, An Act to amend the Judges Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to Bill C-9, an act to amend the Judges Act. I want to acknowledge that I am speaking today on the traditional unceded lands of the Algonquin people.

As lawmakers, it is our cherished responsibility to see to the good stewardship of our justice system. It is also our responsibility to ensure that traditional independence, a principle that lies at the heart of that system, is safeguarded and preserved. These responsibilities go hand in hand. An independent court system, in which every Canadian has confidence that their rights will be protected and that the laws of our country will be enforced with honour and integrity, is the lifeblood of our constitutional democracy. Public confidence in the courts is essential to public confidence in the rule of law, and public confidence depends not only on the status and strength of our courts as institutions but on the integrity of the judges who occupy them.

I rise today to address a matter that engages this responsibility directly: the reform of Canada's system for investigating allegations of misconduct against federally appointed judges. It is tempting to take these observations for granted, but the reality is that they are the product of sustained vigilance and effort. Our institutions are strong because we take care to respect and nourish them. Our judiciary is strong because its members strive continuously to better serve Canadians and hold themselves to the most stringent standards of integrity, impartiality and professionalism.

Canada's superior court judiciary, which includes the judges of the Federal Court and Supreme Court of Canada as well the judges of all provincial and territorial superior courts, enjoys an unparalleled reputation for excellence. Allegations of misconduct against members of the federal judiciary are rare, and allegations so serious that removal from judicial office may be warranted are rarer still. Nevertheless, an effective process for reviewing those few allegations that arise constitutes an integral part of our justice system and helps to secure a cornerstone of the rule of law, which is public confidence in the integrity of justice.

According to our constitutional separation of powers, the judiciary itself must play a leading role in safeguarding the integrity of its members. Since 1971, the Judges Act has empowered its members, the chief justices and associate chief justices of Canada's superior courts, acting through the Canadian Judicial Council, or CJC, to receive and investigate complaints regarding the conduct of superior court judges and to report their findings and recommendations to the Minister of Justice. Only then does it fall to the minister to decide whether to seek removal of a judge. It is a decision that requires ratification by Parliament and an address to the Governor General under section 99(1) of the Constitution Act, 1867.

This power is tempered by the constitutional principle of judicial independence, and the security of tenure it affords to every superior court judge in the absence of their proven incapacity or misconduct.

Recently, the gap between these broader changes and the conduct process prescribed under the Judges Act has grown acute, bringing into jeopardy the public confidence that this process is meant to secure. Allowing the judiciary to regulate the conduct of their own members in this manner is entirely appropriate. It rightly safeguards the courts against interference by the political branches, ensuring that judges can protect the Constitution and the rights of Canadians without fear of reprisal.

While Canadians can thus have confidence in judicial leadership and control over investigations into judicial conduct, the legislative framework that enables this leadership has remained unchanged since 1971. This is despite vast changes to the legal and social landscapes in which the framework must operate.



The most serious judicial conduct cases, and those that attract the greatest public attention through the inquiry committee process, are notoriously long and costly, and are beset with parallel court challenges that take years to resolve. One of these is the length and cost of judicial conduct proceedings. As federal administrative tribunals, inquiry committees constituted by the CJC are reviewable first in the Federal Court, then by the Federal Court of Appeal and then possibly the Supreme Court of Canada.

• (1035)

This gives a judge who is subject to the process an opportunity to initiate as many as three stages of judicial review. This was seen recently in the case of former Justice Girouard.

Because the Judges Act lacks alternatives to full-scale divisional inquiries, all cases that raise valid concerns regardless of their gravity are forced into a procedurally complex, public and adversarial inquiry mechanism. At the conclusion of that mechanism, rather than allowing an inquiry committee to report directly to the minister, the Judges Act requires that a report and recommendation be submitted by the CJC as a whole.

The fact that judicial independence warrants the provision of publicly funded counsel to a judge has meant that in some cases, lawyers have collected millions of dollars in fees for launching exhaustive legal challenges that are ultimately proven to be without merit. The public is rightly outraged by this lack of efficiency and accountability in a process carried out in its name. The situation demands correction.

In other words, a body of at least 17 chief justices and associate chief justices from across Canada who have not had any direct involvement in the scrutiny of a given case must review the work of an inquiry committee and decide whether or not to recommend a judge's removal to the minister. This process is burdensome, inefficient and costly. Rather than having confidence that concerns about judicial conduct will receive a fair and effective resolution, Canadians see this process as duplicating features of procedural complexity and the adversarial model that can be so alienating in the justice system at large.

Another shortcoming of the current process is that the Judges Act empowers the CJC only to recommend for or against the removal of a judge. There are no lesser sanctions available. As a result, instances of misconduct may fail to be sanctioned because they do not warrant removal. There is also a risk that judges may be exposed to full-scale inquiry proceedings and to the stigma of having their removal publicly considered for conduct that is more sensibly addressed by alternative procedures and lesser sanctions.

The bill before us would thus comprehensively reform and modernize the judicial conduct process while honouring a fundamental commitment to fairness, independence and procedural rigour. Allow me to offer a brief summary emphasizing the objectives that the bill is intended to achieve.

First and foremost, the bill would streamline the judicial conduct process. It would replace the current availability of judicial review with an efficient internal appeal mechanism for judges whose conduct has been found lacking by a hearing or a review panel. In other words, rather than allowing judges to step outside the process and

### *Government Orders*

launch multiple court challenges that can interrupt and delay proceedings for years, the reformed process would include its own internal system of review to ensure the fairness and integrity of any findings made against a judge.

At the conclusion of the hearings process and before the report on removal is issued to the minister, both the judge whose conduct is being examined and the lawyer responsible for presenting the case against them would be entitled to appeal the outcome to an appeal panel. Rather than making CJC hearings subject to external review by multiple levels of court with the resulting costs and delays, the new process would include a fair, efficient and coherent appeal mechanism internal to the process itself.

A five-judge appeal panel would hold public hearings akin to those of an appellate court and have all the powers it needs to effectively address any shortcomings in the hearing panel's process. Once it has reached a decision, the only remaining recourse available to the judge and to presenting counsel would be to seek leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. Entrusting process oversight to the Supreme Court would reinforce public confidence and avoid lengthy judicial review proceedings through several levels of court.

These steps on appeal would be governed by strict deadlines, and any outcomes reached would form part of the report and the recommendations ultimately made to the Minister of Justice. In addition to giving confidence in the integrity of judicial conduct proceedings, these reforms are expected to reduce the length of proceedings by a matter of years.

This would avoid situations we have seen in the past where repeated appeals to the Federal Court have drawn the process out to obscene lengths.

• (1040)

The new process would also provide opportunities for early resolution of conduct complaints, avoiding the need in many instances to resort to adversarial public hearings. Rather than treating all cases as though they might warrant judicial removal, the CJC would be empowered to impose alternate remedies that were proportionate to the conduct at issue and better tailored to the public interest. The public at large would be better represented in these proceedings with the bill codifying a place for public representatives in the review of complaint processes.

[*Translation*]

For example, it may require a judge to take a continuing education course or apologize for the harm caused by their misconduct.

As far as conduct that warrants judicial removal is concerned, the bill requires that robust public hearings be held. The bill includes a role that will allow the presenting counsel to act as a public prosecutor in presenting a case against a judge. What is more, the judge will have ample opportunity to provide responses and present a defence with the assistance of their own lawyer.

*Government Orders*

If the hearing panel recommends the judge's removal, those recommendations will be sent to the Minister of Justice subject only to the disposition of the appeal. It will not be necessary for the entire Canadian Judicial Council to take part in the process.

[*English*]

These steps alone would render the judicial conduct process more flexible, timely and efficient without compromising fairness or investigative rigour. In doing so, it would also render the process less costly, more accessible and more accountable to Canadians.

Beyond mere process reforms, the bill would introduce a stable funding mechanism to support the CJC's role in investigating judicial conduct and one appropriate to the constitutionally imperative nature of this duty. It would also add safeguards requiring that the responsible officials establish guidelines consistent with government-wide standards for the administration of public funds, that the administration of those funds be subject to regular audits, and that the results of those audits be made available in public reports. This combination of financial accountability and transparency is critical in ensuring public confidence in the judicial conduct process, and it is overdue.

The provisions established in the appropriation clearly limit the categories of expenses it captures to those required to hold public hearings. Moreover, these would be subject to regulations made by the Governor in Council. Planned regulations include limiting how much lawyers involved in the process can bill, and limiting judges who are subject to proceedings to one principal lawyer. The bill also would require that the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs make guidelines affixing or providing for the determination of any fees, allowances and expenses that may be reimbursed and that are not specifically addressed by the regulations. These guidelines must be consistent with any Treasury Board directives pertaining to similar costs, and any difference must be publicly justified.

Finally, the bill would require that a mandatory independent review be completed every five years into all costs paid through the statutory appropriation. The independent reviewer would report to the Minister of Justice, the Commissioner and the chair of the CJC. The report would assess the efficacy of all applicable policies establishing financial controls and would be made public. Taken together, these measures would bring a new level of fiscal accountability to judicial conduct costs, while replacing the cumbersome and ad hoc funding approach currently in place.

All of these reforms were informed by an extensive process of public consultation. In addition to hearing from Canadians, academic experts and members of the legal profession, the government has had a sustained engagement with two judicial organizations in particular: the CJC and the Canadian Superior Courts Judges Association.

• (1045)

The government is deeply grateful for the commitment of these organizations to supporting reform and sharing their perspectives and expertise in a spirit of respectful collaboration with officials from the Department of Justice Canada. I know that passage of these reforms is of the highest priority to judicial leaders, and the

government is committed to answering their rightful requests for legislation that would support them in fulfilling their critical role.

I will conclude simply by recommending to my colleagues that we seize the opportunity to renew an institution that is vital to the trust that Canadians place in their justice system. I am convinced that Canada has the strongest justice system in the world, in no small part because we have the most exceptional and committed judiciary in the world. That reality is not inevitable, but it is the result of our sustained commitment and effort to keeping our institutions healthy and keeping our judiciary independent and strong.

Let us renew these commitments again with the passage of this legislation. I look forward to our deliberation and debate.

**Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I listened intently to the parliamentary secretary's speech, but I am concerned with the timing. This bill has sat dormant for so long and is now being brought forward just before we go into summer. It brings me to another issue. We cannot talk about the judicial process or the justice system without speaking about victims and the unique place they have. They are often overlooked, I am afraid.

I would like the parliamentary secretary to comment on the fact that the position of victims ombudsman has remained vacant for far too long. It was supposed to be filled back in October. I wonder if he could comment on the process for that and why it has not been filled to date.

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague. I work with him at the justice committee and always appreciate his interventions, but I am a little perplexed as to why we are not talking about the bill itself and are speaking about issues that are ancillary to the bill.

With respect to the bill itself, there is a process allowing different parties to be involved in the process. Ours is an outdated way of reviewing judges' conduct. It is 51 years old, to be exact. We look forward to a proper debate on this. We introduced this bill back in December of last year, and obviously our legislative calendar has been extensive. It has included the passage of Bill C-5, which we were able to get through yesterday. We are very much committed to moving this bill forward.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ):** Madam Speaker, everyone has heard about the case of Justice Girouard, who committed wrongdoing two weeks before his appointment in 2010. After all the appeals, his sanctions process took 10 years. I am wondering if the timeline could be tightened up drastically through the changes proposed by the Bill C-9. That would improve public confidence in the justice system.

*Government Orders*

I would also like to know whether my hon. colleague believes that the federal government will be able to make significant savings in this process, which is often too long and complex and, at times, undermines the confidence of Quebecers and Canadians in the justice system.

[English]

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree:** Madam Speaker, I fully agree with my colleague. We have heard from the Canadian Judicial Council about the delays, and we have heard the frustration from the public about the delays. One of the things this bill tries to do is streamline the process, make it more efficient and make it more cost-effective to ensure justice is served in a timely manner.

We have an incredible justice system and incredible judiciary, but for the odd time when there is a lapse, it is important to have continued public confidence in our system. We are grateful for the support of my friend opposite.

• (1050)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for setting out so clearly the legislation before us. It has obviously been delayed, and we obviously need to update the Canadian Judicial Council. I hope he will not mind if I stray from what the bill would do and ask if the government would be prepared to expand it to what judges do after they retire.

I am personally very concerned that Supreme Court of Canada judges, upon retirement, are available for hire to private sector lobby interests, and that the advice they provide is bought and paid for. I think of those who have worked for SNC-Lavalin, as an example. They really should be precluded from taking private sector work after leaving the bench.

I wonder if the hon. parliamentary secretary has heard of any current discussions of whether that might be a good idea.

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree:** Madam Speaker, I look forward to speaking to my colleague about this issue further. However, what she has cited is not the subject of this particular bill. This bill is focused on the reform of the complaints process to make sure that it is fair, it is efficient, it is expedient and it is cost-effective. Of course, for any other issues relating to judges, I look forward to talking to any member about their concerns, and I will take them back to the minister.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for once again laying out what the bill intends to do.

I found it quite interesting that the first question he got from the Conservatives was about timing and why it is taking so long, as though the Conservatives have not been here to witness the antics they have been up to for the last five or six months. Our fall economic statement did not get voted on until late spring because of Conservative shenanigans. I am pretty certain that even if the Conservatives completely agreed with every part of this bill, they would still not let it pass through the House for no reason other than just to be obstructive.

The member is the parliamentary secretary for a ministry that has introduced a lot of legislation in the last few months. I wonder if he can comment a bit on the frustration that he sees with respect to moving legislation through the House.

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree:** Madam Speaker, I ran on a platform of hope and hard work, and we have been working very hard with a great deal of optimism to bring forward legislation.

While I concur with my friend on the many obstructionist tactics of the opposition, I do want to say that there were moments when we came together. The motion on amendments to the Saskatchewan Act is an example of that, and I congratulate my friend opposite.

I believe this is a bill that we can all come together on and get passed right away.

**Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I notice that the two Liberals who have gotten up in the House to speak about the bill and ask questions have resiled from a discussion about victims. My colleague for Fundy Royal specifically asked a question on how victims are implicated by the bill and how they would benefit from an improved complaints process. However, all they did, both the parliamentary secretary and my colleague from Kingston and the Islands, was deflect. They do not want to talk about victims; they want to talk about something else.

Could the hon. member please explain to the House how victims will benefit from this legislation? At the end of the day, we are talking about judges, the ones who render judgment in many criminal cases across this country, and it is the victims of crime who are often left hanging and fall through the cracks.

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate my friend's question, and I want to remind him that the Conservative Party does not have exclusivity on protecting victims. I think all of us in the House absolutely have a responsibility there, and we are very much committed to ensuring that the voices of those who are particularly impacted are heard.

Bill C-9 would allow for complaints to come forward, including from victims and other actors within the overall justice system. The bill would make it easier for these complaints to go through the process so they will not have to wait seven, eight or 10 years. They would be dealt with expeditiously. The levels of appeal that are available currently would be curtailed so that the process is more efficient.

I fundamentally believe that this would enhance the confidence that Canadians have, including victims, in coming forward with complaints. What we want to do is establish the space for people to come forward and have confidence that they can complain and still get a fair hearing in a timely manner.

*Government Orders*

• (1055)

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, on the question of timing, I have to note that one thing that helps governments accomplish their legislative priorities is time. In the last Parliament, the Prime Minister chose to call an election needlessly when all the opposition parties pledged not to cause an election. I wonder how these priorities factor into the decision-making of the government, and how the Liberals can call it a priority when they showed that they were so clearly willing to put what they thought were their partisan interests ahead of the priorities in the bill.

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree:** Madam Speaker, the Minister of Justice has brought forward a number of pieces of legislation, including Bill C-5, which passed yesterday. A motion on the Saskatchewan Act was passed several months ago. We have Bill C-9 too, which is currently in the works.

We will continue to bring forward all of our priorities. We believe this bill is a priority and we want to get it passed.

**Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC):** Madam Speaker, as we approach the final sitting days of the House before it rises, this is likely my last opportunity to speak before we all return to our ridings for the summer months. In light of this, I would like to start off my remarks today by acknowledging the great people of my riding of Fundy Royal, whom I am honoured to represent here in this 44th Parliament.

On the topic at hand, we are here today to discuss Bill C-9, an act to amend the Judges Act. I will begin by going over a bit of a summary of the bill.

The legislation would amend the Judges Act to replace the process through which the conduct of federally appointed judges is reviewed by the Canadian Judicial Council. It would establish a new process for reviewing allegations of misconduct that are not serious enough to warrant a judge's removal from office and would make changes to the process by which recommendations regarding removal from office can be made to the Minister of Justice. As with the provisions it replaces, this new process would also apply to persons, other than judges, who are appointed under an act of Parliament to hold office during good behaviour.

In short, the objective of the legislation is to update the Judges Act to strengthen the judicial complaints process. The existing process was established in 1971, so it is due for a refresh. We can all agree that strengthening and increasing confidence in the judicial system, and taking action to better respond to complaints that it may receive from Canadians, are good things. Canadians are really depending on this Parliament to strengthen our judicial system.

As it stands, the judicial system in Canada has been weakened by COVID delays and a lack of resources for victims in particular, like, as I have mentioned, the vacant victims ombudsman position. There really is no excuse today for that when we see so many stories ripped from the headlines that impact Canadian victims. We also see legislation like the bill the parliamentary secretary just mentioned, Bill C-5. The victims we have talked to, whom we have seen and heard from at committee, are concerned about that bill and its predecessor bill, Bill C-22. The victims ombudsman had a lot to say about it.

I would love the benefit of hearing from a victims ombudsman, except we do not have one. We were supposed to have that position filled back in October, so for many, many months it has been vacant. That is completely unacceptable, not only for victims and their families but also for all Canadians. I should note that when the position of the federal ombudsman for federal offenders in our federal prison system became vacant, it was filled the next day. We can see where the government's priorities are.

Bill C-9 was originally introduced in the Senate as Bill S-5 on May 25, 2021. The previous version of the bill did not complete second reading. We heard commentary across the way about delays, with some asking why we are talking about delays. Why was that bill not passed? Well, the Prime Minister called his snap pandemic election in August 2021. That is what happened with that version of the bill.

The bill was reintroduced in the Senate last year as Bill S-3, but the government had an apparent change of heart, dropping Bill S-3 from the Senate Order Paper in December of 2021 and introducing that bill in the House of Commons as Bill C-9. That is where it has languished for months until today, just days before we go into our summer recess.

The bill would modify the existing judicial review process by establishing a process for complaints serious enough to warrant removal from office, and another process for offences that would warrant sanctions other than removal, such as counselling, continuing education and reprimands. Currently, if misconduct is less serious, a single member of the Canadian Judicial Council who conducts the initial review may negotiate with a judge for an appropriate remedy.

It may be helpful at this point to provide a bit of background on the Canadian Judicial Council, what it does and who its members are.

Established by Parliament in 1971, the Canadian Judicial Council is mandated to "promote the efficiency, uniformity, and to improve the quality of judicial services in all superior courts in Canada." Through this mandate, the Canadian Judicial Council presides over the judicial complaints process.

• (1100)

The Canadian Judicial Council is made up of 41 members and is led by the current Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, the Right Hon. Richard Wagner, who is chairperson of the council. The membership is made up of chief justices and associate chief justices of the Canadian provincial and federal superior courts. The goal of the members is to improve consistency in the administration of justice before the courts and the quality of services in Canada's superior courts.

*Government Orders*

Returning back to the bill itself, the reasons a judge could be removed from office are laid out. These include infirmity, misconduct, failure in the due execution of judicial office and “the judge [being] in a position that a reasonable, fair-minded and informed observer would consider to be incompatible with the due execution of judicial office.” A screening officer can dismiss complaints should they seem frivolous or improper, rather than referring to them to the review panel. A complaint that alleges sexual harassment or discrimination may not be dismissed. The full screening criteria will be published by the Canadian Judicial Council.

The minister or Attorney General may themselves request the Canadian Judicial Council establish a full hearing panel to determine whether the removal from the office of a superior court judge is justified. The Canadian Judicial Council is to submit a report within three months after the end of each calendar year with respect to the number of complaints received and the actions taken. The intention of this bill, as stated by the government, is to streamline the process for more serious complaints for which removal from the bench could be an outcome.

As I mentioned earlier, these amendments would also address the current shortcomings of the process by imposing mandatory sanctions on a judge when a complaint of misconduct is found to be justified but not to be serious enough to warrant removal from office. Again, such sanctions could include counselling, continuing education and reprimands. In the name of transparency, this legislation would require that the Canadian Judicial Council include the number of complaints received and how they were resolved in its annual public report.

To clarify, the Canadian Judicial Council’s process applies only to federally appointed judges, which are the judges of the Supreme Court of Canada and the federal courts, the provincial and territorial superior trial courts and the provincial and territorial courts of appeal. The provinces and territories are responsible for reviewing the conduct of the judges at the provincial-territorial trial court level, who are also provincially appointed.

Since its inception in 1971, the Canadian Judicial Council has completed inquiries into eight complaints considered serious enough that they could warrant a judge’s removal from the bench. Four of them, in fact, did result in recommendations for removal. A ninth inquiry is under way, but has faced delays due to public health restrictions imposed by the Province of Quebec, such as curfew and indoor capacity limits.

Under the proposed new process laid out in Bill C-9, the Canadian Judicial Council would continue to preside over the judicial complaints process, which would start with a three-person review panel deciding to either investigate a complaint of misconduct or, if the complaint is serious enough that it might warrant removal from the bench, refer it to a separate five-person hearing panel. If appropriate, a three-person review panel made up of a Canadian Judicial Council member, a judge and a layperson could impose such sanctions as public apologies or courses of continuing education. If warranted, a five-person hearing panel made up of two Canadian Judicial Council members, a judge, a lawyer and a layperson could, after holding a public hearing, recommend removal from the bench to the Minister of Justice.

Judges who face removal from the bench would have access to an appeal panel made up of three Canadian Judicial Council members and two judges and finally to the Supreme Court of Canada, should the court agree to hear the appeal.

I know that sounded very convoluted and lengthy, but believe it or not, this would actually streamline the current process for court review of council decisions, which currently involves judicial review by two additional levels of court, those being the Federal Court and the Federal Court of Appeal, before a judge can ask the Supreme Court to hear the case.

The amendments would provide for a funding mechanism for the new process. The financial impact of the review process has been raised by a number of stakeholders. I want to encourage the Liberal government to take its fiscal responsibility to taxpayers into consideration with all government policies, but this bill is as good a start as any.

• (1105)

I would like to take a moment to point out that we have the former leader of the Conservative Party to thank for paving the way to having this bill before the House of Commons today. The Hon. Rona Ambrose introduced her private member’s bill, Bill C-337, in 2017. This legislation would require the Canadian judiciary to produce a report every year that detailed how many judges had completed training in sexual assault law and how many cases were heard by judges who had not been trained, as well as a description of the courses that were taken. It would also require any lawyer applying for a position in the judiciary to have first completed sexual assault case training and education. Last, it would result in a greater number of written decisions from judges presiding over sexual assault trials, thus providing improved transparency for Canadians seeking justice.

The original premise of Bill C-337 was in response to a complaint about the behaviour of a federal judge who was presiding over a case of sexual assault in 2014. The Canadian Judicial Council of which we speak today launched an investigation into the behaviour of that judge. Ultimately, in March 2017, the Canadian Judicial Council sent a letter to the federal Minister of Justice recommending that this judge be removed from the bench, and the minister accepted the recommendation.

The bill before us today works to expedite and facilitate the complaints process so that extreme cases like the one I just referenced can be fully and properly reviewed without causing too much disruption in terms of time, costs and delays in processing smaller but still important complaints.

Earlier this year, the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights received correspondence from the Canadian Bar Association stating its support for the legislation as written in Bill C-9. In part, its letter reads as follows:

### *Government Orders*

The CBA commented on the state of the judicial discipline process in its 2014 submission to the Canadian Judicial Council (CJC). On the subject of judicial discipline proceedings, our 16 recommendations were to ensure that the objectives of balancing the independence of the judiciary and the public's confidence in the administration of justice were respected in the process. The CJC and Justice Canada responded with its own reports, which culminated in the present amendments to the Judges Act proposed by the Minister of Justice.

The letter from the Canadian Bar Association goes on to say:

In the view of the CBA Subcommittee, Bill C-9 strikes a fair balance between the right to procedural fairness and public confidence in the integrity of the justice system with the discipline of judges who form the core of that system. The proposed amendments enhance the accountability of judges, builds transparency, and creates cost-efficiencies in the process for handling complaints against members of the Bench.

I would like to pause here briefly just to say that at a moment like this, looking at a bill like this, it seems to me that it would be a very good time to have a federal ombudsman for victims of crime to hear the perspective on how the judicial complaints process is or is not currently working and how this bill would or would not be able to meet those challenges or rectify those concerns.

In testimony given to the justice committee on June 3, 2021, the federal ombudsman for victims of crime at that time raised what she described as a "most critical" issue, which was the legal recourse or remedy that victims have if their rights are violated.

She stated:

Currently, victims do not have a way to enforce the rights given to them in law; they only have a right to make a complaint to various agencies. This means that victims have to rely on the goodwill of criminal justice officials and corrections officials to give effect to or implement their statutory rights under the bill. This means victims count on police, Crown prosecutors, courts, review boards, corrections officials and parole boards to deliver, uphold and respect their rights.

But my office continues to receive complaints from victims that are common across all jurisdictions in Canada. Victims report to us that they are not consistently provided information about their rights or how to exercise them, they feel overlooked in all of the processes, and they have no recourse when officials don't respect their rights.

While the bill we are discussing today is, as I said earlier, a step in the right direction, there is certainly more work that needs to be done to make sure our justice system in Canada works for everyone who comes into contact with it, and I will add especially victims. One way this can be achieved is by immediately filling the position of federal ombudsman for victims of crime, which has now been vacant for nine months. There is absolutely no excuse for this position to have remained vacant for nine months when other positions are filled immediately, including, as I mentioned earlier, the position of ombudsman for those who are in our federal prisons.

• (1110)

By contrast, as I was mentioning, when the offenders ombudsman position became vacant, the Liberal government filled it the very next day, as it should have been. It should be filled right away, but so should the position of the ombudsman for victims of crime.

In 2021, the Canadian Judicial Council published "Ethical Principles for Judges". I would like to reference excerpts from this publication to add some context into the role and duty of the judiciary.

They read as follows:

An independent and impartial judiciary is the right of all and constitutes a fundamental pillar of democratic governance, the rule of law and justice in Canada....

Today, judges' work includes case management, settlement conferences, judicial mediation, and frequent interaction with self-represented litigants. These responsibilities invite further consideration with respect to ethical guidance. In the same manner, the digital age, the phenomenon of social media, the importance of professional development for judges and the transition to post-judicial roles all raise ethical issues that were not fully considered twenty years ago. Judges are expected to be alert to the history, experience and circumstances of Canada's Indigenous peoples, and to the diversity of cultures and communities that make up this country. In this spirit, the judiciary is now more actively involved with the wider public, both to enhance public confidence and to expand its own knowledge of the diversity of human experiences in Canada today.

As was just referenced, social context and society overall change over time, and critical institutions like the justice system must grow to reflect these changes. Much of the time, this simply requires education on emerging issues or a more updated perspective on older issues.

In order to grow, there is a crucial partnership that must be respected between the judiciary and Parliament. While the Parliament and the courts are separate entities, there is a back-and-forth conversation between the two that is essential to our democracy and our judiciary. We have recently seen examples in which that conversation, unfortunately, was desperately lacking. On Friday, May 27, of this year, the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the punishment of life without parole in cases concerning mass murderers.

When confronted on the impact of the Supreme Court's ruling, the Liberal government is determined to stick to their talking points by telling Parliament and concerned Canadians that we should not worry about mass killers actually receiving parole, because that possible outcome is extremely rare. What that actually means is that this government is comfortable putting these families through a revictimizing, retraumatizing parole process, even though, at the end of the day, it is essentially all for show because, according to the government, we just need to trust that a mass killer will not receive parole anyway.

In the Supreme Court of Canada's ruling, the decision stated, "A life sentence without a realistic possibility of parole presupposes the offender is beyond redemption and cannot be rehabilitated. This is degrading in nature and incompatible with human dignity. It amounts to cruel and unusual punishment."

What the court is saying here is that keeping mass killers behind bars for the number of years that a judge has already decided would adequately reflect the gravity of their crimes amounts to "cruel and unusual punishment". Personally, I and many others feel and believe that having the victims' families endure a parole hearing every two years for the rest of their lives is the real cruel and unusual punishment, and the federal government has a duty and a responsibility to respond to the court's decision, something that it has not done and has shown no inclination to do.

*Government Orders*

Essentially, the Supreme Court also ruled on May 13 that one can drink one's way out of a serious crime. We have called on the government to respond to that as well, and we look forward to debate on the response that needs to be coming. Just because the Supreme Court has made these rulings does not mean that this is the end of the road. What it means is that there is a discussion and a dialogue that has to take place, and now the ball is in our court. It is for us to deal with these decisions in Parliament. The Liberals can now create legislation that responds to the Supreme Court's decisions, and this legislation can be used to make sure that victims, survivors and their families can live in a country where they are equally protected and respected by our justice system.

Bill C-9, an act to amend the Judges Act, is a step in the right direction. I will note that there is much, much more to be done to make sure that the justice system is fair and balanced for all.

• (1115)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I appreciated my colleague's review of what he sees in Bill C-9, but I want to take this opportunity to ask him more about victims' rights. I was very much honoured to work with our former ombudsman for victims' rights, Sue O'Sullivan. We worked together in this place to try to improve the victims' rights bill. It fell short then. Not only do I think we need to appoint a new ombudsman for victims' rights, but we need to look at what we can do to make our own victims' rights code more robust.

I wonder if the hon. member for Fundy Royal has studied what they did in California with what is called Marsy's Law, which includes the kind of provisions we need here in Canada to protect victims.

**Hon. Rob Moore:** Madam Speaker, I agree with the hon. member wholeheartedly that we need to put more emphasis on victims. What is really troubling is that in past versions of this bill and past versions of Bill C-5, we had commentary from the office of the victims ombudsman. It is important for us to have someone who speaks for victims. It should not be up to victims only to speak for themselves.

Unfortunately, in the last nine months that voice, which is so important, has not been there to speak to this, other legislation, or Supreme Court of Canada decisions, all of which greatly impact victims and their families, and the position remains vacant. I am urgently calling, and have been for months now, on the government to fill the position of ombudsman for victims of crime.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Fundy Royal for his speech. My question also addresses victims, because he talked a lot about victims in his speech. I want to talk about the new provisions that allow the review panel to impose certain sanctions for less serious offences—continuing education and therapy, for example—which is an improvement over the previous bill. However, there is no opportunity for the victim to participate in the choice of sanctions. The bill indicates that the judge involved has consent over certain sanctions, but there is no mention of the victims.

Could this be an improvement to the bill?

• (1120)

[*English*]

**Hon. Rob Moore:** Madam Speaker, I think any time we can incorporate more views of victims and the impact of offences or misconduct on the victim, we absolutely should. That was the commentary of the ombudsman for victims of crime, where she said that, too often, no one is looking out for victims and their voice is not heard during the process. We understand there are many issues that are paramount for victims right now. Ironically, I am citing someone whose position remains vacant, and that is the ombudsman for victims of crime.

I am pleased to work with my hon. colleague on strengthening this bill and others, and the role that victims play in our processes.

**Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to profoundly thank the hon. member for Fundy Royal for placing victims at the heart of his intervention. I listened very carefully to the speech that the parliamentary secretary to the Liberal Minister of Justice gave, and I do not believe the word “victim” was ever mentioned. My colleague here on the Conservative side, of course, made victims the linchpin of his comments.

I would ask him to expand on the practical impact that this legislation, if it is improved at committee, could have on the plight of future victims.

**Hon. Rob Moore:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his steadfast support for victims.

It is always concerning to me. I currently sit on the justice committee and when we discuss a bill, for example Bill C-5, which we voted on this week, often the word “victim” does not come up in the conversation whatsoever. It is often said that justice delayed is justice denied, so one avenue of improvement with this bill is streamlining the process for offences that do not warrant removal from the bench so that we would have an outcome and have an impact on the judge who is the subject of the complaint sooner rather than later, as is currently the case with a too protracted process.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Madam Speaker, I have already agreed with my colleague from Fundy Royal that we need to deal more expeditiously with the vacancy for the ombudsman for victims' rights. However, in looking at this legislation, one must remember that of course judges in this country do not solely judge criminal cases. Obviously, the areas of law that end up before a judiciary are everything from contract law, environmental law and crimes that involve actual violence to property law, intellectual property rights and trade law. We could go on forever. These disputes go into many different areas of the life of a country.

*Government Orders*

Therefore, I would ask the member how he feels about these improvements and modernization of the Canadian Judicial Council.

**Hon. Rob Moore:** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague is quite right. There are many different judges and many different types of law in the cases that they are presiding over. However, the fact is that there needs to be a robust complaints process in place. Misconduct could take place both inside and outside of the courtroom and is not necessarily confined, as the member mentioned, to criminal cases.

We look to this bill as an improvement on the existing process, particularly for offences that do not warrant removal but warrant some type of sanction that could include training or otherwise. As I mentioned, justice delayed is justice denied, so we look at having a streamlined process as an improvement, but by no means is this the end of the conversation. As has come up many times now in questions and answers, victims have to play a more prominent role, both in this and throughout our criminal justice system.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for bringing this forward. As a former Canadian Bar Association president and long-time lawyer before I came to this place, I know that one of the things we always fought for and spoke up for was independence of the judiciary. That is something that is integral to confidence in our justice system. However, in today's world, when all judgments that are made public are scrutinized by the public and sometimes hard to explain, it seems to me that a process for looking at the conduct of judges that would not necessarily meet the threshold of Judicial Council review makes some sense.

I am interested in my colleague's thoughts on how this bill interacts with our common support for independence of the judiciary.

• (1125)

**Hon. Rob Moore:** Madam Speaker, it was a pleasure to serve with my hon. colleague for some time on the justice committee. She brings a wealth of experience in this and other areas.

It is important. This legislation came in back in the 1970s. There are always improvements that can be made to the process, particularly when dealing with situations that do not warrant removal. As my hon. colleague has rightly said, the independence of the judiciary is so important. It underpins the process. Without an independent judiciary, we do not have proper rule of law in our country. Therefore, we respect that judicial independence, but we also know that there have to be robust provisions in place when there are actual cases of misconduct, rare as they may be.

This bill would streamline that process, particularly dealing with situations that do not warrant removal from the bench. Obviously, removal from the bench, for a judge, is the ultimate sanction. As I mentioned in my speech, it has been applied very rarely, but there are other instances where there needs to be a sanction for misconduct, and this bill would streamline that process. It is why we are supporting the bill, but we are also open to making amendments that would improve it and improve the role of victims in the process.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Madam Speaker, with your permission and permission from my colleagues, I would like to share my time with my colleague, the member for Saint-Jean.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Does the hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord have the consent of the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Madam Speaker, for years, people have been calling for reforms of the process for reviewing allegations of judicial misconduct, whether the review results in a removal or not. This is not the first time that such a bill has been introduced in the House. The Judicial Council itself has called for this. If we can pass this legislation, it will benefit all stakeholders in the judicial system and all Quebecers and Canadians. The judicial system is the backbone of any society that wants to live, thrive and evolve in peace. Without a judicial system, it would be total anarchy, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

No one wants to abolish the courts. Everyone wants to be able to have faith that the courts will resolve our disputes. Ideally, it would resolve all of them, and for that to happen, we must appoint judges with spotless records in terms of credibility and professionalism. The first step is to ensure that the appointment process is effective and non-partisan. I will come back to this.

We must also ensure that once a judge is appointed, they are consistently subject to ethical conduct rules that are acceptable to everyone involved. Finally, we must ensure that, in cases of misconduct, there is a reliable and effective process for reviewing and, where appropriate, fairly sanctioning the conduct of the party at fault.

We have to admit that the review process in place is among the best in the world. We are not starting from scratch, and that is a good thing. Having myself participated in discussions with bar associations in other jurisdictions in Europe and elsewhere, I can say that what we have here in Quebec and Canada is the envy of many other democratic societies.

That being said, recent examples have shown that we need to think about a new and improved process that would prevent abuses. Having a process that takes years before all reviews and appeals have been exhausted, while the principal continues to receive a salary and benefits—often including a generous pension fund—and these costs are assumed by the public, certainly does not help boost confidence in the judicial system.

Of course, it is just as important that judges who are the subject of a complaint can express their point of view, defend themselves and exercise their rights just like any other citizen. The process needs to be fair and should not unduly favour the person who is guilty of misconduct and seeks to abuse the system. In this respect, Bill C-9 meets our expectations and should receive our support, as well as that of all Canadians. I am happy about this and even hopeful that we will now tackle the other key process, judicial appointments.



It would be nice to see the government finally set partisan politics aside when appointing new judges.

Does the Liberalist the government is so fond of still have a place in the selection process? We have talked about this many times in the House. We will have to talk more.

Could the final selection from the short list be done by a committee made up of a representative from each of the recognized parties? Could representatives of the public or professional bodies also take part? That is certainly something to think about.

In my opinion, we are ready for this review process. The Bloc Québécois has been calling for it for a long time, and we will continue to do so. Bill C-9 may set the stage for us to seriously consider it. Will the Minister of Justice be bold enough to propose it? I hope so. If he does, I can assure him right now of our full co-operation.

Until then, let us hope that the reform of the complaints review process proposed in Bill C-9 can build public trust in our judicial system.

• (1130)

I said “our judicial system” because we must never forget that the judicial system belongs to the people and must be accountable to the people. We are merely the ones responsible for ensuring the system is effective.

I will not rehash here the process that led to the relatively recent resignation of a Superior Court justice for whom the review process, given the many appeals and challenges against him, apparently had no hope of ending before he was assured the monetary benefits of his office. However, we must recognize that we cannot allow this heinous impression of non-accountability and dishonesty persist, whether it is well-founded or not. We need to assume our responsibilities and make sure that the public never doubts the credibility, goodwill and effectiveness of our courts.

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord for his speech.

I would like to comment on the second part of his speech on the appointment process. As we discuss Bill C-9 today, what our colleagues have often pointed out is both the importance of maintaining the separation between the judiciary, the executive and the legislative powers and the importance of having a system the public can trust. It seems to me that these two principles are especially pertinent to the appointment of judges.

Does my colleague not think that this is the cornerstone of the more than necessary review of the appointment process?

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her question. I totally agree with her.

Indeed, it takes both. We need effective rules of conduct that inspire confidence, a process for reviewing these rules that is just as effective, and an appointment process. All of this must be completely independent of the executive and legislative branches.

In fact, our work is limited to implementing the process, the selection committees and the review panels. That is our job, but once

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that is done, the system must remain entirely non-partisan. Political partisanship must never influence the appointment of a judge or the sanctions for a judge’s misconduct.

In addition, the review process is also important in ensuring that no unfounded complaints prevent a judge from sitting. This process is essential, and must be absolutely non-partisan.

• (1135)

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his excellent speech. I hope he agrees that we need to pass this bill so that we can spend more time resolving other problems in our judicial system, particularly systemic racism and the appointment of judges.

What does he think are the biggest problems in our judicial system?

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her question. Before answering, I would like to congratulate her for making the effort to ask the question in French. I know that it was not easy, and I want her to know that I am very thankful for the effort. It is a mark of respect, and I sincerely thank her.

I was so focused on her language efforts that I forgot her question. Ha, ha!

I do agree that we need to vote in favour of Bill C-9. The appointment process must also be impartial, and it needs a review. That is our job, and we owe it to voters and the entire population to make sure our justice system is non-partisan, effective, professional and reliable.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the seat for the office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime has been vacant since last October. Does the member have any thoughts on that?

When we consider legislation such as this, and on the overall topic, it is really important that we consider victims. Could the member comment on that?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Madam Speaker, thanks to my colleague, I remember the previous question now. I would say that the biggest challenge is non-partisanship.

Anyway, to answer the question from my colleague from Kelowna—Lake Country, I would say that we do need to appoint an ombudsman. An ombudsman is the guardian and representative of the people. He or she monitors the work of various organizations. It is therefore important. The position is vacant and should be filled. I hope it will be filled soon.

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Once again, I must say that, fortunately or unfortunately, I am an eternal optimist, and I always tend to trust people. Sometimes I am disappointed, but until then, I will place my trust in the current government. I will, however, say that it needs to hurry up, because this is urgent. We need to appoint an ombudsman, review the appointment process and respond to what the public is asking for so that we can finally say “mission accomplished”.

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to stand this morning to discuss Bill C-9.

While I was reading the bill, I had a bit of *déjà vu*. I remember driving on the 417 in the spring while listening to the speeches in the House on Bill S-5, which was sponsored by Senator Dalphond, for whom I have tremendous respect. I still call him “Your Honour”.

I know that Bill S-5 died on the Order Paper because of the election. The fact that I was supposed to discuss Bill C-9 in the spring but did not get a chance to shows that we may be a bit behind on the legislative agenda. That is the only criticism I will offer today. As for the rest, I am highly satisfied at least with the spirit of the bill we are studying, as is the Canadian Judicial Council, which strongly supports it.

We are talking about it today. One of the pillars or cornerstones of the bill is the importance of the separation of powers between the legislative, judicial and executive branches. This has been the case since 1971, when the Canadian Judicial Council was created and made responsible for reviewing complaints. This is maintained in Bill C-9.

To ensure the separation of powers, the ability to remove judges is also maintained, as originally provided for in section 99(1) of the Constitution Act, 1867, which states that “the judges of the superior courts shall hold office during good behaviour, but shall be removable by the Governor General on address of the Senate and House of Commons”.

If we relied specifically on this principle, it might appear as though the legislative branch and the executive branch, meaning us here in Parliament, had power over the removal of judges. However, since 1971, the complaint review process has been the responsibility of the Canadian Judicial Council, which must issue recommendations to the Minister of Justice in order for the removal to take place. This complaint review process has been around for over 50 years.

With respect to what has been done since 1971, the improvements in Bill C-9 meet certain needs. In this case, better is not the enemy of good. We tend to think that if something is working reasonably well, we should not necessarily seek perfection. I think that this used to apply in this case.

There are three essential issues that the bill resolves. The first is that the current process is extremely long. Given the numerous opportunities to file for appeals and judicial reviews during the process, it can take a very long time to review a complaint. My colleagues mentioned that. Unfortunately, we saw proof of this with a Superior Court judge whose name I will not mention, but whose review process lasted from 2012 to 2021. If I remember correctly, the decision was handed down in 2021.

As my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord mentioned, the problem is that, during that whole time, the judge continues to receive their salary and benefits and contribute to their pension. That in itself can be an incentive to come up with endless stalling tactics and draw the process out in order to keep the financial benefits.

This bill makes certain changes. In particular, it modifies the process to include the creation of an appeal panel, the final body before the Supreme Court to which a judge who is at fault can apply. This eliminates the need to go through the Superior Court and the Court of Appeal to reach the Supreme Court, assuming it even agrees to hear the appeal. The bill streamlines the process.

As my colleagues mentioned, under the current version of the act, judges still receive their salary and benefits. Clause 126(1) of the new act remedies that situation. It states, and I quote:

For the purposes of calculating an annuity under Part I, if a full hearing panel decides that the removal from office of a judge who is the subject of a complaint is justified, the day after the day on which the judge is given notice of the full hearing panel’s decision is the day to be used to determine the number of years the judge has been in judicial office and the salary annexed to the office held by the judge at the time of his or her resignation, removal or attaining the age of retirement unless (a) the decision is set aside by a decision of the Supreme Court of Canada, or by the decision of an appeal panel if the appeal panel’s decision is final; (b) the Minister’s response under subsection 140(1) provides that no action is to be taken to remove the judge from office; or (c) the matter of removal of the judge from office is put to one or both Houses of Parliament and is rejected by either of them.

● (1140)

As a result, a judge who is found to be at fault will not receive a salary during that period.

Another problem with the previous version of the bill was that there were no half-measures for lesser offences, so to speak. It was all black or white. The panel’s only options were to issue a recommendation for removal or to not issue one. The only middle ground involved negotiating some sort of disciplinary action with the judge on a case-by-case basis. However, judges were quite free to say that they did not want any part in that process because it was not mandatory.

This bill remedies that situation. As soon as a complaint, which can be based on written submissions to the panel, has been examined, the panel can impose redress measures in cases where the reason for the complaint does not constitute grounds for removal.

The review panel can order the judge, for example, to take professional development courses or require him to apologize. In some cases, this can help more effectively remedy a situation when the judge is open to having certain sanctions apply. This may be sufficient, in certain cases, to avoid continuing with a full complaint process and public hearing, which could be long and expensive.

One of the options in the new bill is for the council to issue a private or public expression of concern. There is a certain transparency in the process. The council can issue a private or public warning, a private or public reprimand or order the judge to apologize. As I mentioned in my question to the member for Fundy Royal, the only thing that is a little unusual is one of the measures in clause 102, as follows:

(g) with the consent of the judge, take any other action that the panel considers appropriate in the circumstances.

Perhaps there are questions that should be asked when the bill is referred to a committee for study after second reading, if it gets to that stage, which should not be a problem. For example, why is the judge's consent required? Why do the victims have no say in choosing the sanction to be applied for an offence that is less serious than one that might lead to removal from office?

Another thing the bill deals with is how onerous the process is. Previously, the Canadian Judicial Council itself had to make a recommendation to the minister to have a judge removed. The way it was set up, there was one panel that reviewed the case and another panel that, if it received the complaint, had to pass it on to the Canadian Judicial Council itself. The whole thing involved about 17 chief justices or associate chief justices from courts that were not already part of the process. It diverted energy from solving other problems in the courts, and the process did not necessarily help ensure procedural fairness for judges. This bill fixes that. The review panel itself will now be able to make a recommendation to the minister to relieve a judge of her or his duties. This kind of short-circuits a process that was not necessary and did not guarantee procedural fairness.

All these factors significantly improve the process. However, as my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord explained, this is not the only way to improve people's perception that the justice system is impartial and create a clear separation between the legislative, executive and judicial branches.

I think we also need to look at updating the judicial appointment process. The Bloc Québécois has called for this numerous times by suggesting things like creating a special all-party committee tasked with recommending a new selection process. I have not lost hope. Like my colleague, I believe that human nature is fundamentally good and is capable of doing good things, although I too am sometimes disappointed. Still, I am always willing to work with anyone who is equally willing, and I encourage the government to introduce a bill to review the appointment process.

• (1145)

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her great speech.

I think we all agree on this bill. It is a good bill, and it is important.

In the spirit of co-operation, I would like to ask my colleague how she would improve this bill.

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Madam Speaker, as the previous speaker did, I too want to thank my colleague for his question,

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which he asked in French. We really do appreciate it and see it as a sign of respect. We know that it is not always easy.

I have already mentioned one possible way to impose sanctions for offences that do not necessarily call for the judge to be removed from office. I talked about including victims more in the process. This could be deliberated by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. Unfortunately, I am not a member of that committee, so of course someone else will have to suggest ways to improve the legislation, but that could be a good starting point.

With regard to the fees involved in representing the judge, the committee work could also include ensuring that there is no financial incentive to carry on and drag out the proceedings.

• (1150)

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her fine speech.

I would like to ask her a question about the federal ombudsman for victims of crime. This position has been vacant for nine months, yet the ombudsman for federal offenders position was filled one day later. Could my colleague tell me about this government's priorities when it comes to victims?

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Madam Speaker, whether the role of an ombudsman is to protect victims or offenders, there is always a certain obligation to appoint someone quickly. When a position remains vacant for a long time, there will be a backlog of cases. Unfortunately, that has become this government's specialty. I am thinking in particular about the immigration file, which I carried for two years.

I also think there should be more transparency with respect to certain appointments. For example, take the defence file, which is one of my files. We think the ombudsman should be accountable to the House, not the minister. That might have avoided some conflicts in the past, as in the Jonathan Vance case.

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I too will ask my colleague a question in French.

I understand that my colleague agrees with me about reviewing the appointment process. We have said it before: The "Liberalist" is appalling. I am not the one who came up with the name, by the way—it was the government. When even the government refers to this list of conditions by that name, we can imagine what impact this can have on the public. This really needs to be addressed quickly.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks about the example from Quebec, the Bastarache commission, during which former justice Bastarache reviewed the appointment process and proposed conditions that are better than those in place at the federal level.

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Madam Speaker, I will not miss any opportunity to say that Quebec is forward-thinking and is doing great things that we should emulate more often.

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We need to have a much more transparent, non-partisan and depoliticized process. I will say it again, because this is key to having confidence in the justice system: The legislative, the executive, and the judicial branches must be kept separate, which is not the case with the “Liberalist”. This example is painfully obvious.

Since most of the judges who sit in Quebec are federally appointed superior court judges, efforts to ensure a non-partisan appointment process will have a particular impact on the routine workings of the courts.

[*English*]

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I will turn to the substance of Bill C-9 in a moment, but first I want to talk about how we got here, a process that for me illustrates disarray on the government's side in this 44th Parliament. Some days it still seems almost as if the Liberals really did not expect to have to govern after the last election.

Certainly, the bill was essentially ready to go well before the pandemic hit. For unknown reasons, the government decided to have it introduced in the Senate on May 25, 2020, as Bill S-5, and it died there when the unnecessary 2021 election was called. Then it was reintroduced by the government leader in the Senate as Bill S-3 on December 1, 2021. After a dispute over whether the bill could actually be introduced in the Senate as it would require a royal recommendation to allow expenditures by the Judicial Council under the bill, the bill was withdrawn from the Senate on December 15, 2021, and reintroduced as a government bill, Bill C-9, in the House on December 16, 2021, if members can follow that bouncing ball.

Despite the disarray on the government side, the bill still seemed to be a priority for the Liberal government as it was included in the December 2021 mandate letter for the Minister of Justice. There, the Prime Minister directed that the Minister of Justice, “Secure support for the swift passage of reforms to the judicial conduct process in the Judges Act to ensure the process is fair, effective and efficient so as to foster greater confidence in the judicial system.”

That's fair enough, and no doubt there is important work for us to do on improving the process by which complaints against federal judges are handled. However, here we come to the question of priorities of the Liberals and their effectiveness when it comes to addressing, in a timely manner, the pressing crises in our justice system and, of course, the question of the persistent obstructionism of the Conservatives, as the official opposition, in this sitting of Parliament.

While I remain disappointed that the government chose to ensure the defeat of private member's Bill C-216 from the member for Courtenay—Alberni, which would have decriminalized personal possession of small amounts of drugs, we have made some progress on the opioid crisis. Pushed into action by the impending vote on the private member's bill, the Liberals, after months of delay, finally granted an interim exemption to the provisions of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act for British Columbia, in effect decriminalizing personal possession for small amounts of drugs for the next three years.

That's a good thing, yes, but it only raises the question of why wait another six months. This delay seems likely to ensure that

2022 will eclipse the appalling record set in 2021 in British Columbia for the greatest number of overdose deaths in B.C. Also, why only British Columbia? The epidemic of deaths from toxic drug supply continues unabated across the country and in all corners of the country, both urban and rural. Passing Bill C-216 would have allowed us to begin to apply the tools we know that work right now: decriminalizing the personal possession of small amounts of drugs and guaranteeing a safe supply of drugs for those suffering from addictions. Bill C-216 would have brought a permanent change to the law to guarantee that addiction is dealt with as a health matter and not a criminal matter.

The crisis that demands urgent action is, of course, systemic racism in our criminal justice system. The most prominent evidence of the reality of this crisis is the over-incarceration of indigenous and Black Canadians in this country. All members by now are familiar with the shocking facts that indigenous people are more than six times as likely as other Canadians to end up incarcerated and that Black Canadians are more than twice as likely. Most shocking I think to all of us is the fact that indigenous women make up 50% of women incarcerated in federal institutions when they are less than 5% of the population.

Of course, injustice does not end with incarceration, as there is the legacy of the resulting criminal record. Not only have indigenous and racialized Canadians been disproportionately targeted for investigation, prosecution, fining or imprisonment, the most marginalized among us then end up stuck with criminal records. These are criminal records that make getting a job almost impossible, criminal records that often restrict access to affordable housing or even ordinary rental housing because of criminal record checks, criminal records that make volunteering with kids and seniors impossible, criminal records that restrict travel and criminal records that even make it difficult to get a bank loan or a mortgage.

The good news is that we have taken some steps to address the systemic racism in our court system with the passage of Bill C-5 yesterday. As soon as the Senate acts, we will see the elimination of 20 mandatory minimum penalties, most importantly those in the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, which fell very heavily on indigenous and racialized Canadians and have been a major contributor to over-incarceration.

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• (1155)

Again, we would have liked to see bolder action here with the expansion of the existing Gladue principles to give judges discretion to waive all remaining mandatory minimums when it would be unjust to impose them on indigenous or racialized Canadians due to their circumstances. Unfortunately, this was not in the bill. One may ask why I am going on so long about this. It is judges' discretion that will make a big difference, so people have to have confidence in the judiciary.

Despite the public image that we never co-operate in Parliament, we had good co-operation in the justice committee. That co-operation allowed the passage of my amendment to Bill C-5, which will see the elimination of criminal records for personal possession of drugs within two years through a process called sequestration. What this means in practice is that these records will no longer show up in criminal record checks.

Today, we are moving on to debate Bill C-9 and finally, some members may say, I am coming to the substance of this bill. This is a bill to reform the process for handling complaints against federal judges. As I said, it is important in our system to maintain public confidence in those judges. Is this a crisis? Clearly it is not. Is it as urgent as decriminalizing drugs or removing systemic racism in our justice system? Clearly it is not. Is this as important? I would argue that in fact it is, because trust in the integrity of our justice system is integral to the fate of our democracy, especially in these trying times. We have to have faith in the integrity of the justice system and that means in the judges themselves, so we have to do better when it comes to holding the judiciary accountable, but we have to do so in ways that respect their fundamental independence and protect the system against government and political interference.

Bill C-9 suggests ways in which we can do this and, as I mentioned at the outset, measures have been ready to go on this for a very long time. Can we do better on holding judges accountable? Yes, we can, but it took well over two years for the government to get this bill before the House today and many of the ideas in it were first proposed in Canadian Bar Association reports as early as 2014. Some appeared in private members' bills tabled in the House as early as 2017, so it is past time to get to work on this bill.

Let me distinguish just for a moment what we are actually talking about. We are not talking about mistakes in law that occur from time to time in the federal courts. There is a clear remedy for these kinds of mistakes, and it is the appeal process. Instead, we are talking about the failure of federally appointed judges to meet the high standards that have been set for them and that we naturally should demand of them. That is either when it comes to personal conduct or to maintaining impartiality on the bench.

I should say from the outset that the Canadian record is remarkably good when it comes to cases of serious misconduct warranting removal from the bench. In the history of Canada, the Canadian Judicial Council has recommended removal for only five federally appointed judges. Four of those resigned before Parliament could deal with their cases, and the fifth before Parliament could act on the case. Whether these judges resigned before being removed solely to protect their pensions, which has been alleged, or simply to

avoid the stigma of being the first federal judge ever removed by Parliament, I leave for others to judge.

Leaving the process in the hands of judges themselves is probably necessary, as this is both a key and crucial feature of our current system. It is the one that guarantees governments cannot influence the decisions of judges by threatening to remove them from office. Complaints about federally appointed judges are handled by the Canadian Judicial Council, which is made up of the 41 chief justices and associate chief justices of federally appointed courts.

The Canadian Judicial Council is chaired by the chief justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, who appoints a committee to examine complaints. If a complaint is initially found to have merit, a three-judge panel examines the complaint and either decides to dismiss it, to recommend no further action because the misconduct does not warrant removal from the bench, or to hold a public inquiry. Again, this is relatively rare, with only 14 inquiries held over the past 40 years.

If there was an inquiry, the committee would then forward its findings to the full Judicial Council, along with a recommendation on the possible removal. If removal is recommended, the judge has the right to appeal to an appeals panel and, if needed, further appeal beyond that. The Supreme Court of Canada can choose to hear the appeal directly, but the current process is that the case would be heard at the Federal Court and the Federal Court of Appeal before the Supreme Court of Canada could hear the case. This seems unnecessarily complicated and provoking of unnecessary delay. Bill C-9 would address the problem, but while the current system does work in the most serious cases of judicial behaviour, the process is long and drawn out.

• (1200)

Bill C-9 would also address the major gap in the current process, which is that it has proved largely ineffective in dealing with cases of misbehaviour that would not be serious enough to warrant removal from the bench. This is the fact: There is only one possible remedy in the current process, which is removal from the bench. Serious misbehaviour, though rare, is not hard to spot as it always involves law-breaking by the judge concerned or outright corruption.

Less serious complaints about misbehaviour are almost always about the question of impartiality. What would an example be of this less serious misbehaviour? A case in Saskatchewan in 2021 is a case in point. Five complaints were received about a judge who appeared in pictures with a group indirectly connected to a case on which, though he had finished hearings, he had not yet delivered judgment.

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The judge in this case agreed this was a serious error on his part and that it could reflect negatively on perceptions about his impartiality in the case before him. The complaints did not proceed, as almost no one thought the judge should be removed and he had promised it would never happen again. Under the current provisions, no action could have been taken, if the judge had disputed the allegations, other than to recommend his removal from the bench for appearing in a photograph.

Bill C-9 would allow for additional remedial options other than the current sole option of recommending removal. The bill proposes the referral of complaints to a three-judge review panel, which might find removal to be warranted, and then the review panel could refer the complaint to a larger five-judge hearing panel. At the review stage, however, the review panel could still dismiss the complaint or impose remedies other than removal.

What would Canadians get out of these changes? Most importantly, they would get confidence in the judiciary that would be better maintained by having a process that was more timely and could deal more effectively with less serious complaints. This should help prevent the judicial system from falling into disrepute and help preserve the very important trust in the impartiality of the judiciary.

Bill C-9 might actually save some taxpayer money on cases involving allegations of misconduct by federal judges, as the current process can stretch out for years. Cases involving serious misconduct now often take up to four years to resolve. Bill C-9 would expedite that process by removing the two levels of court appeals that I mentioned.

At the same time, there also may be an increase in costs for dealing with less serious allegations as there would be more options available that are currently dismissed early in the process. The benefit here is that less serious cases would no longer simply be dismissed, and instead sanctions for remedies would be possible.

In the end, and after hearing debate today, I believe Bill C-9 should prove to be relatively uncontroversial. The Canadian Bar Association was part of the consultations that were held by the judicial council when Senate Bill S-5 was being drafted in the previous Parliament. There was a broader consultation that dealt with measures to clarify expectations on what constitutes “good behaviour” for federal judges that are largely set in regulations. Bill C-9 simply reforms the process for dealing with judges who fail to meet those standards.

Bill C-9 would also require more transparency with regard to how complaints are handled. The Canadian Judicial Council is responsible for administering this process, and Bill C-9 would require the council to include the number of complaints it received and how they were resolved in its annual public report.

In conclusion, New Democrats support modernizing the process for complaints against federally appointed judges, and we support adding alternative remedial options behind the current sole option of removal from the bench. The bill would allow for varied sanctions such as counselling, continuing education and other reprimands. New Democrats are supportive of streamlining and updating the process to handle complaints against federally appointed judges. This process has not been updated for 50 years. It is time

for a modern complaint system for a modernized judiciary, and one that will help increase public confidence in federal judges.

The bill provides an opportunity for parties to work together to get an important reform in place, as it is yet another example of things that did not get done earlier because of the unnecessary 2021 election. We should get this done so that we can then turn our attention back to tackling the serious issues in our justice system that remain, and to confronting the opioid crisis that is better dealt with as a health matter than a judicial matter. I hope to see Bill C-9 advance quickly through the House and in the other place.

• (1205)

**Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member did a great job of outlining some of the gaps in justice reform. I know that he spoke at length about this bill, but I want to give him the opportunity, given his vast experience as a critic in justice, to talk about ways in which the government needs to move, going forward, to help close some of those gaps in some very serious needs for justice reform.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Mr. Speaker, I know the member for Hamilton Centre's dedication to ensuring that we reform the justice system to try to remove the systemic racism that exists.

As I said in my speech, Bill C-9 is important in that the public, from diverse backgrounds, has to have confidence in this system. The other things that we have talked about here, which are getting the opioid crisis out of the justice system and directly tackling the systemic racism that results in the over-incarceration of indigenous and racialized Canadians, are in crisis. We need to move further and we need to move faster in addressing those matters in our justice system than we have been able to do in this Parliament. We are making progress, but not enough and not fast enough.

**Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to my hon. colleague's speech. He is a member of the justice committee, so there are occasional times that we agree on things at the justice committee. This is one of those times. There is agreement on this bill and that we need to update the process for judicial complaints after it being relatively unchanged for the past half-century.

One of the things that has come up in debate that I would like his comments on is this. During the last version of this bill, we were able to get input from the ombudsman for victims of crime. He will know that position has remained vacant since October of last year. In my view, it should have been filled immediately. There is an important role that the ombudsman plays when we are dealing with legislation as well as other situations that arise.

I wonder this. Could my hon. colleague comment on this vacancy, and whether he feels it is urgent that it be filled?

*Government Orders*

• (1210)

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Mr. Speaker, I will state, as the member for Fundy Royal did, that although sometimes we disagree, we have worked very effectively together at the justice committee for some time. I expect that we will continue to do so.

He is well aware that both he and I have raised with the minister, on numerous occasions, the issue of the vacancy in the office of the ombudsman for federal victims of crime. I do think it is urgent that this spot be filled. It is a very important role in amplifying the voices of victims, and a very important role in letting us know in Parliament what the true state of affairs is when it comes to victims and our justice system. The previous federal ombudsman for victims of crime provided very useful testimony at committee many times, and I think we could have used that kind of testimony on some of the issues we are dealing with this time.

I would certainly agree with the member that this vacancy needs to be filled as soon as possible.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, one thing that Bill C-9 will do is provide for a review panel made up of three people. This panel will be able to conduct the inquiry itself or refer it to a larger five-person panel.

Is the member satisfied by this panel? Does he think that it will be able to adequately address any complaints that are made against judges?

Does he have any other mechanisms to suggest?

[*English*]

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Mr. Speaker, I think the proof is in the pudding. I think this is a good proposal. It will allow the judicial council, as I said, to deal with less serious cases of misconduct that obviously do not warrant removal from the bench, but right now we see those complaints dismissed out of hand. I do not think that serves the public well, and I do not think it serves judges well. By having a new review committee to take a look at these less serious complaints, complaints that do not necessarily involve law-breaking or corruption, we can get some other sanctions applied to help influence judges to maintain the high standards that are expected of them.

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I also want to recognize my colleague for his work on the justice committee, particularly the recent amendments that would see the sequestration of records for those charged and convicted of simple possession. It is going to make a difference for thousands of Canadians.

My question is around this bill and the process moving forward. I have been listening to the debate, and there seems to be remarkable consensus that this is a much-needed change and that we should move forward in a timely way. In the past, when we have had that kind of agreement and when bills before us have a history in the House of debate and deliberation, there have been ways for us to move them forward in an expeditious manner.

I would like my colleague's thoughts on what a path forward might look like for this bill that would see it passed into law as quickly as possible.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley for his kind words on my role on the committee.

I just want to say, before I answer the question specifically, that the removal of criminal records for personal possession potentially affects 250,000 Canadians, so this would have a big impact. If we are worried about public safety, we need to make sure that those who have come in conflict with the law have every opportunity to reintegrate themselves into society, to support their families and to get things back on track. Bill C-5 would help do that.

With respect to Bill C-9, I have been frustrated, I would say, for almost five years now because we have not simply gotten this done. I think there is agreement, and like the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, I would recommend to House leaders that we find a way to move this bill forward very quickly.

• (1215)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful to my hon. colleague and neighbour, the hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, for giving us the full background and history on how long it has taken for this bill to come before us. I also agree with him that there are urgent priorities in other areas of criminal justice.

There is one area of judicial conduct that I would love to know his opinion on, and it is a growing concern. Retired Supreme Court of Canada judges and other judges from high levels carry with them an enormous amount of clout. If they say something it must be true. After all, they are former Supreme Court of Canada judges.

I am sure my hon. friend will recall that two former Supreme Court judges were hired by SNC-Lavalin and were used to undermine the opinions and work of the very hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould when she was our attorney general and minister of justice. There has been some discussion, including from Wayne MacKay, a professor emeritus at Dalhousie law school, which I was privileged to attend, that we should consider ensuring that when judges retire they remain constrained by the same ethical rules of conduct that applied when they were practising judges. I wonder if he has any views on that.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Mr. Speaker, I share the hon. member's concerns about activities undertaken by former members of the judiciary, but we have a thorny problem there in that when former judges resume their private lives, it is hard to imagine how we can impose standards upon them that are different from what we expect of others. I think it is a matter worthy of investigation and worthy of consultation broadly in society and in the legal and judicial community to find a solution to this problem.

**Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as we approach the end of the parliamentary session, I want to take a moment to give thanks to my family, my staff, all of the people of Halifax West and all who have supported me and continue to support me in order to do my best in service.

*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

I will be sharing my time today with the member for Mount Royal.

[*English*]

I am pleased to join my hon. colleagues today to speak in favour of Bill C-9, which proposes reforms to the current process for reviewing allegations of misconduct against federally appointed judges.

The role occupied by the judiciary in our system of government is unique. While one judge in the performance of their duties will interact with countless members of the public, the reverse is not true. Most individuals outside of the legal profession will have little direct exposure to judges in courtrooms in the course of their lives, yet for those individuals who do appear in court, that process is likely to be a major event in their lives. The behaviour of the judge handling their case will shape that person's impression of the justice system as a whole. For individuals who arrive in our courts seeking justice or facing serious jeopardy to their liberty, it is not an overstatement to say that the judge represents the personal embodiment of the values of integrity and impartiality that our justice system is trusted to uphold.

[*Translation*]

In addition, many people only ever see judges at a distance, in the context of significant or controversial issues. Canada has a high degree of respect for its judiciary and for the administration of justice overall, but it will require constant attention and effort to keep it that way.

[*English*]

Just as the impact of a judge's behaviour on a particular individual can have great significance, so too can allegations of judicial misconduct have significant effects on public confidence and trust. Complaints against Canadian judges are rare, especially those severe enough to implicate potential removal from office. However, when they do occur, they capture public attention precisely because they diverge so radically from the norm. The public is entitled to see those allegations taken seriously and addressed through a process that itself reflects the best ideals of our justice system. Canadians need to know that the judicial system is fair to all, including the judiciary, and it is on this theme I wish to speak to members today.

Appropriate mechanisms for reviewing judicial conduct must be grounded in the constitutional realities of the judicial role. Judicial independence protects judges from outside influence of any kind, actual or perceived, in the exercise of their functions. This is absolutely critical to ensuring that the adjudication of cases is impartial and fair and is seen as such.

One form of influence against which judges are protected is the threat of personal reprimand or removal from their offices for conduct or decisions that may be contrary to the preferences of those in political power. For this reason, the Supreme Court of Canada has specified that the review of allegations related to judicial conduct, while vital to preserving public confidence in its own right, must be controlled and led by the judiciary itself. Moreover, the mecha-

nisms for this review must allow opportunities for the judge in question to be fully and fairly heard.

Once a fair, judge-led process culminates in a recommendation on whether a judge should be removed from office, our great Constitution shifts the responsibility to us as parliamentarians to determine whether we will indeed remove the judge via an address to the Governor General. It is a testament to both the strength of our judiciary and the respect of this chamber for the sanctity of judicial independence that, to date, this power has never been exercised. It is a power that indeed must be reserved for circumstances of true necessity, when a judge refuses to leave office after it has been credibly established that their conduct threatens public confidence in the administration of justice.

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

To be sure that this power is exercised appropriately, Parliament must know that a judge-led review of the conduct of another judge was effective, impartial and thorough. This means ensuring the judge in question was treated with absolute fairness. This notion is at the very heart of the amendments we are debating today.

[*English*]

The current judicial conduct process, as set out in the Judges Act and operationalized by the Canadian Judicial Council, is in dire need of modernization and reform. The council has done what it can do to overhaul the process by making changes to its procedures, but much more is still needed, and that requires legislative amendments. As my colleagues have shared, a primary concern with the existing mechanism is its lack of efficiency, stemming from a rigid structure that is not easily adaptable to reviewing different types of judicial conduct. Associated with this are high costs in terms of money, time and detriment to the public trust.

Despite the intention of providing fairness to an impugned judge, the current regime can instead foster near endless litigation, as every facet of the inquiry process is susceptible to challenge through judicial review, compounded by appeals to multiple levels of court, often on grounds that have little merit or that bear on the public interest. My colleagues have referred to some of these examples, and I will not repeat them. It suffices to note that as matters linger unresolved for extended periods and at great cost, confidence in the administration of justice and the judiciary is undermined.

Procedural fairness, as accorded to judges, is necessary. Indeed, it is as equally important as the fairness that must be accorded to individuals in judges' own courtrooms. However, procedural fairness can be satisfied in a way that does not enable adversarial zeal, calculated delay and resulting negative repercussions for Canadians. The Canadian Judicial Council itself has acknowledged that the status quo is at odds with the public interest. It is now for us as lawmakers to act.



Bill C-9 proposes a suite of reforms designed to overhaul the process for handling judicial conduct complaints. All have been carefully crafted to ensure that public confidence is enhanced, recognizing that this requires independence and efficiency, as well as a high degree of procedural fairness. Satisfying those complementary objectives will in turn foster greater trust in the administration of justice more broadly.

Bill C-9 would enhance the versatility of the judicial conduct process by providing a review panel to deal with less severe cases, that is, allegations of misconduct that are not so serious as to potentially warrant removal from office. This introduces responsiveness and nuance through options other than a full-scale hearing, sparing both judges and complainants from the strain of adversarial public hearings and the possible stigma of publicizing unverified allegations. A judge would nevertheless retain the right to be aware of all allegations, respond to them comprehensively and benefit from the advice and advocacy of skilled counsel.

Given the scrutiny and profile that public hearings necessarily entail, the need for fairness is especially important whenever it is required. Under the new process, allegations of misconduct so serious that removal from office may be warranted would be handled by a hearing panel comprising five members. It would include representatives of the judiciary, the legal profession and the public, and hearings would function in a manner akin to a trial. Prosecuting counsel would also be appointed, with the responsibility to present the case against the judge, much as a criminal prosecutor would do. The judge would be entitled to rigorous opportunities to call evidence and examine counsel. The process would ensure that the full rigour of an adversarial hearing, with the same clear court procedure, applies to all hearings.

I doubt anyone could reasonably claim that the processes I have described would fail to provide procedural fairness to a judge whose conduct has been called into question. They are not only fair but exhaustive and rigorous, designed to apply the rigour of our justice system to serious allegations while also allowing more humane and effective alternatives when allegations do not rise to a serious level. Most importantly, we as parliamentarians can be assured that should the day ever come when we need to consider a recommendation for judicial removal, we can have confidence that the recommendation stems from a scrupulous, fair and effective process.

With that, I look forward to questions from my colleagues.

• (1225)

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in addition to being able to remove a judge, should that be the conclusion of the trial, are there other consequences that can be applied to judges who are found not to have executed their duties well?

**Ms. Lena Metlege Diab:** Mr. Speaker, I served with the hon. member on the science and research committee, and she is very capable and very experienced in that field and in questioning witnesses.

What we are trying to do today has been well researched and well studied and has been recommended by judges, the public and the Canadian Bar Association. In the most egregious cases where the removal of a judge is necessary, this is where we as parliamentarians

must act. That is exactly what we are doing today by moving forward with this new legislation.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on her speech, but I would like to come back to what my colleague from Saint-Jean and my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord said earlier.

One thing that is missing from Bill C-9 is the judicial appointment process. Members will recall the uproar caused by the Liberal government's use of the infamous "Liberalist" database. I would like to know if my colleague agrees that it is time for a review of the judicial appointment process.

**Ms. Lena Metlege Diab:** Mr. Speaker, it is important to know that our judicial system has to be effective and professional and that the executive branch and legislative branch have to be complementary yet separate. The selection of judges is very important in our society, for all the examples I mentioned in my speech.

[*English*]

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I sense there is both broad agreement that this is an important bill and some frustration at the process to date, particularly the fact that this bill came forward in the 43rd Parliament and was interrupted by the unnecessary election call.

I wonder if the member could speculate on how quickly this bill could become law. I wonder whether there might be opportunities for this House to act expeditiously to fast-forward the process and ensure it becomes law as quickly as possible. If so, the changes that this bill promises could become a reality and this House could spend its time working on the many other priorities that we all need time to debate.

• (1230)

**Ms. Lena Metlege Diab:** Mr. Speaker, I absolutely love the question from my colleague. I wish I could expedite this and others. I wish I had that power in me, but I am only one of 300-some parliamentarians in this wonderful House of Commons.

For my part, I will do whatever it takes to ensure that we have a speedier resolution to this. From hearing members from different caucuses, it appears there is substantial agreement on this bill. I do look forward to it proceeding.

Should unanimous consent be something that all members want, I am sure the whips could work on that very quickly.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, the last member asked the question that was on my mind.

In the course of the debate this morning, I certainly heard the hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke say out loud that we should get this bill passed quickly.

*Government Orders*

As we approach the end of a session, I do not know why we hold the whip over ourselves as though we do not get summer vacation and it would be so bad if we stayed and worked. That is something we are supposed to do, stay and work. Let us use the end of June momentum to suggest that Bill C-9 should get unanimous consent to pass it expeditiously this week.

**Ms. Lena Metlege Diab:** Mr. Speaker, I definitely agree with the hon. member. Whatever I could do as one parliamentarian in this House, I would be happy to do to get unanimous consent to move this forward.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to support Bill C-9, an act to amend the Judges Act.

This bill proposes to overhaul a process that is essential to maintaining public confidence in our justice system, namely the mechanisms used for examining allegations of judicial misconduct.

If there is one class of legislation that everyone in the House should be able to agree on unanimously, it is laws having to do with our justice system.

[*English*]

In the time I have been in the House, I have been really pleased to see the non-partisan ways that members have been able to work together on justice-related issues on many occasions. I am going to outline one that just happened last week.

My hon. colleague from St. Albert—Edmonton proposed a private member's bill to carve out an exception to allow jurors to speak to mental health professionals about what happened during the time they were in deliberations. Up until now, the Criminal Code has prohibited jurors from doing so, thus creating a problem where a juror who is profoundly affected by what happens in deliberations is unable to speak about it to somebody who can counsel them on their mental health.

At the justice committee, we heard from jurors. We put forward a package of recommendations in the 42nd Parliament related to how we should improve the lives of jurors. My colleague from St. Albert—Edmonton worked with a colleague in the Senate. They put this forward in both Houses and were able to secure the unanimous adoption of a bill that will profoundly change the life of jurors. That is the way we should do things in this House more frequently.

This bill is another excellent example of where there has been profound collegiality. There has been a lot of consultation and there is a general consensus that we should move forward. I echo the comments of my dear friend from Saanich—Gulf Islands that we should find a way to pass this before we have any type of summer break.

That being said, one of the things that I think is really important in this country is the respect for our institutions. We have wonderful federal judges who have been appointed in this country, people of great distinction in their field. When people go before the courts, they need to have confidence that the judges are impartial and fair and that judges have the ability to fairly adjudicate their case. This

means we need a process that the public can trust for judges who are accused of misconduct.

There are things in this country we should not question. We should not be questioning the central bank. We should not be questioning the justice system. We should have profound confidence in these national institutions no matter our party or our political leanings. Therefore, it is up to us as parliamentarians to create laws that provide that confidence. This bill does that in three essential ways.

On the first point, I am going to use the example my friend from Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke used earlier, of when a judge is photographed between the time the judge finishes judging a case and the opinion is published and there is a picture of the judge with a group of people who are a party to the case. That does not necessarily warrant that judge's removal from office for life and an act of both Houses of Parliament to remove the judge. Right now, there are no sanctions below removal that are available to the Canadian Judicial Council. This bill offers us alternatives such as training, an apology in public and other things a judge can do to excuse behaviour that does not rise to the level of warranting removal.

Second, we have seen a misuse of the system. There are judges who have been accused, but there have been very few because our judges are a very distinguished, excellent group of people. I do not want anything I say in this speech to be considered a slap in the face to the federal judiciary which is made up of excellent people. There are always some people who are alleged to have committed and do commit some misconduct. The idea that people can tie this up in knots for years and years with appeal after appeal until they are able to get their pension does not make any sense.

• (1235)

[*Translation*]

I am very pleased that we now have a process with a panel of three to five people to start, if the relationship is extremely troubling, and that its decision can be appealed directly to the Supreme Court of Canada. There will be no appeals to the Federal Court or the Federal Court of Appeal. The process will be much faster, and I believe that this is very important.

There is something else that is important, and that is transparency. At present, the Canadian Judicial Council is not required to prepare an annual report of all complaints submitted. It will now be required to disclose annually that it has received such complaints and to explain how they were addressed. That is also important for transparency.

[*English*]

I would also like to mention that there has been a lot of discussion in the House about the importance of the rights of victims. Let me say that when it comes to all parties and every parliamentarian, there is a profound respect for the rights of victims and the need for victims to feel they were fairly served by the justice system. It is very important to respect the rights of the criminal defendant, but it is also important to make sure victims are considered throughout the process.

*Government Orders*

This process that would be in place would be a faster process. This means people who were alleged to be victims of misconduct would have their final decision much faster than they would otherwise have had it. That also is important.

I am going to sort of make a clarion call. Especially at the end of the session, there is often a lot of partisanship and anger shown, but as a group, we can do so much good. I know this from experience, having worked with Conservative colleagues, like my friend from Sarnia—Lambton, and my colleagues in the NDP. I have worked often with the member for Edmonton Strathcona, as well as my friend from Saanich—Gulf Islands and members of the Bloc.

[*Translation*]

We all worked together to do constructive things. If we use the next week to pass bills we agree are constructive, I believe that we will accomplish a lot. I am therefore asking my colleagues in the House to work together to find a way to pass this bill before the end of June. I believe that it would be a great thing for Canadians.

[*English*]

This would allow us to show Canadians, who are discouraged when they see the acrimony floating around, that parliamentarians really can work together and accomplish things. I think that confidence in our national institutions is so important to restore.

• (1240)

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was glad to hear the member talk about victims. Of course, that is some of the premise of this bill.

I want to ask him a question on the topic of victims. The position of Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime is still vacant. That position has been vacant now for approximately nine months, so someone to speak up for victims and hear their voices is not at the table.

I am wondering if the member has any thoughts on that and if he can provide us any information today as to when that position might be filled.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Mr. Speaker, I cannot provide any information as to when the position will be filled, as I am not involved in that process. I can say that I share the view of my colleague that it is very important to protect the rights of victims of crime, and I am certainly hoping the position will be filled at the nearest possible opportunity.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague likely knows, we agree on the principle of the bill. I completely agree that it is crucial that people be able to trust their justice system.

We have heard all kinds of allegations, especially regarding the judicial appointment process. We have heard about the Liberalist database and the possibility of political interference in appointing judges.

Does my colleague think the government should review the judicial appointment process sometime soon?

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question from my friend from La Pointe-de-l'Île.

We made some great changes to the process following the 2015 election. We created regional committees made up of Canadian Bar Association members and people who know the community and can tell the Department of Justice whether or not a person is qualified before their name is put on the judicial appointment list.

I followed the process launched in western Quebec, and I am very pleased that the Minister of Justice can now only appoint people who are on the lists approved by these committees. That said, the process can always be improved.

[*English*]

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I always learn a great deal listening to my colleague and have enjoyed working in this place with him.

I agree with him that, when we stand here and listen to speeches from all members in this place, we hear the total agreement on moving this piece of legislation forward. What other things would he suggest we could do to encourage this bill to go forward as quickly as possible? Would he be willing, as a member of the government, to bring forward a unanimous consent motion so we could push this bill forward and give people the confidence that this Parliament can get things done?

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Mr. Speaker, I would certainly support a unanimous consent motion. Right now, it is up to all of us to speak to our House leaders and make sure they can agree to that. Maybe after question period, we will all be delighted to see one.

[*Translation*]

Again, we should all go and speak with our respective House leaders in the next few hours.

[*English*]

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite always does a great job on his speeches and, with his experience in the past, he always gives good detail.

I did like hearing that there are measures in this bill, other than just getting rid of a judge, that would address issues at a lower level. There are things like training and apologies in public. I wonder if the member could elaborate on the whole suite of options that are available there.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Mr. Speaker, as the first female engineer elected to Parliament, my hon. colleague comes from private industry, as I do. Therefore, she knows that it would be ludicrous for the human resources department to be limited to firing an employee for any type of misconduct they happen to engage in at work. There is a whole gradation of potential sanctions ranging from a verbal warning to a written warning to suspension to an apology to training, which is obviously very important training. Now, instead of having to just remove a judge, there would be a three-member panel that would be able to recommend multiple options for a judge who has committed a lesser offence.

*Government Orders*

• (1245)

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Peace River—Westlock.

It is a pleasure to rise to speak to Bill C-9, which is an act that would create a complaint mechanism for judges. We have certainly heard from all sides today that everyone thinks this is a great idea. This is not to say judges do not do a good job, because we know we have great judges in this country who work hard, but as with any career discipline, there is always the odd thing going on that is not good.

I remember when I was the chair of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women we talked about some of the things that were happening. In one sexual assault case, a judge actually asked the complainant, “Why couldn’t you just keep your knees together?” In another sexual assault case, another judge said, “she was drunk” in the taxi.

Rona Ambrose brought forward Bill C-337 to try to get at this issue of judges who do not have experience in sexual assault presiding over those cases. Although that bill unfortunately did not make it through under her private member’s bill, the government brought it back, and we passed it earlier in the session. This would offer judges training, and in fact, it would offer lawyers who want to be judges training as well. That is the kind of remedy we want to see.

I was very pleased to hear the member for Mount Royal, who just spoke, talk about what this bill would allow. Other than just the extreme option of getting rid of a judge for whatever behaviour was complained about, there is a whole realm of possibilities, including verbal warnings, letter warnings, public apologies, training and multiple other options. This is something very good about this bill.

I do have a concern about the state of judges in our country since the Liberal government was elected. I started in 2015, and at that time we were missing I think 60 judges who needed to be appointed. Because of that, and because the Jordan decision, there were numerous examples of murderers and rapists who went free because there were not enough judges to handle the workload in a timely fashion.

There was an attempt made to put in a process. The government wanted to increase the diversity of the judges being selected, which is great, because one of the things that will make for a healthier democracy and rule of law is to have diverse thought and diverse representation of the population.

Unfortunately, what happened is the government used the Liberal fundraising database to figure out which judges should be picked from the lawyer pool. There were also fundraisers going on with the minister of justice at the time, which caused a big scandal because lawyers were paying \$500 to meet her, and they all wanted to become judges. We know that is certainly not in keeping with conflict of interest rules in the House. The scandal went on for quite a while.

It is important to have diversity of thought with judges so they can check one another. If people are all in a group and they think together, it can be a bad thing. We have seen some of the Supreme

Court decisions that came out recently that have caused concern across the country, such as the one that says, if a person is intoxicated, it could be a defence for murder, sexual assault, etc. Canadians in general would reject that and say no. The person is the one who chose to keep drinking or doing drugs until they became that intoxicated, and there needs to be an ownership of the behaviour. Those judges all together did not have enough diversity of thought for somebody to say that decision might not be a good thing.

I would suggest, from a Conservative perspective, that when somebody has killed multiple people, consecutive sentencing gave a lot of comfort to victims. The Supreme Court decision on that is another example. Parliament has a duty to review those decisions and have the discussions about whether that is really where we want to go on those topics. The whole purpose of having judges is that they are the executors of the rule of law in our nation.

• (1250)

I am very concerned that, in the last seven years, we are not seeing more rule of law. We are seeing more people committing crimes. The crime rates are increasing, including gun crime and violent crime. However, when I look at the response from the government, it looks like we are seeing a continual erosion of the rule of law.

The member who spoke previously mentioned that I am the first female engineer in the House, and we have an expression in the engineering world about a frog in a pot. Gradually the temperature in the pot increases until eventually we boil the frog, but the frog is not able to sense that the temperature is going up because it is so incremental. I would argue, with respect to the rule of law in Canada, the temperature is going up.

We had Bill C-75, which reduced the sentencing to fines or less than two years of time in jail for crimes such as abduction of a person under the age of 16, abduction of a person under the age of 14, arson for fraudulent purposes, marriage under 16 and participation in the activity of a terrorist group. There are a number of offences there, and I did not see the justification for that. We have heard from police chiefs that, although in some cases they agreed, in many cases there are serious crimes happening that now have only a slap on the wrist, which is not sending the right message about the rule of law and the importance of it.

In this parliamentary session, we now have Bill C-5 coming forward, which would remove mandatory minimums on robbery with a firearm; extortion with a firearm; discharging a firearm with intent; using a firearm in the commission of offences; trafficking or possession for the purpose of trafficking; importing, exporting, or possession of serious drugs; and production of these serious drugs, which are killing thousands of Canadians. Also, Bill C-5 would allow some of these sentences to be put down to house arrest, including that of sexual assault.

*Government Orders*

Somebody could victimize someone in their community and then serve the time there. I do not think that is something that we should leave to the discretion of judges, when we have seen in the past a judge ask, “couldn't you just keep your knees together?” There is a naivete if we think we can leave it to chance. Yes, in the majority of cases, judges will judge with wisdom, but it is the every now and again that we want to prevent and what our laws should prevent.

Abduction of a person under 14 could become a house arrest sentence. This is unbelievable. We have a huge human trafficking issue in this country, and this not only sends the wrong message, but it is also not going to fix things because, when people are left with a potential house arrest, those who are committing crimes can commit them out of their house. It is the same thing for someone trafficking drugs who gets house arrest. How convenient is that for people to stop by and pick up drugs?

These things make no sense to me, and so I am very concerned when I look at the erosion of our rule of law. At the same time, there is an erosion of protection for victims. We had Bill C-28 in the previous Parliament on victim surcharge. It used to be that there was some recompense made for victims who had suffered and had to travel distances to go to parole hearings and that kind of thing, but that was taken away.

This is a soft-on-crime government, and while I support Bill C-9 because when judges do not get it right we need to fix that, but I am very concerned that we are having this continual erosion of the rule of law. We have heard many speeches in the House that have said that there is a high rate of reoffending. People are committing crimes, getting out, committing them again and being put back in, and there really is no rehabilitation happening. That is not to say that there should not be, but the situation today is that there is not. If we know that people are going to reoffend and go out on the street, we have to protect the public, and we have a duty to do that.

The mechanism in the bill is to make sure that judges are doing their due diligence. We would have mechanisms, not just an extreme one, but progressions, that would allow us to take corrective action and manage the judicial system to ensure its integrity. This will preserve the rule of law, although the concerns I have expressed do remain.

• (1255)

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, and I want to go back to some of the comments she made at the beginning of her speech.

We have seen some horrific judgements that women who suffered sexual assault have faced in the courts, with judges who have had some horrific opinions, not judgements but opinions, on the women. However, Rona Ambrose did come forward about the need to have judges properly trained so they actually understood these files in reference to sexual assault and abuse against women.

I would ask my hon. colleague if she feels that the mechanisms within the bill would allow us to address some of the serious problems we have with judges who just do not understand the sexual assault culture facing women.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the bill that Rona Ambrose brought forward had training as the main measure, training so that judges would understand sexual assault.

With Bill C-9, we actually have a plethora of things that can be done to match the severity of the situation, whether it was an idle comment or a photograph that was taken prior to the sentence being made public. I think there is enough flexibility in this bill, and that is always going to be better. We do not want someone to be fired on a first offence, but we want to make sure there are a suite of actions that can be taken so that the punishment essentially fits the crime.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one of the things my colleague talked about was the erosion of the rule of law at the same time as the erosion of the protection of victims. We have seen, time and again, a real soft-on-crime approach by the Liberal government.

I want to bring this to her attention. In my community of Kelowna—Lake Country, the City of Kelowna just released a report, a couple of weeks ago, called “Community Confidence in Justice: Advocacy Paper”. It talks about the increase in crime in our community, and it has a number of different suggestions and advocacy on protecting the public and moving forward with different policy ideas and guidelines.

Is the member seeing a similar increase in crime where she is from, such that we really need to look at both the rule of law and the protection of victims in her community as well?

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Mr. Speaker, I am very sad to report that Sarnia—Lambton has the same homicide rate as Toronto. This is something that has escalated. When I first moved there, it was rare to hear of a murder in Sarnia—Lambton. We have had multiple murders already this year, and it is related to the drug trade.

That is why I am specifically concerned that we are bringing forward bills in this House that would allow drug traffickers and people who produce drugs to maybe get a house arrest. We already have a revolving door and police officers are tearing their hair out. They risk their lives and these people are arrested, and then they are out on the streets, sometimes the same day, in my community.

We do not understand why the judges are making those calls. Obviously, the Criminal Code does give them sway to put these people away. I understand that in many cases it is about mental health or addiction, but we do not have any long-term recovery beds. We do not have enough treatment. I do not know when we are going to start putting the treatment in place, so that we can start treating the addictions and the root cause of the trauma, instead of having these revolving doors that result in violence in our communities.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member made reference at the beginning of her comments to appointments and the fact that she did not feel we were appointing judges fast enough and it was causing murderers to go free. I am wondering if she could cite any individuals who committed murder and actually went free because of not having a judge in place.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Mr. Speaker, that was at the time when Jody Wilson-Raybould was the justice minister. I remember one member specifically, and there are records in Hansard. I would encourage people to go back and look at Hansard because there were specific cases cited, rape cases and murder cases, where people did go free due to Jordan's principle at that time.

• (1300)

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleagues in discussing Bill C-9 today. I am appreciative of the bill and the fact that it would grant the premise that we have been advocating for a very long time, and that Liberals have been arguing against for a very long time, that judges need to be held accountable. There needs to be a remedy for egregious actions on the part of judges.

I believe in the fallen nature of man and that the dividing line between good and evil runs through the heart of a person. I do not think anybody is above doing wrong or evil things, and we must all fight against that all the time. That stands for everybody, including judges. Judges can get it wrong and sometimes do evil things. Those things happen in the fallen world we live in. For that reason, there need to be accountability mechanisms for all individuals.

Accountability is baked into many of the things we do. It is baked into democracy and there are the checks and balances of democracy. In this place, we have one of the most obvious checks and balances, which is the vote when it comes to getting re-elected or being elected. We run on our record and on what we plan to do, and that is an accountability mechanism. That is being accountable to the people back home.

There are other checks and balances in our system. We have the Constitution, and all the laws we bring in this place must be checked against our Constitution, making sure that individual freedoms and liberties are maintained. We have provincial jurisdiction and federal jurisdiction, and both of those are guarded jealously. That is one of the checks and balances in our system. Then we have a thing called judicial independence, where politicians and the political sphere are not supposed to influence judges, so to speak. However, every now and then judges will have personal failures, where whatever they have done is beyond the pale of public activity and they would be deemed unfit to be judges any longer. This bill puts out a mechanism in order to deal with that.

I will read some of the reasons for removal that this bill lays out: "(a) infirmity; (b) misconduct; (c) failure in the due execution of judicial office; (d) the judge is in a position that a reasonable, fair-minded and informed observer would consider to be incompatible with the due execution of judicial office." I think this is a fair bill, and it would put in place a due process for the removal of judges from their position.

As I said earlier, I am appreciative of this bill because it grants the premise that judges need to be held accountable. I do not know about others, but where I come from there is a growing dissatisfaction or mistrust, or "lack of confidence" is probably the best term, for folks back home around the judicial system and holding criminals to account. We are starting to see this spill over into urban areas, where criminals operate with impunity. They steal things in broad daylight and commit acts of violence in broad daylight, disobeying the law in general and violating local communities. In rural Canada, theft is a real challenge, and it is somewhat a crime of opportunity. Where I live, the police getting to my door is a matter of perhaps hours, so criminals can do their criminal activity and be long gone before the police show up.

• (1305)

While I think this bill is an important starting piece, there is an entire sentiment that the current Liberal government drives, which starts perhaps with its tacit support of the "Defund the Police" movement, but also this general idea that the justice system will allow people to get out of jail more easily and will not penalize people. These kinds of things, which we often hear from the government, have led to the police not being able to make arrests, and when they do make arrests they are not able to get convictions, which becomes a major challenge. It demoralizes the police, the lack of political support from movements like "Defund the Police". It undermines the political support police think they have.

They know that if they are going to pursue criminals, they need to have public support for their actions, and we are seeing more and more the police telling folks that they probably will not get a conviction or that they will have to go through all that effort and the criminal would be back out in six months. If what is missing from the victim's place is a small thing, they are not going to put the resources toward that, because they have a major case they are working on and they are diverting the resources to that, as they are likely to get a conviction there. Individuals' lives are devastated. When people come home to find that their fridge, washing machine and dishwasher are missing, that basically all of the appliances in their house have been stolen, it is a violating thing. To have somebody come into their house and steal things like that is unnerving. Perhaps it is not a great monetary loss, but it is extremely disconcerting for the folks who are missing those things.

*Government Orders*

Pollsters will track this kind of thing, the trust in our institutions, and generally Canadians' trust has been going down over the last seven years. We saw that under Conservative governments, trust in institutions, trust that institutions were doing what people expected them to do, was going up. Now we have seen a dramatic decrease in the trust in institutions, which bears itself out in two ways. One is that now people do not even call the police when their stuff goes missing. I hear that over and over again. People say that the police cannot do anything about it and therefore they do not even call. The other side of the coin is that criminals operate with increasingly brazen activity. We saw it in Calgary recently: two cars blazing down the road, shooting at each other while driving down the road, with no apparent fear that the police would show up, apprehend them and put an end to this firefight. It ended in the tragic death of a mother of five. That was in Calgary, just recently.

Folks will now come into rural yards and start stealing things. When the homeowner shows up and asks what they are doing, they say they are stealing things. He says, "I am standing right here", and they just say, "What are you going to do about it?" We have that increasingly. We have just brazen activity by criminals because they see the lack of the system's ability to hold them to account, and therefore operate with complete impunity and brazenness that we have never seen before.

I would say that in my own life, I have witnessed the deterioration of trust in the community, trust in general. When I was growing up in my community, no one had a chain-link fence, no one had a gate at the end of the driveway, but these sorts of things are more and more common.

I lay this at the feet of the current government and the fact that it does not take this seriously. It does not provide the political support and tacitly supports movements like "Defund the Police", which undermines our way of life, our quality of life and our ability to live peacefully in this country, and has led to a deterioration of the interactions we have as a society.

I look forward to questions on this.

• (1310)

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to continue with the theme of what we have been hearing about this piece of legislation, Bill C-9. There seems to be broad support for it. It seems to be something that would be a good step forward at least. Everybody agrees on that.

It has had a tortured history. I would say the government has been rather inept at bringing this measure forward, but now that it is here before us and we are facing the end of the parliamentary session at the end of the month, I am wondering if the member would comment on the possibility of moving this bill forward quickly, perhaps even with unanimous consent, so that we could get on to some of the more important issues facing us here.

**Mr. Arnold Viersen:** Mr. Speaker, I am in favour of moving this bill along quickly, although I am not in favour of shortcutting the process.

I have experienced that in this place. I have seen bills moved forward very quickly, only to have groups come forward later on, saying they never had the opportunity to present at committee and that

they had an amendment they thought was needed for that particular bill, but because the system was short-circuited, they never got to present the amendment. Those amendments never did come forward, and then we had to put forward a private member's bill, new legislation, in order to amend that piece of legislation.

While I am hopeful that this bill will pass and pass soon, we should not be pushing it too fast, because Canadians will want to weigh in. We need to have the ability for the bill in front of us to be brought up in Canadian awareness and get feedback from civil society and all Canadians.

I look forward to having this bill at committee and to hearing from Canadians on what they have to say about it.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I normally do not want to see bills rushed through this place. The hon. member for Peace River—Westlock may know that I supported the Conservative vote on not rushing Bill C-11 through in the way that it was rushed through earlier this week.

However, in this case, this bill has had an unusual course. In the last Parliament, it actually started on the Senate side, so it has already been studied in the Senate. On top of that, of course, there were deep consultations with the Canadian Bar Association and others in developing the legislation. On many issues, Canadians are inadequately consulted, but maybe if it does come forward, I would hope that we do find a way to move it quickly, because it should have been passed probably about five years ago, if not 15 years ago.

**Mr. Arnold Viersen:** Mr. Speaker, I would note that we are still waiting on a Canadian Bar Association response to this particular legislation. I know that I am looking forward to their response in particular. In that regard, I would say I think we have to bring this bill to committee.

However, I want to reiterate I am very appreciative that this bill grants the premise that there needs to be judge accountability in this country. I would say that the bill is a very good start in keeping judges accountable for their conduct. I also look forward to having discussions with colleagues around bringing forward some other level of judicial accountability for judgments that do take place. I know we have the notwithstanding clause, and that has been and continues to be a decent check on judgments that we get from judges. I look forward to continuing those discussions with my colleagues in this place.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member had spoken about Canadians losing trust in their institutions. One example we could look at is the CMHC, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Canada's national housing agency. It has one single reason for existence, and that is to make housing more affordable for everyone in Canada. Of course, it has failed miserably in that regard.

*Government Orders*

We also know that through the justice system, we have a revolving door. Legislation like this that we see here today, and also the private member's bill that I tabled this week dealing with addiction treatment in penitentiaries, could help with the revolving door. Could the member comment on those types of initiatives, and whether they could help with restoring confidence in our justice system?

• (1315)

**Mr. Arnold Viersen:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Kelowna—Lake Country for her advocacy around addictions. I know that is likely where a lot of the issues that we face in this country come from, so we have to work to ensure that we have a society that can treat addiction and does not just put addicted people on palliative care and basically say we will provide them with the drugs they need rather than trying to end those addictions and bring forward a country that is positive and hopeful.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be able to address the House virtually today.

There are a number of thoughts that I would like to share with respect to this piece of legislation. It is legislation that has been in the works for a considerable amount of time. As much as I have been enjoying some of the questions and answers, especially when the Conservatives are being pushed as to when they are going to look at it or whether they would consider the passage of the legislation. Just given the context of what the official opposition members are saying, I do not anticipate that the bill will be passing before summer. I think the Conservatives have some spin notes that they want to try to leave on this particular legislation.

The biggest one that comes to my mind is the issue of “soft on crime”. It is especially members of the Conservative hard-right element who like to say that they are much harder on crime, that government needs to be tough on crime and that if it is not a Conservative government, it is soft on crime. Whether it makes sense or not, that is the line that the Conservatives like to give because of public perception.

That said, the bill will pass when it will pass, ultimately. I am hopeful that, as we can sense, the majority of the House see the value in Bill C-9, because it is something that is needed.

I want to start by making a couple of observations from some of the stakeholders. I want to do that this time around because I really do respect our judicial system as one of the fundamental pillars of our democracy. Our rule of law, our judicial system and the idea of independence are held dear by, I would like to think, all members of the House.

For that reason, I thought it was important to start off with a quote. It is from the Right Hon. Richard Wagner, Chief Justice of Canada and chairperson of the Canadian Judicial Council. He stated:

Over the past few years, the Council has consistently called for new legislation to be tabled in order to improve the process by which concerns about judicial conduct are reviewed. The efforts of members of Council to develop proposals in this regard have been fruitful, and we appreciate the openness with which the Minister of Justice has engaged the Council in his consultations.

I will go to another quote from the Canadian Judicial Council. It states:

While the Council will take some time to carefully review the proposed amendments, we are confident that these reforms will bring about much needed efficiency and transparency to the judicial conduct review process.

I wanted to start with those opening quotes because of the respect that I have for judicial independence. I also recognize that there has been a great deal of work, whether by the minister or by administration or by civil servants. They have worked very closely with the many different stakeholders while at the same time respecting the importance of judicial independence. That is why, when I look at the legislation—and I concur with some of the comments being made by my New Democratic Party colleagues and Green Party members, who seem to support the legislation and its speedy passage—I would like to think that the bill itself should not be controversial. It is actually fairly straightforward. There will be other opportunities for the opposition members to try to score their political points, if I could put it that way.

I do think there would have been a great deal of value in seeing Bill C-9 at least pass through second reading so that it could go to committee stage, possibly during the summer, when feedback could be heard from the public and experts, with the idea of coming back in the fall for report stage and third reading.

• (1320)

The Conservative members who spoke before me were interesting. I picked up on two comments; one was the issue of “soft on crime”, which I have already referenced and maybe will go into a little more later, but they also brought up the issue of appointments of judges. I was somewhat taken aback by some of the comments that were put on the record.

We were being criticized because we did not make appointments shortly after being elected into government, as we were reviewing and establishing a more independent, apolitical, transparent appointment process to ensure that our judicial system would be that much more transparent. Yes, there might have been some delays in those appointments, but they were taking the extreme position that murderers went free because of some delays in appointments. I would welcome and challenge the Conservative members to cite specific examples of someone who not only allegedly murdered but did murder an individual and ultimately, because they could not get a day in court, were let go without any charges being laid in that situation. I would be very much interested in a name. If they could provide me with one, they can always send it to my P9 email or raise it inside the House.



*Government Orders*

The member went on to talk about Jody Wilson-Raybould, being very critical of her for not making appointments and implying in the comments that she would only make an appointment if the person donated to the party. Again, those were very extreme statements being made by the Conservative Party. It is not fair. It is interesting how they seem to have forgiven the past—at least, most of the Conservative caucus has—in regard to Jody Wilson-Raybould, but I remember the allegations a number of years ago on that front.

It is important to look at the appointments that have actually been made. The government has made somewhere in the neighbourhood of 400 appointments since 2016. If we do the comparison, I would love to hear the numbers from the previous administration. When it comes to this administration, out of the hundreds of appointments to our judicial system, 55% have been women. I would love to hear a comparison with the previous 10 years under Stephen Harper.

About 3% of our appointments, or marginally just above that, were indigenous. That is important to recognize. Over 10% are visible minorities. The LGBTQ2 appointments are over 5%. Not only are we identifying ideal, competent, incredible individuals, but as a result of a more transparent, depoliticized appointment process, I believe that overall the appointments are more effective in better reflecting what our society looks like today.

● (1325)

On both of those points, whether it is judges and the appointment of judges or the issue of the Conservatives being soft on crime and saying the government is not tough enough on crime, I would challenge the Conservatives to prove their points, not necessarily on this legislation, but on other pieces of legislation so we can ultimately see Bill C-9 pass.

It is important to recognize that we do need to see a balance. We have the fundamental pillar of our judicial independence and it is important there be a high level of confidence held by the public in the administration of justice. I believe the legislation we are looking at deals with that in a very fair fashion.

The amendments will ultimately allow for the Canadian Judicial Council to continue to preside over the process proposed in the legislation. This would start with a three-person review panel ultimately deciding to investigate a complaint of misconduct. In some situations, if the complaint is serious enough, it might even warrant dismissal or removal from the bench. In situations like that, it could be referred to a separate five-person panel.

In the first case, it would be strictly a three-person review panel made up of CJC members. A judge and a layperson could impose sanctions such as public apologies and continuing education.

The current process has turned out, in many ways, to be exceptionally costly at times, and equally as important, it is not very timely. We have seen situations where it could take years before anything is actually concluded.

That is the reason our judicial system is saying that we need to make changes. Today, judges facing possible removal from office because of serious allegations of misconduct have several opportunities throughout the process to launch these judicial reviews. How-

ever, as I indicated, the process in some cases can be too long and can be at a fairly significant cost.

Replacing the process through which the Canadian Judicial Council reviews the conduct of a federally appointed judge is the essence of what the legislation is proposing to do. It establishes a new process for reviewing allegations of misconduct that are not serious enough to warrant a judge's removal from office and makes changes to the process by which recommendations regarding removal from office can be made by the Minister of Justice.

The new process would allow for the imposition of sanctions for misconduct which, while not serious enough to warrant removal, may warrant sanctions that are quite different. The current process does not allow for such sanctions. The member for Mount Royal highlighted some examples. Where a judge's actions have been deemed to have offended something and there needs to be a consequence for the actions, there are more opportunities for different types of consequences.

● (1330)

We could see anything ranging from verbal warnings to written warnings, to suspensions or public apologies. We could even see additional training being required, and ultimately, of course, judges being released. This legislation enables a suite of actions that could be imposed on a judge, given a certain behaviour or comment that is made publicly.

Not only have we heard today, but we have also heard it in the past. We have had private members' bills. I think of Rona Ambrose. She talked about educating judges, particularly in the area of rape victims. Her piece of legislation ultimately received support from all areas of the House. Parliamentarians from all political stripes recognized the need to have some form of educational programming for newly appointed judges to take things into consideration. In fact, my daughter, who is a local representative in the province of Manitoba, had also taken that particular initiative after hearing about what Rona Ambrose had done.

Ultimately, the government pushed that legislation through in the years that followed after Ms. Ambrose left the House of Commons, but we attribute it to Rona and we attribute it to the fact that there is a universal desire for that training.

It was not that long ago when we had another private member's bill, one from one of my colleagues from Montreal. There was a great deal of effort by members on all sides of the House to see that legislation, Bill C-233, which is still before the House today, pass second reading and go to committee. It came out of third reading because of that desire.

*Government Orders*

For those who are not familiar, Ms. Ambrose's piece of legislation is recognized as Keira's law for good reason. I will quote from an article, "When I brought forward the evidence about abuse of Mr. Brown, we had a judge, for example, who said that domestic violence is not relevant to parenting and, 'I'm going to ignore it.'"

Periodically statements come out of our judicial system that call into question the public confidence. That is one of the reasons it is so important that we pass this legislation. It recognizes that our independent judicial system and our judges, who we do need to respect, can make mistakes. Obviously, a vast majority of judgments are done in a way in which they meet the expectations of Canadians, but on occasion, when that does not happen, there needs to be a more effective mechanism to ensure there is an appropriate consequence. This legislation would enable some variation of consequences for judges, at times, who cross the line.

I have appreciated the opportunity to share a few thoughts and will be more than happy to answer any questions.

• (1335)

**Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one of the important changes in the legislation is the inclusion of the review and hearing panel system. I was wondering if the member could tell everyone what the difference between a review and a hearing panel is.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I would emphasize that one of the aspects of the legislation that I do like is that we are finally going to be seeing a layperson as part of the process. Having that put into place is quite important and is an important aspect of the legislation.

I am not as confident in giving the type of detailed answer the member is specifically looking for.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Winnipeg North for his speech. His ability to speak in depth on so many diverse topics will never cease to amaze me. I have sincere respect for his work and the way he carries it out.

That said, why is it so urgent for the government to act on Bill C-9 at this time?

Given all the other urgent issues that the government should feel are priorities, particularly inflation, why is Bill C-9 being dealt with at this time?

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, the problem with the House of Commons is there is never enough time to have the types of debates that we would like to have on everything that comes before us. That is why we often have to sit beyond our normal sitting hours.

The Government of Canada has a legislative agenda. It also has budgetary measures. When we put them together and look at the priorities of the government, whether it is the pandemic or inflation, as we are all concerned about, all of these public policy issues continue to move forward, led by the Prime Minister and the cabinet.

At the end of the day, a well-functioning government has the ability to deal with a wide variety of issues, always keeping our focus on the issues that are most important to Canadians. It does not necessarily mean that we just let Bill C-9 go nowhere. It is an important piece of legislation. We have been provided this opportunity to bring in Bill C-9 because of a collapse in debate last night.

We have not lost any focus on what the important issues are for Canadians in particular, whether it is the pandemic, the war in Europe or inflation, which are all matters of great concern.

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have heard it said that the most valuable commodity in this place is time, and here we are debating a bill for several hours. I have been here for most of it and heard a fair bit of repetition, but also some strong agreement that we want to move this forward. I wonder whether my colleague knows if there have been conversations about moving this bill forward by unanimous consent. We have seen that done before. Even on contentious issues, such as conversion therapy, we have managed to expedite the process.

In the interest of moving on to issues that really require more debate than something that was debated in the previous Parliament, I would ask my colleague if he has made an effort within his party to expedite this process.

• (1340)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, as much as I do enjoy being engaged in debate on the floor of the House of Commons, I would have been more than happy to surrender my time to debate if I had a sense that we could actually pass the legislation at second reading so that it could go before a committee.

However, over the last number of months, I have seen the behaviour of members of the official opposition in particular. It seems they have taken the position that unless a bill is under time allocation, we can anticipate a long debate on virtually all pieces of legislation.

Maybe I am being a little unfair to my Conservative colleagues, but I firmly believe that if the Conservatives wanted this bill to pass, we would be very much open to having it pass second reading, at the very least, so that it could begin committee stage.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Winnipeg North mentioned a few times the disconnect between what we see the Conservatives do and what we hear the Conservatives talk about. These are things like being soft on crime, when the Conservatives are supporting illegal blockades and the Liberal Party is working to bring in better law enforcement.

We have gone a long way since the patronage appointments of Stephen Harper. I am thinking of Vic Toews: Less than a year out of cabinet, he was appointed to the Court of Queen's Bench in Manitoba by Stephen Harper. Now, we are doing an independent review of appointments of judges.

Could the member comment on how far we have moved things along to restore the public trust in our judicial system, and how Bill C-9 will help us to go even further?

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question, but I am reflecting more on some of the other comments the member made reference to. He talked about Liberals being soft on crime. Not that long ago, on Wellington Street, which was open at the time and has not opened since, a rally took place that shut down downtown Ottawa due to all the activities that were taking place. The Conservative Party of Canada members, like the member for Carleton, were doing very little, if anything, and maybe even encouraging the occupation to continue. On the other hand, they say we are the ones who are soft on crime. That is a side issue that I wanted to throw in.

Bill C-9 is the reason I started by quoting the chief justice, who recognizes that there is a need for us to change the system. They are very much following the legislation. This is not something that was done overnight. It has taken a while. We believe we got it right, and that is why I say we should send it to committee if there need to be some changes. It would reinforce public confidence, which is what the member is getting at in his question. We want to reinforce public confidence in our judicial system because unfortunately, at times and in a limited number of cases, a judge will say the wrong thing and it is likely because something inside needs to be changed, maybe through an educational program or something of that nature.

We have recognized it in the past. Let us recognize it today and see if we can get the legislation passed.

• (1345)

**Mr. Philip Lawrence:** Mr. Speaker, throughout the discussion, I have heard from the other side the importance of moving through this legislation with due dispatch. However, it is also important to have due diligence. The last time I asked a substantive question, I did not get an answer, so I am going to attempt another substantive question just to prove once again that even the government does not know what it is passing.

Can the member comment on the difference between the executive director screening it versus a designated officer?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, the member went into the legislation and picked something out. What we are debating at second reading is the principle of the legislation. If we agree on the principle of the legislation, then we send it to committee. In committee, there will be all sorts of opportunities to get the detailed answers that the member is specifically looking for. If he wants an answer before it goes to committee, the minister is right across the aisle from him. He can drop him a note or raise it with the parliamentary secretary, who has already spoken on the issue.

The principle of the legislation is good, solid, sound and necessary, and it will help put more public confidence in our judicial system. Why would the member not recognize it for what it is and allow the legislation to pass, at the very least, so we can get it to committee?

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will have to cut off the next speaker about five minutes into his speech for Statements by Members.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Northumberland—Peterborough South.

**Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am actually going to go through the

substance of this bill. I agree with many parts of it. I would say this is one of the least contentious pieces of legislation that we will go through and that we have discussed. However, I do believe that our job, for which we are very well compensated by Canadian taxpayers, is to make sure we understand any legislation that goes through the chamber as it will all have an impact our country. After all, that is why we were sent here by our constituents and that is why we are paid by the taxpayers.

Some members of the government party do not seem to have a substantive grasp of this, as my last two questions pointed out. They were unable to answer even simple questions over the substance of this legislation.

Let us start out on our journey of what happens in a disciplinary procedure. I actually had the privilege of sitting on another body's disciplinary committee and found it to be very important and critical. Just to put this into context before we walk through the process, it is by weeding out those poor actors who are not living up to the expectations of the community that we improve the profession. I must say that, by and large, our justices are amazing people doing great work. They are keeping our cities and our streets safe. They are working to rehabilitate those who have gone off course, and I truly applaud their work. It is not many jobs that place the fate of individuals in one's hands and have that type of stress, so I would like to start by giving my thanks to the justices.

There are those justices who go off course, for whatever reason. They are unable or incapable of performing the duties that they are required to by law. It is incredibly important that when we have those folks off course we either bring them back on course or, in very severe circumstances when their careers simply cannot be salvaged, take them off the bench. For the most part, our justices are great, but it is incredibly important that we keep everyone accountable, from the House to the judges across our country and to the highest offices of the land.

The first step is the issuance of a complaint. Under the old system, the executive director of the Canadian Judicial Council would screen them. Now, they are putting in place a screening officer. It would be a lawyer's job to have those complaints come in and to initially screen them. Having sat on a professional disciplinary board myself, often complaints are just vexatious. They might be from litigants who got a decision they did not happen to like, but the judge did nothing wrong. When someone is in a decision-making capacity, they cannot make all the people happy all the time. Unfortunately, some of that bubbles up into complaints.

I believe that having a professional at the screening desk whose full-time job, as I understand it, is to review these complaints is a great step. I am sure the executive director was doing a good job, but they have multiple other tasks as well. Having a professional screening individual, who is a lawyer, review complaints is, I believe, a great step.

### *Government Orders*

The next step is a very important one. After the initial complaint has been issued, the judge who is the subject of the complaint will get a notification of that complaint. I assume it will be a written notification. They then get the ability to respond with written submissions. At that point, that could be reviewed to see whether it is a legitimate claim or not. That claim could be dismissed on the grounds of the written submissions of the justice.

Once again, this is important. I like this part of the process. As I said, it is incredibly important that we hold everyone accountable so that if there are justices who are behaving inappropriately, we pull them off the bench.

● (1350)

Also very important is that we make this as painless as possible for justices who have done nothing wrong, but are the subject of vexatious or unnecessary complaints. This is obviously a very stressful job to begin with, so if there are vexatious claims it is incredibly important we get them voided and annulled as soon as possible. Throughout this new process, there would be multiple off-ramps where multiple individuals could review a claim and say whether something was a real claim or whether it should be dismissed.

One critical point in the initial review of the complaint by the screening officer is that discrimination and sexual harassment complaints could not be dismissed. I really like that, too. If we look at the numbers, the math and the history of our country, unfortunately sexual harassment claims have been way too often dismissed out of hand as “she said, he said” or otherwise. This would put an absolute right for those complaints to continue on, ensure they are not dismissed out of hand and that they do get a hearing, which is novel.

I have not seen this in other professional disciplinary boards. It may exist, but I have not seen it and it is a great step. One of the lowest prosecution rates we have is for sexual assault and for discriminatory crimes. Putting that in place would put in another safeguard to make sure that where there is discrimination and sexual harassment going on, that claim, if submitted, would always get a hearing. Other claims that may be lesser in nature could be dismissed out of hand, and I support that. This makes a lot of sense.

I also want to bring up that Conservatives agree this legislation needs to be reviewed.

After we get to the screening officer and the reviewing member, the next step would be the review panel. After there has been a complaint, the screening officer has said they believe something is legitimate and the justice has written their submissions back that they still believe this deserves to be heard, it would go to a review panel that would include a member, a judge and a layperson. It is nice that a layperson has been included in a number of these bills. Sometimes it should not always be the profession judging the profession, especially when it comes to judges, because the impact of a judge is well beyond the legal profession.

When it gets in front of the review panel, the review panel would consider the substance of the complaint, any related documents, observations provided by the viewing member, written submissions provided by the judge at issue and those of the chief justice. This would be a new addition in proposed section 99.

The review panel would have the ability to do one of three things. The panel could refer the case to a full hearing, which should be done if it believes the removal of the justice is a potential outcome of the offence: The offence is serious enough that it could warrant the removal of the justice. Another option, or another off-ramp, if the review panel does not believe this is a legitimate concern is to dismiss the complaint. Once again, if a person is innocent, it is another opportunity for them to have their innocence expressed and to have an off-ramp.

The next is to impose alternative sanctions short of removal. At this stage and level, the review panel could put in sanctions and penalties. This does not happen under the current system. It actually needs to be kicked back to the Canadian Judicial Council, which would then decide. This step would be taken away, which would expedite the process and make it that much more efficient.

● (1355)

I will quickly go through the list of possible sanctions that the review panel could put in.

It could issue a public or private expression of concern, a warning or a reprimand. From my experience working with a professional disciplinary committee, I know that oftentimes, if we can get to someone early, someone who may not be a bad person but may have made a mistake, then the opportunity to counsel them, educate them and put them in the right direction is far more productive. They may go on to be a fabulous justice, and this was just one indiscretion, one mistake along the way that they learned from. I think we need to give people, including justices, a second chance where it is merited.

The review panel could order a judge to privately or public apologize or take specific measures, including attending counselling or continuing education. We are in a mental health crisis, and I do not believe that justices are completely immune to it, particularly given the stress of their job. Perhaps counselling is a solution. We may have an extremely talented person who has been going through a difficult time. As a community, we want to do everything we can to help them with whatever issues they may have. Also, they are an extremely valuable part of our community, being a justice, so we want to see the investment rewarded with a great, long career.

The review panel could take any action that it considers equivalent to the above options. With a judge's consent, it could also make an agreement, which is great too because not everything is one size fits all. Overly prescriptive legislation, in my opinion, can often be challenging, so this would give judges the ability to sit with members of the review panel and decide and agree on some steps going forward so that we can get their career back on a path that makes sure they are dispensing justice in a way that the community would be proud of.

With regard to the review panel, if one of the sanctions I talked about was put in place, there would be a review process or an appeal process, which is a little confusing in the legislation, called a “reduced hearing panel”. I would have named it the “appeal panel” for the sanctions or put the word “appeal” in there somewhere, but that is effectively what this is. The justice would have the ability to call for a review of the sanctions that are less important than removal.

I will leave the step about a full removal for the second part of my speech because I do not want to continue with that, but I will note that the reduced hearing panel has an interesting part to it. Judges could go from getting sanctions to being put in a full panel hearing, which could actually lead to a worse circumstance. I have some questions about that and will raise them later on in my speech.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

### FIREARMS

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, gun violence is a reality in every community. My riding of Parkdale—High Park is no exception. As my staff have heard repeatedly from my constituents, we must do everything in our power to combat gun violence.

To date, we have banned assault-style weapons. We have cracked down on illegal trafficking. We have committed \$250 million to address gang violence.

With Bill C-21 we are going further. We are implementing a national freeze on the sale, purchase, transfer and importation of handguns. We are responding to the pleas of women who are victims of intimate partner violence, which often turns lethal simply because of the presence of handguns in the home. We are responding to pleas of racialized and religious minorities, who have asked that red flag laws, which enable firearms to be removed by court order, protect the anonymity of those targeted by hate. We are responding to the pleas of mental health advocates, who contend, rightly, that handguns in Canadian homes result in increased deaths by suicide.

The only pleas we are ignoring are those of the gun lobby, who would criticize us for working to keep Canadians safe.

\* \* \*

### ITALIAN HERITAGE MONTH

**Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today in the House to recognize Italian Heritage Month. Over 40,000 Italian Canadians live in King—Vaughan, and I am a proud ancestor of an Italian Canadian.

In the 1950s, my grandfather immigrated to Canada and worked as a bricklayer for many years to support his family. He came to this nation with nothing but the clothing on his back and a few dollars in his pocket. My grandfather and numerous other Italian Cana-

### Statements by Members

dians became entrepreneurs, business owners and community leaders, and as a result of their hard work and devotion, they had a desire to achieve.

Italian Canadians make an important contribution to this country, and they continue to make the riding of King—Vaughan and our entire country better every day.

[Member spoke in Italian]

[English]

\* \* \*

### HEALTH CARE WORKERS

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to recognize and show my immense gratitude to health care workers. With the summer days among us and the possibility to finally rejoice together, the echo of the sounds of pots and pans showing support for health care workers may have dissipated, but in our hearts we must continue to be thankful and recognize the essential importance of their work.

Consider the nurses who are working in indigenous communities and remote communities, the family physicians who are accompanying us at every stage of our lives and those in long-term care who have faced the tragedy of the pandemic head-on. I thank them for their sacrifice and dedication.

Words will never be enough. Much work needs to be done, and we must commit to improving working conditions and solidifying our system. We can only achieve that by making sure that every decision focuses on the well-being of health care workers themselves.

I encourage all members in the House to join me in celebrating their heroic efforts. I thank them. *Woliwon.*

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, June 15 is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. It is a time to remember the importance of paying attention to the suffering that some seniors are experiencing.

Elder abuse is insidious and unacceptable, but it is unfortunately still all too common, whether it is a slap on the face, belittling comments, or financial fraud. We need to raise awareness of this social problem, and encourage people to recognize it and prevent all types of abuse.

However, beyond abuse, more and more organizations want us to focus on caring. In order to have a more caring community, incomes need to be higher. While COVID-19 has amplified the isolation and financial stress felt by seniors, rising inflation is hardest for those on fixed incomes, many of them seniors.

*Statements by Members*

To help them stay in their own homes, old age security needs to be increased without creating age discrimination. Health transfers also need to be increased, with no strings attached.

Seniors have the same rights as everyone else, and we need to allow them to age with care, kindness and dignity.

\* \* \*

**ORLÉANS PLASMA DONOR CENTRE**

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on June 6, I had the great pleasure of visiting the brand new plasma donor centre in my community of Orléans.

[English]

The state-of-the-art donation centre is located in Place d'Orléans Shopping Centre. Donated plasma can be given to those in need of a plasma transfusion or to create plasma protein products such as immunoglobulins, which can be used to help Canadians in need. Currently, there is an increased need for plasma, as more and more conditions are being treated with immunoglobulins.

[Translation]

Anyone who is eligible can donate plasma as often as every two weeks. I would like to thank all the residents of Orléans who have already used this facility. I encourage all eligible individuals to consider making an appointment to donate plasma by visiting the Canadian Blood Services website.

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● (1405)

[English]

**MARIPOSA FOLK FESTIVAL**

**Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have a back-row special for members today.

The Mariposa Folk Festival in Orillia has been an iconic cultural event since its first edition in 1961 and has grown into a cultural highlight of summer in Simcoe North. This year's festival will be a celebration of the return of the festival, of live music and, yes, of the community.

In the last 60-plus years, a who's who of folk legends have graced Mariposa's stages: Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Leonard Cohen, Gordon Lightfoot, Buffy Sainte-Marie and many more. The Mariposa Folk Festival will take place from July 8 to 10 in beautiful Tudhope Park on the shores of Lake Couchiching in Orillia. It celebrates the past while bringing in diverse, contemporary folk music to new generations.

I would like to thank the Mariposa Folk Foundation and all of the volunteers for their continued work in the promotion and preservation of folk art in Canada through song, story and craft.

I invite all who see this message to come to visit us in Orillia this summer.

**CALGARY ARAB FESTIVAL**

**Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge a very special event that I had the honour of attending in Calgary. The seventh Calgary Arab Festival was an extraordinary event showcasing live performances, folk shows, cultural tents and delicious foods from across the globe. The celebration was especially meaningful this year because of the recent recognition of Arab Heritage Month. I thank my hon. colleagues for supporting Bill C-232 and providing over a million Arab Canadians with another opportunity to showcase their cultures.

I would like to say a special thanks to Mirna Khaled, Mohamad Awada, Alaa Hamadan, Mohammed Hamden, Bridges for Newcomers and all the volunteers who put this festival together.

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**BIKE THE CREEK**

**Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, summer is right around the corner and so is Brampton's annual Bike the Creek event, coming up on June 18. Bramptonians of all ages have a chance to bike through the beautiful valleys, trails and landmarks in Peel. This year marks the eighth annual ride.

I want to thank all BikeBrampton board members, volunteers and organizers, and I send a big shout-out to David and Dayle Laing and Kevin Montgomery for their leadership.

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is so important, and it is amazing to see how biking can help us reduce our carbon footprint and stay active. Cycling can improve our heart, lungs, circulation and mental health, and it is a great way to explore our communities. Let us all get pedalling this weekend and discover the joy of cycling.

\* \* \*

**BEEF LABELLING**

**Mr. Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I once asked my youngest daughter what her favourite colour was. Do members know what she said? It was “bacon”. We cannot get more Canadian than that.

I love bacon too. What does bacon go great on? It is the iconic bacon cheeseburger. Every part of that sandwich represents a different part of Saskatchewan agriculture, and agriculture is under attack.

Now the government wants to slap a warning label on Canadian ground beef. Be it the Liberals' carbon tax, rampant inflation or now warning labels, the government wants to starve Canadians. Adding a warning label on beef is yet another attack on Saskatchewan. It will hurt our beef industry and raise costs for already-struggling families.

Why will the government not stop interfering and let us eat our bacon cheeseburgers in peace?

### RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS

**Ms. Jenna Sudds (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a warm smile is the universal language of kindness. Have members ever met someone whose smile just pulled them in, whose smile radiated kindness?

I rise today to recognize my constituent and team member Joanne Sass-Williams, as she begins her retirement next week. Joanne has one of those smiles, instantly earning trust and comfort for those around her. Her quiet confidence, giant heart and dedication to the constituents of Kanata—Carleton over the last seven years have been incredible. A void will be left in our office as she leaves us next week. However, I know her husband Lloyd, kids Laura and Kurtis and especially her grandbabies Addie and Melody will be overjoyed to have more of her time.

Joanne reminds me that kindness is a silent smile, a friendly word, a nod of encouragement. Kindness is the single most powerful thing we can give to each other, and Joanne has given it in spades. I thank her.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Madam Speaker, on Sunday, the Minister of Foreign Affairs said it was unacceptable for a high-level Canadian official to attend a Russia Day celebration. “The buck stops with me,” she claimed.

As a former Canadian foreign services officer, I can personally attest that at Global Affairs, we only do what we are told to do. Orders are given and we are expected to execute them without question. Nowhere is this more clear than with the top diplomat, the minister herself.

If the direction came from the minister, it is a continued reflection of the Liberal government's approach to foreign policy. It is careless, thoughtless and reactive, and it starts with our foreign minister.

The minister owes it to Canadians and to our ally, Ukraine, to explain why a Canadian official attended this celebration. It is an affront not only to democracy, but also to diplomacy.

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### FLOOD PROTECTION

**Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last November, B.C.'s Fraser Valley experienced a massive flood. Thousands were evacuated as the Nooksack River in Washington state sent floodwaters pouring into Canada. Sumas prairie, the heart of Abbotsford's agricultural industry, suffered catastrophic losses of livestock, crops and buildings.

This week, city council approved a plan for long-term flood protection at a price of close to \$3 billion. The goal is not just to rebuild old dikes, but to construct new flood-resilient infrastructure to 21st century standards. Modern engineering will not only keep us safe; it will avert billions of dollars in future economic losses.

### Statements by Members

In fact, hundreds of constituents have written to me asking the Liberal government to fund this infrastructure. Today, I will personally deliver those letters to the Deputy Prime Minister. I plead with her to listen to our cries for help and deliver the support we have asked for.

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### ONTARIO HOCKEY LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Windsor—Tecumseh, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, two of the hardest-working hockey teams from two of the hardest-working communities faced off in game seven of the OHL championship. The Hamilton Bulldogs and our own Windsor Spitfires gave hockey fans one of the most thrilling championship series in memory.

Although we came up short, I rise today to say congratulations to the western conference champions, the Windsor Spitfires, on a great season and thank them for giving our community and our fans an unbelievable and electric playoff run.

I would also like to say congratulations to the Bulldogs, the city of Hamilton and their incredible fans that showed class and grit throughout the series. I wish them good luck in Saint John. Let us bring the Memorial Cup back to Ontario.

I say to Spitfires coach Marc Savard and the Spitfires players that today we stand Windsor proud. We will be there when the season starts to cheer the boys on all the way. Go, Spits, go.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### SUMMER FESTIVITIES IN ALGOMA—MANITOULIN—KAPUSKASING

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are looking forward to summer activities and seeing everything this wonderful country has to offer.

If anyone is looking for a top-tier tourist destination, look no further than Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking. Kapuskasing will be throwing its biggest party of the year as it hosts a Saint-Jean festival this weekend.

[English]

The Iron Bridge Music Fest has a great line-up of musicians. Everyone should be sure to add Manitoulin Country Fest and St. Joseph Island's Go North Music Festival to their schedule.

### Oral Questions

People can learn about indigenous culture by attending National Indigenous Peoples Day events or the many powwows, including the Wiikwemkoong 60th Annual Cultural Festival.

There is also a host of Canada Day and Pride festivities. People should not forget White River's Winnie the Pooh Festival.

Are engines music to people's ears? They can get revved up at the North Shore Challenge Drag Race or the Smooth Truck Fest.

People who love the outdoors can put their line down at the 40th annual Wawa Salmon Fishing Derby.

People who love food can drop by the Espanola Poutine Feast or Little Current's ribfest.

We can see that Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing has something for everyone. Come join us.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

[Translation]

### GOVERNOR GENERAL

**Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, no matter what anyone says, representing the monarchy must make for a rough life.

Consider the 100,000 bucks for in-flight catering. This does not include hotel or restaurant expenses during the trip. The in-flight catering alone cost \$100,000 for nine days. I do not know what they ate, but I hope it was good. One must have no shame and no sense of responsibility to use people's money like that, to use taxpayer money to treat oneself and one's entourage to such a feast.

One thing is certain. While the Governor General's role is largely symbolic, the expenses involved are anything but. Not only do we want to hear the Governor General's ridiculous excuses, but we want our colleagues from the other parties to explain why they care about the monarchy, because, for us, it is clear that the monarchy is an antiquated, undemocratic institution that serves no purpose and costs way too much money.

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[English]

### JUSTICE

**Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, six years ago, in 2016, the government conducted consultations on reforming the judicial complaints process. After inexcusable delays, we are finally starting to debate Bill C-9, which has the potential to increase confidence in the judicial system. This is long overdue.

This bill would replace the process through which the conduct of federally appointed judges is reviewed by the Canadian Judicial Council and would enable a judge to be removed from office for reasons including infirmity, misconduct or failure in the due execution of judicial office. By modifying the existing judicial review process, a straightforward process for complaints serious enough to warrant removal from office would be established.

Our justice system needed this piece of legislation to be implemented years ago. Canadians must be assured that our judges need

to be held accountable and perform their duty in the best interests of our society and our country. I urge all members in the House to support this bill.

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### ITALIAN HERITAGE MONTH

**Ms. Lisa Hefner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is Italian Heritage Month and my riding of Hamilton Mountain is home to a vibrant Italian community 12,000 strong.

One of my constituents, Alfredo De Luca, learned the art of cooking from his mom back when he was a child in Calabria, Italy. There he learned how to perfect his sauce, make the handmade pasta he uses to craft his lasagna, and find the perfect spice for his meatballs. Today, Alfredo, his wife Tania and son Alfredo bring those traditional recipes to the people of Hamilton Mountain at Alfredo's Place on Fennell Avenue East. He opened the restaurant after an accomplished career at Stelco, and his mouth-watering fresh dishes now draw crowds. Family-run traditional businesses like Alfredo's are at the heart of what makes Hamilton, well, Hamilton. I am thankful to Alfredo and his family for sharing their traditions with all of us.

Happy Italian Heritage Month to all who are celebrating.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

### GOVERNMENT POLICIES

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, never in the history of this country have the people been so poorly served by a government.

Everything the Liberals touch goes wrong, and Canadians are paying the price. If they want a passport, they have to stand in line. If they want to travel by plane, they have to stand in line. If they travel to the United States without a smart phone, they still have to have ArriveCAN. If they have a problem with employment insurance, they have to wait months to get a cheque. Now it is their turn to stand in line.

Which minister will stand up and take responsibility for this chaos?

**Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know that Canadians are frustrated.

For the past two years, they have followed the rules and stayed home. They want to travel and go on vacation. We are doing everything we can. Demand is incredible right now. The government is working on it, changing the process and adding more people to serve Canadians. We will keep working on it until we fix it.



*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the problem is the government's chaotic management. [English]

Regarding COVID-19, the Minister of Health was slow at every step. Regarding passports, the minister did not know that Canadians would want to travel after COVID-19. Regarding immigration, the minister asked Ukrainians to make an appointment online. Regarding international affairs, the minister has no problem with people attending a party at the Russian embassy. Regarding the military, the previous minister was unable to protect women. Regarding the government, it is total chaos.

Why is the Prime Minister abandoning Canadians?

• (1420)

**Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, of course Canadians want to get back to normal after two years of a pandemic. We understand that.

However, we have to kick-start all parts of the Government of Canada. We are adding more staff and extending working hours to ensure that we are meeting this increased demand.

We understand that Canadians are frustrated. We will be there for them and make the changes required to ensure that they receive the services they need.

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**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, another example of Liberal incompetence is the mismanagement of the Pinocchio affair.

Two senior ministers contradicted the Minister of Public Safety in committee by testifying that no police force specifically asked for the Emergencies Act to be invoked. The President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness said, and I quote, "I'm not aware of any recommendation from law enforcement." There is squabbling in the Liberal ranks. The Minister of Public Safety has lost the confidence of his own colleagues.

When will the Prime Minister demand his resignation?

**The Speaker:** I want to remind members that we try to have intelligent discourse in the House. Name calling is not something I like to hear in this place.

The hon. Minister of Canadian Heritage.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if my colleague wants to see squabbling, he should just look at the official opposition benches. They are having a hard time getting along.

The more serious issue is what they are doing while the government is working to solve the problems and challenges that Canadians are facing. The Conservatives are spending their time filibustering. Filibustering is the first thing they think about when they wake up in the morning and the last thing they think about when they go to bed at night. How do they spend their time in between? They filibuster.

**THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, \$3,100 in food and alcohol costs for a flight to Dubai may seem normal to these "speNDP-Liberals", but it is beyond the reach of a vast majority of Canadians, who struggle every day to pay their bills, let alone imagine taking a flight. However, that did not stop the finance minister from lecturing to Canadians how good they have it from her podium in Toronto, where they charged \$1,000 a table to hear her "hurry up and wait" approach to helping Canadians struggle with record high inflation.

Does the minister not understand that Canadians need help, not lectures, today, and will she start listening to Conservative proposals to fight inflation?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, unlike this side of the House, the opposition has no affordability plan. What it proposes is that Canadians put their money into Bitcoin.

There is a movie about that, and it is called *Risky Business*. Had one listened to the Conservatives, one would have lost their shirt in the last year.

We are going to put \$8.9 billion into the pockets of Canadians this year. The Conservatives bluff, bluster and blame. We double down and deliver.

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, \$3,100 for in-flight catering, for food costs, is no joke to Canadians.

These Liberals will not listen to pragmatic suggestions to help fight inflation. They will not stop their inflationary deficit spending. They will not give Canadians a break at the pumps. They think it hurts us, but instead, when they reject our ideas, it hurts Canadians.

Hope springs eternal, so I will try again. Here is an idea: In 2017, Bill Morneau added an inflationary clause to every user fee charged by the Canadian government, from national parks to port fees. They go up automatically. Will the minister get serious on inflation and say no more to the Morneau user fee escalator?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government has been working on affordability and making sure Canadians can not just make ends meet but prosper. We taxed the 1% and put more money in the pockets of Canadians.

The Canada worker benefit is going to benefit three million Canadians. A couple will make \$2,500 more and a single person \$1,200. There will be \$500 if one is struggling for housing.

### Oral Questions

The other side thinks it has a plan, but I know one thing from Alberta, which is that that side is all hat and no cattle.

\* \* \*

● (1425)

[Translation]

### PASSPORTS

**Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, people are having to line up for two days to get a passport because this government did not anticipate that Quebeckers and Canadians would be eager to travel this summer. When these people manage to get their passports, they head to the airport. The government also failed to anticipate that. The Liberals did not make the connection that more passports mean more people at the airport.

These ministers do not anticipate anything. They spend their time telling Quebec how to manage its health care system, its infrastructure and its language planning.

Why do they not mind their own business instead of interfering in Quebec's business? They already have a hard enough time looking after their own affairs.

**Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the Bloc Québécois's interest in Canadian passports.

I understand that Canadians across the country are frustrated about the wait times for getting their passports. We understand that Canadians want to travel again, after following guidelines and staying home for two years.

Demand is very high, and we are responding. We have already hired 600 additional people and are hiring another 600. The offices are open, but demand is extremely high right now. We are doing everything we can to meet the needs of Canadians all across the country.

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### ACCESS TO INFORMATION

**Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the only thing this government sees coming are requests for access to information. When it comes to hiding information from the media and the public, the Liberals are officially the best of all time. Last year, 7,000 complaints were sent to the Information Commissioner, which represents an increase of 70%. The Liberals are the Wayne Gretzky of secrecy.

When we look at the most opaque departments, it becomes obvious. We are talking about the Prime Minister's Office itself, since leadership comes from the top, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, the Canada Revenue Agency, and the Canada Border Services Agency.

If the federal government has so many skeletons then why does it not just clean out its closet instead of always interfering in Quebec's jurisdictions?

**Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the commissioner for her work on

these issues. Openness, transparency and accountability are the guiding principles of our government.

We have invested more than \$50 million in additional funding to improve access to information and we are currently proceeding with a regulatory review of the access to information process. We will continue to explore options for improving it, enhancing proactive publication and reducing delays.

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[English]

### THE ECONOMY

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are going hungry. Canadians are going to lose their homes because the cost of living is going up. The Minister of Finance made an announcement today that does not include anything new to help Canadians now. In fact, what a lot of Canadians will receive from this announcement is \$7. Seven dollars extra does not even pay for a litre of milk and a loaf of bread.

Will the government finally realize people need immediate help and increase the financial support to families, everyday families who need help, by \$500 to \$1,000, as we are calling for?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we understand the challenges Canadians are facing at the pump and at the grocery store. As the hon. member knows, inflation is rising around the world. Here in Canada, we have the lowest inflation, yet it is still rising. That is why, in our budget, we were very clear. We have been working on affordability for a long time, and in our budget we have dental care for Canadian families and a doubling of the support provided through the first-time homebuyer's tax.

There is the Canada workers benefit, which is \$2,400 for a couple and \$1,200 for a single worker, as well as a \$500 payment for those who are facing housing affordability challenges. Once again, this year, the basic income amount for everybody's taxes goes up in Canada, so more money will be in the pockets of Canadians.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, these are tough times, and Canadians are struggling to make ends meet. The Minister of Finance announced more help for a lot of Canadians: an extra \$7. Seven dollars will not make much of a difference to all the people who do not have enough to buy groceries.

When will the government adopt our plan to increase financial support for people by \$500 to \$1,000, which would really help families in these tough times?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question. We know inflation is rising around the world. Here in Canada, it has not risen as much, but we know it is still an issue for Canadians at the grocery store and at the pump.

That is why we introduced a dental care plan for Canadians in our budget. The Canada workers benefit will give couples an extra \$2,400 and single workers an extra \$1,200. We have an affordability plan, and we will follow it.

*Oral Questions*

• (1430)

*[English]*

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are struggling to make ends meet. They are seeing the price of everything skyrocket, from gasoline to groceries. All the while, Liberal officials jet-set around the world in decadence, drinking champagne and, if we can believe it, eating caviar. The \$93,000 cost of catering on one of these flights would feed a Canadian family for years. Canadians are looking to catch a break, not catch a slap in the face.

When will the Liberals set their entitlements aside and finally put Canadians first?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, obviously, we know inflation is having an impact on Canadian lives, but I would like to take my colleague down memory lane. He referred to the expenses linked to alcohol. Stephen Harper's delegation took 348 bottles when it went to South Africa in 2013. I just wanted to state the facts. Of course, I hope—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order.

I will ask the hon. minister to please continue.

**Hon. Mélanie Joly:** Mr. Speaker, clearly, the members opposite need to take back their fake outrage.

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, well, the minister wants to talk about what happened a decade ago or more. We are talking about what has been happening while they have been in office. We are reading stories in the newspaper about Canadians who cannot afford a full tank of gas. They are running out of gas on their way to work in record numbers across the country. They are not able to afford groceries, prescriptions or even to turn on the air conditioning during a heat wave because of inflationary pressures.

We are asking the government to take a reality check, not take a luxurious flight and spend \$93,000 on catering when they could do with a little less. When will they put their entitlements aside and put Canadians first?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would love to have known where that rhetoric was in support of Canadians when we were in the House trying to pass Bill C-2, Bill C-8 and the budget implementation act, which include billions of dollars to go into the hands of Canadians. Instead, we took the reins to make sure we could get legislation passed, so we could get \$8.9 billion into the hands of Canadians.

For child care, which the people on the other side just want to shred, in Toronto alone, a family will save \$19,790 a year. That will help families afford groceries and gas. We are doing this across the country because this government puts Canada first.

*[Translation]***PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Public Safety has repeatedly said that he invoked the Emergencies Act, a historic law that had never been used before in this country, at the request of the police. The problem is that every single police force has told the committee that they never asked for it.

I am asking the minister to do the only honourable thing left to him and resign.

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, it is clear that we will always protect Canadians' needs and safety. That is exactly why we invoked the Emergencies Act. In the process, we sought the advice of the police and used that advice to make our decisions.

On the other side, there are the Conservatives, who encouraged the illegal blockade. They must apologize.

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Emergency Preparedness, himself a former chief of police, said the following in committee, referring to the Emergencies Act: "I do not believe that would have been an appropriate thing for law enforcement to ask, and they did not ask".

The reality is that we have a Minister of Public Safety who has totally lost Canadians' confidence. There is only one course open to him now, and that is to do the honourable thing and resign. What is he waiting for?

• (1435)

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government will always defend its decision to invoke the Emergencies Act, because it was a necessary decision.

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police supports the decision. The Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police supports the decision. The Canadian Police Association supports the decision. Why? Because it was necessary.

We on this side understand that. The Conservatives have never understood that. They need to apologize for their role in the illegal blockade.

*[English]*

**Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the public safety minister continues to hide the truth from Canadians on the use of the Emergencies Act. The minister cannot just tell Canadians that the act was necessary. He must show them. That is his job. I will quote the emergency preparedness minister, who said, "I do not believe that would have been an appropriate thing for law enforcement to ask, and they did not ask."

The public safety minister has misled Canadians and Parliament. Will he resign today?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have been consistent and clear on this side of the House that the decision to invoke the Emergencies Act was necessary because it was needed to restore public safety. Past president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, Chief Gary Conn, said that, in their view, the Emergencies Act provided the appropriate authorities and powers for police services to ensure the rule of law and the safety of citizens. He said that had been their experience, particularly during the “freedom convoy” of 2022.

That is law enforcement right there, and it was the Conservatives who exacerbated the situation with their reckless behaviour.

**Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, these are more diversion tactics to avoid answering one simple question. The public safety minister has misled Canadians and Parliament. Law enforcement did not ask to have the use of the Emergencies Act. It is just that simple. I will quote the emergency preparedness minister: “I am not aware of any recommendation of law enforcement.”

Will the minister do the honourable thing and resign today, right now?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, doing the honourable thing means protecting Canadians. That is why we invoked the Emergencies Act. Doing the honourable thing means not taking that decision in a vacuum, which means consulting with police, searching for their advice and using that advice to inform the decision of the Emergencies Act, which is why police associations across the country supported the decision.

It was the Conservatives who knew all too well that, by making reckless statements asking the blockades to double down and entrench, they were undermining public safety, and they should apologize for that role. They undermined public safety, but on this side of the House, we protect it

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[Translation]

**CLIMATE CHANGE**

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, there is a flaw in how Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions are calculated. Canada is the fourth-largest oil exporter in the world, but it is not responsible for what it sells.

Between 2016 and 2020, Canada as a whole emitted 3.6 billion tonnes of greenhouse gases, yet Ecojustice calculated that fossil fuel exports caused 4.4 billion tonnes of emissions elsewhere in the world.

Canadian exports pollute 29% more than Canada in its entirety. Does the minister find it acceptable to wash his hands of that pollution?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me give a quick lesson on the greenhouse gas emissions inventory. Canada uses the same methodology as every country in the world, which is the one used by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the IPCC. Simply put, emissions are calculated at the point of combustion. If the oil is burned here, it goes into our emissions balance, and if the oil

is burned in the United States or Europe, it goes into their balance. That is how it works for everyone on the planet, including Canada.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, even if the Bay du Nord project pumps the minimum estimated volume of oil, which would be an additional 500 million barrels, the minister keeps saying that this project will achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. I am inclined to say that he is washing his hands of it. However, if oil pollutes while it is being extracted, it also pollutes while it is being used. This oil will never be zero-emission once it is burned in a vehicle in Canada or elsewhere.

Climate change does not care whether it is Canada or another country that is responsible for accounting for the pollution.

In the middle of a climate crisis, how can the Minister of the Environment really claim that Bay du Nord is going to reach net-zero emissions?

• (1440)

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, that is not a claim, but rather a condition for the project to go ahead. This is the first time in this country’s history that the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency has imposed a net-zero condition on a project.

Second, I would invite my colleague to read the International Energy Agency report, which states that in 2050, we will still be using fossil fuel products, not as fuels, but instead as solvents or to build roads, for example. We will no longer be burning that fuel in 2050, but we will be using it for other purposes.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is absurd to hear the Minister of Environment boast about having the support of environmental groups when none other than Équiterre is taking him to court over Bay du Nord.

It is also absurd to hear him say that the number of additional barrels has no impact, as though more means less. It is utterly absurd to hear him speak about zero-emission oil as though it were green oil. It is even more absurd to hear him defending Canada’s responsibility for pollution as a mere accounting exercise, while turning a blind eye to the impact of these oil exports.

The minister is speaking, but what we are hearing is the voice of the oil companies. Does he realize this?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said and will repeat, we are putting a cap on greenhouse gas emissions. This cap will be in line with current levels and will decline over time so we can achieve our 2030 and 2050 targets.

No matter how much oil is produced, companies will have to respect this greenhouse gas emissions cap to ensure that Canada can reach its 2030 and 2050 targets. That is what we are going to do.

*Oral Questions*

[English]

**TOURISM INDUSTRY**

**Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government continues to be reactive rather than prepared. The vice-president of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce said that if the Government of Canada has a plan for tourism, it has never shown it to us. Mark Webber of the Customs and Immigration Union said that his border agents are no longer agents but instead have become “IT consultants”, and wait times have skyrocketed because of the inefficient ArriveCAN app. He went on to say that they were never consulted on the app. No wonder our airports and land borders are a disaster and an embarrassment.

Why would the government create a system without consulting the frontline workers who must implement it?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, not only do we have a plan for tourism, but this side of the aisle put in \$23 billion to make sure that the tourism sector would recover. Who voted against it? It was that side. They are not there for workers, not there for entrepreneurs, not there for tourism operators.

This side of the aisle has the backs of tourism operators. A federal tourism growth strategy is coming. We are going to boost tourism, we are going to boost this sector and we are going to show the world what Canada has to offer.

**Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, backlogs and delays at the border and points of entry are crippling our tourism industry. Whether it is a major event like the Toronto International Film Festival or a small rural event like the Tweed Stampede and Jamboree in Hastings-Lennox and Addington, our tourism industry is hurting. The government needs to take action to alleviate the absolutely unnecessary chaos.

When will the government stop slacking and start acting?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps the colleagues on the other side of the aisle have not caught up with the news, but this government has taken off random mandatory testing at the airports. It will be moved outside of airports July 1. We have no more PCR tests and no more rapid tests and billions of dollars have gone into the tourism sector. Even the Greater Toronto Airports Authority has sent a letter to us, thanking us for doubling down and working to make sure that the airports are functioning.

We are going to get this right. Those on the other side can yell and scream all they want. We are going to boost tourism and welcome the world once again.

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**GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, airports are in chaos. Global affairs is partying with Russian diplomats instead of expelling them. Immigration files are backlogged for years. Violent crime is up. Fraud is endemic. Inflation is out of control. The government does not even pretend to care about its

deficits. People are lining up all night just for a chance at a passport appointment.

Will the minister stand up and take ownership for this disastrous delivery of basic services?

• (1445)

**Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we understand that there is an unprecedented demand to travel after these two years of the pandemic. We are retooling and redoing processes so that we can absolutely serve Canadians as necessary. However, what we are not doing on this side of the House is pretending that there was no pandemic, pretending that it did not have an impact on a whole wide range of industries.

We are taking action. We have been there throughout the pandemic to support Canadians. We have taken responsible decisions and we are going to continue to do that to serve Canadians.

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**HEALTH**

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, imagine a family member needs urgent medical attention. In Nunavut, this means spending thousands of dollars to travel great distances just to access basic health care. If elders need long-term care, there are too few options. Families are forced to send their loved ones across the country, afraid that they will never see them again.

Nunavut residents deserve to have the care they need at home. Why is the government still failing to provide basic health care services to Nunavut?

**Hon. Dan Vandal (Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to the Arctic and northern policy framework, an Inuit Nunangat new policy that puts the emphasis on providing better services to the residents of Nunavut and Inuit Nunangat. Health care is one of the priorities that is first on our schedule. We are investing millions in health care in the north and a better partnership with Nunavummiut.

*Oral Questions***TAXATION**

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, people in northern Ontario often drive an hour to get to work, yet rising gas prices is putting serious pressure in working-class families. Big oil made \$100 billion in profits in the first quarter. That is triple what they made last year.

As the finance minister is hanging with the über-rich at the Empire Club, the Liberal government does nothing as working-class Canadians are held hostage at the pumps.

When is the government going to tax these obscene oil profits and put the money back in the pockets of working-class Canadians?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as my colleague knows, our budget takes serious measures to address affordability. The example that I will cite today is that the budget proposes to introduce a temporary Canada recovery dividend so that big banks and insurance companies, which have turned a big profit during the pandemic, pay a one-time 15% tax on their above-average taxable income over \$1 billion for 2021.

The banks made money. We have asked them to pay more. That is how we are going to make sure that we have affordability for all Canadians.

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**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Scarborough—Agincourt is home to a large, vibrant Armenian community. Canada and Armenia have deep and long-standing people-to-people ties, and Canada must support Armenians' efforts to improve their democracy.

Recently, special envoy Stéphane Dion submitted his report to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on how Canada can support Armenians in their efforts advance democratic progress and build on our relationship. Could the foreign affairs minister share with this House the findings of this report on how Canada can best support Armenia?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my great colleague and friend from Scarborough—Agincourt for her fantastic work.

Canada is a friend to the Armenian community, and we know also that Armenia needs support for its democracy.

I would like to thank special envoy Stéphane Dion for his important report. We welcome his recommendations and look forward to putting these recommendations in place as concrete steps.

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**TAXATION**

**Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today is the day that the government finally releases its secret plan to fight inflation. It is so secret that there are no new measures in the plan, just a re-listing of programs that are already indexed to inflation. Curiously absent is any relief from one of the key drivers of inflation: gasoline and fuel prices.

Why does the government continually ignore calls to provide immediate relief to Canadians by lowering the taxes on fuel and gasoline?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government has made sure that we index programs to inflation, particularly because we know that in this inflationary cycle in the world economy, it is an important policy to make sure that Canadians have the money they need to pay their bills, buy their groceries and afford their gas.

When it comes to gas, the Conservatives have not fully studied their own policy, because we know from evidence that when we take tax off at the pumps, the prices actually do not change.

We are going to put money in the pockets of Canadians so that they can afford the goods they need, and we are not listening to half-baked policies from the Conservative opposition.

● (1450)

**Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if the hon. member believes that there is collusion in the gasoline price market, but that would be a very serious accusation.

I get that this government does not want to listen to ideas from this side of the House, but perhaps it might be persuaded by the former Bank of Canada governor, who said that in order to tame inflation, we need to get oil prices down.

Various taxes account for almost 60¢ per litre of gasoline. How much higher does gasoline need to go before this government realizes there is a problem?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we understand that inflation is on the rise. It is a global phenomenon caused by the illegal war by Russia on Ukraine, by supply chains opening up after the pandemic and by China's zero-COVID policy. That is why our government is taking this whole-of-government approach and that is why our budget includes a dental plan for Canadians making less than \$90,000 a year and a doubling of the support provided through the first-time homebuyer's tax credit. We are increasing the basic tax amount once again this year, and with the Canada worker benefits of \$2,400 per couple and \$1,200 for a single worker, three million Canadians will have more money in their pockets, and that does not even include the Canada job benefit, which the other side voted against.

### THE ECONOMY

**Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my constituents cannot afford to fill their gas tanks. They are concerned that rising interest rates are going to push them out of their own homes. Inflation is skyrocketing, and this government has no plan to address it.

Conservatives have proposed to suspend the carbon tax and the GST paid on fuel, and we are calling for the government to rein in spending to control inflation.

Given the fact that we are in an affordability crisis, why is the government so opposed to these pragmatic measures that would support Canadians?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question, and we too are preoccupied by inflation, which we know is on the rise around the world. It is on the rise to a lesser degree here in Canada, but we understand that the price at the pump is going up and we understand the pressures at the grocery store, which is why, with our price on pollution, eight out of 10 Canadians receive more money. Let us talk about Ontario, the hon. member's province, where people there will get \$745 more in their pockets than they paid. In my own province, it is almost \$1,100.

We are focused on affordability and we will continue to be focused on it throughout this inflationary cycle.

**Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, while Canadians find themselves having to choose between putting gas in their cars and food on the table, and while this government is stoking inflation with continued deficit spending, the Prime Minister says, “Let them eat cake”, while the wine flows liberally aboard Can Force One on the taxpayer's dime.

When will the government finally sober up and start putting Canadians first?

**Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this government is putting Canadians first, and we are always putting Canadians first. In fact, in that member's province of Manitoba, we signed an early learning and child care agreement whereby families, on average, are going to save \$2,600 a year. That is real money in the pockets of families, and that is in addition to the Canada child benefit, which could provide families with children under six with up to \$7,000 a year.

This government is there for Canadians, Canadian families and Canadian children. That is real money in their pockets that is helping every single day with the high cost of living.

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[Translation]

### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Institute for Research on Public Policy is an independent, bilingual, pan-Canadian organization that nobody could suspect of harbouring separatist sympathies.

However, in a recently released study, the organization says that the new Official Languages Act will not slow the decline of French.

### Oral Questions

To slow the decline of French, Bill C-13 must be compatible with Quebec's Charter of the French Language.

Does the minister understand that the only way to protect French in Quebec is to make it so that only Quebec's language laws apply in Quebec?

• (1455)

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

We recognize that French is in decline in North America and, yes, we recognize that French is in decline in Canada. That is why we went ahead with a new, more robust version of the bill. We will ensure that the federal government does its fair share of the work and that we are doing everything we can to address this situation.

I hope my Bloc Québécois colleague will work with us so we can get this bill passed as quickly as possible.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, re-regurgitated talking points are not an answer.

The author of the study, economist Mario Polèse, said that equality between the two languages is no longer sufficient because the two languages are not equal in their ability to attract newcomers or in their importance, period. This means that French needs to be prioritized.

The problem with Bill C-13 is that the minister continues to put English and French on an equal footing in Quebec, when in fact, only French is under threat.

Putting both languages on an equal footing means stomping on my language with both feet.

**Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, either my hon. colleague is trying to mislead Canadians or he has not read Bill C-13.

If we look at the new version of Bill C-13, what we have is special legislation for federally regulated private businesses to ensure that employees can work in French, and people can be served in French and live in French.

I really hope that my colleagues from all opposition parties will work with us, because this bill is very important. It is currently before a parliamentary committee, and I hope that the opposition members will stop playing politics.

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[English]

### SERVICE CANADA

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after more than two years, the pandemic is no longer an acceptable excuse for poor service. Canadians are being forced to line up for hours outside Service Canada centres in order to simply get a passport on time. Meanwhile, it has been reported that 70% of Service Canada employees are working from home.

### Oral Questions

When will the minister show leadership and bring these employees back to work?

**Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I take issue with the member's question, because let us be clear that when people are working from home they are still working.

The first point is that the numbers she is quoting are for the entire 29,000-person Service Canada workforce. When it comes to people who are in-person and in-office Service Canada passport officers, almost 90% of them are back in the office. Those who are working from home are doing so for medical reasons, but they are still able to support the delivery of services.

It is important to get the facts right here.

**Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, clearly the number of Service Canada personnel working from home is not working, and the fishermen in my riding cannot work from home.

People living in rural Canada cannot get food like pizza delivered from our favourite restaurants. We must pick it up. No business charges for pickup, yet Immigration Canada demands that Service Canada charge a \$20 fee to pick up a passport, which is causing a lot of complaints. This is nothing more than a Liberal tax grab.

Why is the Liberal government making Canadians pay for its failures?

**Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I feel the Conservatives need to understand that throughout the pandemic people in the private sector and the public sector worked from home, and they were working. The vast majority of Canadians who were working from home were working very hard, and Conservatives owe those employees an apology.

When it comes to the fees, those should be waived. That has been the directive. I will reinforce that with my department. However, people who work from home are still hard-working.

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, up until last week, people had to bring a lawn chair with them to the passport office. Now they have to bring along a tent, because they have to camp out all night just to get a passport. That is outrageous.

When we ask the minister questions, she tells us that there are far more applications now than there were last year. That is not true. There are currently fewer applications than there were before the pandemic. The minister is telling people to call our offices, but even our staff have to wait five or six hours to get answers from the government.

Why does the government not resolve this problem by asking or ordering employees to go back to work instead of staying home?

**Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I understand Canadians' frustration, but the Conservatives misunderstand. They are not talk-

ing about the same people. Service Canada has nearly 30,000 employees nationwide and provides various services. The people meeting the needs with respect to passports, including the need for in-person service at Service Canada, are already back at work.

It is a question of volume. We can process 2.5 million to five million passport applications in a year. We normally receive them over a period of 12 months. We are currently receiving that amount all at once. It is a question of volume, but we are responding and ensuring that Canadians receive their documents.

\* \* \*

● (1500)

### PRIVACY

**Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we need to ensure that Canadians have confidence in our country's privacy and data protection measures if they are going to take full advantage of the digital economy and prosper. Canadians have never been so reliant on the digital economy, but the existing privacy legislation was last updated before the advent of technologies like social media and smart phones.

Could the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry update us on how the modernization of these laws will benefit Canadians?

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

As my colleagues will attest, there is a lot of enthusiasm for what we did today. Earlier, I introduced the Digital Charter Implementation Act, 2022, which will give people more power to protect their personal information and their children. This is how we are ensuring that Canadians can take advantage of the latest technologies and be confident that their personal information is protected and secure and that companies are acting responsibly. Security and trust are key words in the digital age.

\* \* \*

[English]

### CANADIAN HERITAGE

**Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's Conservatives will always stand up for our arts and culture sector, but in the dead of night, the Liberals rammed through dozens of amendments to Bill C-11 without debate or explanation. In fact, the Liberal chair of the committee would not even allow Canadians to know what was being voted on. Not one amendment to clearly exclude user-generated content was approved. Canadian—



*Oral Questions*

**The Speaker:** I am just going to interrupt. The noise is getting to such a level that I am having a hard time hearing the question. I am going to ask the hon. member to take it from the top and we will see if we can hear it.

**Mr. John Nater:** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals do not want to hear the truth, but the truth is that Conservatives are the ones standing up for digital-first creators. It is Conservatives who are standing up for free expression online so that new technology and new experiences can be used and explored, not only here in Canada but can find success around the globe.

In the dead of night, the Liberals pushed through amendments and rammed through amendments, without a single amendment that would support excluding user-generated content. Why was there all the secrecy? Why was there the disrespect to Parliament? What is the government hiding?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that the Conservatives, when they wake up in the morning, think about filibustering. When they go to bed at night, they think about filibustering. What do they do in between? They filibuster. That is what they do.

The Conservatives have abandoned the creators. They have abandoned our artists. They have abandoned our culture.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Are we okay to go again? Order.

The hon. member for Edmonton Mill Woods.

**Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as we just heard, the Liberals have shut down debate on Bill C-11. In fact, MPs voted on over 100 amendments without any debate at all.

The Liberals are actually changing what Canadians see online without debate and behind closed doors. It is clear from expert testimony that this bill would allow the CRTC to regulate user-generated content. That is why, through a series of vital amendments, the Conservatives tried to fix this bill. Our common-sense amendments were shot down by the Liberals and the NDP without any debate.

When will the government listen to some reason and fix this disastrous bill?

• (1505)

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think the Conservatives should support this bill because this bill is about creators, and it is going to help them because Conservatives are very creative with the truth.

If Conservatives read the bill, they would know it is about online platforms contributing to our culture. If they have a problem with that, it is a shame.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a matter of fact that on Tuesday, the government, under a cloak of secrecy, did in fact thwart democracy. At the committee, the NDP and Liberal government took Bill C-11 and forced it through without adequate debate or adequate testimony from witnesses.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order. I am having a hard time hearing the questions as well as the answers. We really ought to calm things down.

To the hon. member for Lethbridge, if I could ask you start over so we can hear the whole question.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that on Tuesday we saw democracy thwarted. We saw a cloak of secrecy used. At the command of the NDP-Liberal government, Bill C-11 was forced through committee without adequate consultation with witnesses and adequate debate on amendments. There was no listening and no discussion. It was just rammed through. That was their mode of operation. It was censorship upon censorship.

Canadians are rightly frustrated and very concerned by the assault of the House on their online freedom. My question is very simple to the minister and the Prime Minister; either or both could answer. Do they truly believe that this is transparency, according to what they promised Canadians?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one of the benefits of the conversation with the Conservatives is that we heard one of the best jokes of the year when they said that they cared about culture. It was really funny. That was a hell of a secret meeting, when the room was full of Conservatives and staff and others. That was very, very secret. The problem is that they kept filibustering. My colleague who just spoke filibustered for four hours. When I was sitting there ready to answer questions, she spoke for four hours. I had to go and could not speak. Luckily, I could come back and explain our position, but the position is clear. We are there for Canadians, for our artists and for our culture and we are not abandoning them.

\* \* \*

**CANADIAN COAST GUARD**

**Mr. Churence Rogers (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is the Canadian Coast Guard's 60th anniversary of serving Canadians by helping mariners in need, protecting our marine ecosystem and ensuring safe passage through Canada's waterways. I was thrilled to hear that the Canadian Coast Guard College held its first in-person graduation ceremony since 2019, welcoming 51 graduates from its officer training program into the Canadian Coast Guard.

Canadians owe these graduates an enormous debt of gratitude for the future challenges they will face. Would the minister kindly inform the House of the important work done at the college and the importance of the Canadian Coast Guard College in Canada?

**Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Bonavista—Burin—Trinity for his excellent work on behalf of his constituents. The Canadian Coast Guard College meets the highest international standards of training in navigation and engineering, and in training Coast Guard members to keep our citizens and waterways safe on all three coasts and many waters in between.

*Routine Proceedings*

I want to thank every member of the Canadian Coast Guard for their service on this special anniversary and to congratulate recent graduates who persevered in their studies throughout the pandemic and are now joining one of Canada's most trusted institutions.

\* \* \*

**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, York Factory First Nation has lost its lifeline, its ferry, for longer than expected. The community is now isolated and needs immediate assistance. It also needs an all-weather road. Climate change is already wreaking havoc here, as the ground-breaking report from the Canadian Climate Institute indicates. Urgent federal action is needed now across our north, including by building all-weather roads.

My bill, Bill C-245, supports this work. Will the Liberals invest in all-weather road access for York Factory and support my bill to invest in our communities that are on the front lines of climate change?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is an all-too-sad reality that in fact climate change disproportionately affects indigenous communities. Of course, I will continue to work with all indigenous communities, including York Factory, on making sure their infrastructure is resilient and, as we rebuild and replace infrastructure, that it meets the climate challenges we are all facing together.

\* \* \*

● (1510)

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, regarding government financing of the TMX pipeline, in written answers to Questions on the Order Paper, the government is claiming that BMO and TD reviews make this project financially viable, but due to commercial confidentiality it will not release them. Previous TD reports on TMX were public. Why hide them now? It is entirely likely that the government plans to write off financial risks and debt and leave us financially exposed. If it is so commercially viable, why can we not see the reports?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians know how important it is to get our product to market and to tidewater. The government does not intend to be the long-term owner of the Trans Mountain pipeline. This is a project that has led to 12,700 jobs, and once completed, Canadians will enjoy full price for our oil on the world market. A divestment process will be undertaken once this project is essentially de-risked and once consultations with indigenous people conclude.

[Translation]

**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** Canadian Forces Day is an opportunity for Canadians across the country to recognize the sacrifices that our men and women in uniform make on our behalf.

[English]

It is my pleasure to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of five members of the Canadian Forces who are taking part in Canadian Armed Forces Day today: Master Warrant Officer Guillaume Durand, Chief Petty Officer 1st Class Pascal Gilles Harel, Master Corporal Michael Lee Moore, Master Bombardier Steeven Phillipe Ricard and Warrant Officer Éric Arthur White.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[English]

**PRIVACY COMMISSIONER**

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**The Speaker:** It being 3:12 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion regarding the appointment of Philippe Dufresne as Privacy Commissioner.

Call in the members.

● (1525)

[Translation]

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

*(Division No. 157)***YEAS**

## Members

Aboultatif	Albas
Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Allison
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Block
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Bragdon	Brassard
Brière	Brook
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins

*Routine Proceedings*

Cannings	Caputo	Maguire	Maloney
Carr	Carrie	Martel	Martinez Ferrada
Casey	Chabot	Masse	Mathysen
Chagger	Chahal	May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Chambers	Champagne	Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
Champoux	Chatel	McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
Chen	Chiang	McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Chong	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	McLean	McLeod
Collins (Victoria)	Cooper	McPherson	Melillo
Cormier	Coteau	Mendès	Mendicino
Dabrusin	Dalton	Miao	Michaud
Damoff	Dancho	Miller	Moore
Davidson	Davies	Morantz	Morrice
DeBellefeuille	Deltell	Morrison	Morrissey
d'Entremont	Desbiens	Motz	Murray
Desilets	Desjarlais	Muys	Naqvi
Dhaliwal	Dhillon	Nater	Noormohamed
Diab	Doherty	Normandin	O'Connell
Dong	Dowdall	Oliphant	O'Regan
Dreeshen	Drouin	O'Toole	Patzer
Dubourg	Duclos	Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Duguid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Perkins	Perron
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz	Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Ehsassi	El-Khoury	Poilievre	Powlowski
Ellis	Epp	Rayes	Redekopp
Erskine-Smith	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Reid	Rempel Garner
Falk (Provencher)	Fast	Richards	Roberts
Fergus	Ferreri	Robillard	Rodriguez
Fillmore	Findlay	Rogers	Romanado
Fisher	Fonseca	Rood	Ruff
Fortier	Fortin	Sahota	Sajjan
Fragiskatos	Fraser	Saks	Samson
Freeland	Fry	Sarai	Savard-Tremblay
Gaheer	Garneau	Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Garon	Garrison	Schiefke	Schmale
Gaudreau	Gazan	Serré	Sgro
Généreux	Genuis	Shanahan	Sheehan
Gerretsen	Gill	Shields	Shiplely
Glada	Godin	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Goodridge	Gould	Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Gourde	Gray	Singh	Small
Green	Guilbeault	Sorbara	Soroka
Hajdu	Hallan	Steinley	Ste-Marie
Hanley	Hardie	Stewart	St-Onge
Hepfner	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	Trudel	Turnbull
Jowhari	Julian	Uppal	Valdez
Kayabaga	Kelloway	Van Bynen	van Koevorden
Kelly	Khalid	Van Popta	Vandal
Khera	Kitchen	Vandenbeld	Vecchio
Kmiec	Koutrakis	Vidal	Vien
Kram	Kramp-Neuman	Viersen	Vignola
Kurek	Kusie	Villemure	Virani
Kusmierczyk	Kwan	Vis	Vuong
Lalonde	Lambropoulos	Wagantall	Warkentin
Lametti	Lamoureux	Waugh	Webber
Lantsman	Lapointe	Weiler	Wilkinson
Larouche	Lattanzio	Williams	Williamson
Lauzon	Lawrence	Yip	Zahid
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier	Zarrillo	Zimmer
Lehoux	Lemire	Zuberi — 327	
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)		
Liepert	Lightbound		
Lloyd	Lobb		
Long	Longfield		
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAtulay (Cardigan)		
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor		
MacKenzie	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Nil	

NAYS

*Routine Proceedings*

PAIRED

Members

Anand  
Hoback  
Ng

Gallant  
Lake  
Qualtrough— 6

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

The House just adopted a motion to approve the appointment of Philippe Dufresne as Privacy Commissioner of Canada.

[*English*]

I would like to take a moment to congratulate Philippe on his appointment and thank him for his seven years of excellent service to the House as Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel.

[*Translation*]

I always knew I could count on his expert opinion and tremendous professionalism. Philippe has given wise counsel and support to me, my predecessors, members, committees and the Board of Internal Economy. Over the years, he has made an invaluable contribution to the key legal and legislative issues of our day.

[*English*]

Philippe's dedication to members, to the House of Commons and to Parliament is evident to all who meet him. His unwavering commitment to our parliamentary system is one of Philippe's core values and something that will serve him well in his new role.

[*Translation*]

Philippe is also very committed to ensuring a safe and inclusive environment where everyone can fully contribute to society. That is something he clearly demonstrated during the years he served as the House of Commons' diversity champion.

[*English*]

Please join me in congratulating Philippe. Although we will miss him at the House, we can take satisfaction in knowing that he will continue to serve Parliament and Canadians in his new capacity.

[*Translation*]

We are grateful to Philippe.

[*English*]

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to add a few words to the well-deserved tribute to Mr. Dufresne.

Some members may not be aware that Philippe's association with this place goes back well before his appointment as a law clerk. A few years ago, and I will not say how many, as he was known then, little Philippe or *petit* Philippe worked around here as one of our tour guides. His subsequent career has been one intertwined with this place ever since. After showing folks around, he showed up some of the folks here when he was counsel on the winning side of the unanimous 2005 Supreme Court of Canada decision which set the benchmark for parliamentary privilege in our country.

We, of course, have had the real benefit of his wisdom and support since his appointment in 2015 in both the small issues, which never really come to light, as well as the large monumental issues,

which can grip Parliament during a minority government. Had we not had that snap election last year, Philippe might well have added yet another landmark court case on parliamentary privilege to his record. His deep respect for this institution of the House of Commons and his ability to navigate diplomatically the very different political currents which motivate what happens around here showed in all of his work, and that alone deserves our respect and appreciation in these times.

Now he will go on to be an officer of Parliament where he knows and we know that he will serve with distinction. As the Privacy Commissioner in an ever-increasingly digital world, his task will be a very busy one, but one where Canadians will be well served.

We thank Philippe, wish him luck and we will see him at committee.

• (1530)

**Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to extend, on behalf of the government, our deep and sincere gratitude to Mr. Dufresne for his extraordinary work and counsel over the last seven years, as he has acted as the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel for the House of Commons, whether it was serving members or you, Mr. Speaker, or committees and certainly the Board of Internal Economy, where I had a phenomenal opportunity to see Mr. Dufresne in action and how he supported the administration in the House so powerfully. It has been a tremendous honour. I know that he will serve with incredible distinction as Privacy Commissioner.

I wish Philippe all the very best in that new role and, on behalf of the government and the House, I thank him for his extraordinary work.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all of my Bloc Québécois colleagues, I, too, wish to salute Mr. Dufresne and congratulate him on his appointment.

In the House, in committee and elsewhere, Mr. Dufresne was the epitome of diligence, honesty and integrity. Whenever we had a question or an interaction with him, we could be sure that he had done his homework, knew his files, and would tell the truth.

I will not speak for very long, but I do want to extend my heartfelt thanks to him for all of the years that he has given to the House and for all of the work that he has done. Like the entire team of legislative clerks, he has worked tremendously hard.

I will end with an anecdote. Shortly before the last election was called, if I am not mistaken, the Standing Committee on Finance was sitting during the weeks of the construction holidays at the initiative of the Hon. Wayne Easter. The government had chosen not to proceed with a bill that had originated with the opposition, but that had received royal assent.

Mr. Dufresne appeared before the committee as an expert witness, and as soon as he finished explaining the role of legislators, the House and the government, that settled the matter and the government went ahead. That is another example of the profound rigour that we know he will certainly continue to bring to his new role as Privacy Commissioner of Canada.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of the NDP caucus and our leader, the member for Burnaby South, to congratulate Philippe Dufresne on his many years of service to Parliament.

Mr. Dufresne has always measured up to Parliament's high standards. In his role as a servant of Parliament, he is hard-working and has always shown respect towards members. He keeps us up to date on the various procedures. He is detail-oriented and is always willing to answer our questions. He is always working to safeguard the rights of parliamentarians and the importance of Parliament. He is also a very open person, with an informal style, but he brings an extensive knowledge of parliamentary procedures and legal issues.

There can be no doubt that Mr. Dufresne will make an excellent officer of Parliament. The vote held a few moments ago demonstrates the confidence that all parliamentarians have in him in his new role as an officer of Parliament. We are very grateful for his years of service to our democratic life and to our Canadian Parliament, and we congratulate him.

• (1535)

[English]

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to add our thanks to Mr. Dufresne and also say that I share all the sentiments of the other members of this place in thanking Mr. Dufresne for his extraordinary service as our law clerk.

I also want to say that in the future, we know he will face enormous challenges. The new technologies pose such threats to our privacy. This is not a retirement but the beginning of a new and challenging future and we wish him all the best. Privacy rights are precious and we trust in him to protect them for us.

\* \* \*

#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was going to heap more praise on Mr. Dufresne, but somehow I do not think he wants any more. I know he is a very humble man.

We are rounding the corner on this session of Parliament, and before I get to the Thursday question, I want to thank a few people.

I certainly want to thank the clerks, our deputy speakers, the administrative staff who support this place, the pages, and particularly the Translation Bureau, which has been through a lot over the course of the last couple of years with the hybrid Parliament. I sincerely believe that we have moved beyond the hybrid Parliament system and that we are going to return to this place in a normal fashion with a return to normalcy, and I look forward to that.

I also want to thank the Parliamentary Protective Service, PPS, the Sergeant-at-Arms and everybody in charge of protecting Parliament. They have had a busy time as well.

#### *Business of the House*

I thank everyone who supports this place, the cooks, the cleaners, the drivers and the maintenance staff. I thank everyone who works to ensure that this place functions properly and safely.

This is all done with the greatest of respect in our symbol of democracy. I want to thank them all. I think they deserve a hand.

As we approach the final days of this session, I ask the government House leader what the calendar of the House is expected to be as we get into next week.

**Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will start by echoing the comments of thanks by the opposition House leader. To all those who serve the House and for everything they have done, particularly over the last year, I offer our deep and sincere thanks. The opposition House leader rightly named all those we rely on to do the jobs on a day-to-day basis that we do in serving Canadians.

We will continue with the second reading debate of Bill C-9 concerning the Judges Act this afternoon. Tomorrow, it is our intention to call Bill C-11 on online streaming at report stage.

On Monday, we will be returning to the second reading debate of Bill C-21 respecting firearms. In the afternoon, we will go back to Bill C-11 for debate at third reading. We will also focus on finding a way to expedite the bill currently on notice concerning the self-induced extreme intoxication defence standing in the name of the Minister of Justice.

Finally, we have had discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion:

That, notwithstanding the order adopted by the House on Thursday, November 25, 2021, with regard to the participation in the proceedings of the House and its committees, the provisions related to the COVID-19 vaccination be suspended beginning on Monday, June 20, 2022.

**The Speaker:** All those opposed to the hon. minister's 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*

• (1540)

[*Translation*]

**MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE**

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed the following bill, to which the concurrence of the House is desired: Bill S-10, an act to give effect to the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement, to amend the Sechelt Indian Band Self-Government Act and the Yukon First Nations Self-Government Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other acts.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[*English*]

**JUDGES ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-9, An Act to amend the Judges Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Speaker:** I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, Government Orders will be extended by 13 minutes.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Northumberland—Peterborough South, who has seven minutes remaining.

**Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to where I left off on speaking to Bill C-9, this provision has many things that the Conservatives will support.

I was just outlining the substance of the changes to the judicial review process. Of course, if this bill passes, there will be a screening officer and then there will be a series of panels. We had gotten to the hearing panel, which would be the first review of the misconduct. The panel can direct it in one of three ways: One would be an outright dismissal; the second would be putting into place sanctions, which I outlined; the third would be sending it to a full hearing panel.

One of the unique features of this particular process is that if a sanction less than full removal is done, there is a secondary appeal process, which is called the reduced hearing panel. This panel actually brings in all new evidence, so in many ways it acts like an appeal process to the sanctions from the original review panel, but it is all new evidence and all new process. It does not even rely on the work, so even though it is an appeal process, it is a new judicial process as well.

What I find interesting, and I plan to ask about it at committee if I get the opportunity, is that what could actually happen is that, at the initial panel, the individual justice could be sanctioned, as I outlined earlier, to an apology or a public rebuke from the panel. The justice could appeal that and then be sent to a full hearing for the potential removal. Therefore, the appeal to get less of a sanction could actually go back and have more of an impact, and in fact eventual removal, which could have a chilling effect on justices who want to appeal the process. Perhaps I am misunderstanding

that section. As I said, I look forward to potentially exploring that at committee.

At the initial review panel, if the charges are serious enough to justify a potential full removal, it would go to what is called a full hearing panel. That full hearing panel would have full evidence and there would be a presentation of the evidence by what is called the presenting lawyer or presenting counsel, in many ways a prosecutor, and they will conduct that.

From there, the process stems out and then it actually funnels all back in. Both the reduced hearing panel and the full hearing panel would then go back into one process, which would be a traditional appeal process, and the actual discussions and reasons are reviewed at that appeal process. If, in fact, that appeal process is unsatisfactory to either the presenting counsel or the justice subject to the complaint, there would be at that point a right to appeal to the Supreme Court. Once all of those rights to appeal are exhausted or expired or waived, it would then go to the Minister of Justice, who can bring it in front of Parliament to potentially have that justice removed.

There are a couple of key elements to this, and I find this part quite well done. There is a move in here to increase the transparency. Much more of the hearings, the decisions, the reasoning, the discussions and the lawyers' debate would be public. Of course, sunlight is the greatest disinfectant. On that as well, there would also be annual reports. Obviously, justices have an incredibly important function in our society and in our legal system. What is nice is that there would be a publishing of reports saying how many complaints there are, how successful they are and what the eventual outcome of those complaints is.

• (1545)

This is nice. This is a piece of legislation that is clearly designed. We will discuss it, hopefully pull it apart and make it even better at committee, but it is clear that it intends to improve government efficiency. When I look at the global landscape, I have to say that we are not winning when it comes to our government's effectiveness or efficiency. It takes us months to get passports. We have seen the SNC-Lavalin affair and the WE scandal. This continuous corruption and tiredness, this poor, antiquated system, the uncompetitive WE system, is holding Canadian business back and holding Canadian jobs back.

Perhaps this is the beginning of a new leaf for the government. Maybe it will move on from being a tired, corrupt, inefficient government and actually go forward and try to be better for Canadians. Quite frankly, we are in a global race and we are losing when it comes to government effectiveness and efficiency.

I always appreciate members on the other side trying to give me a helping hand. I look forward to having greater discussion. I would encourage all members to read Bill C-9. It is certainly not the most contentious piece of legislation we will read, but it is important.

As final words, I would like to thank all the justices who are out there working hard trying to protect victims, trying to keep our cities and streets safe, and trying to make Canada a better place.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to see that this is one of those days and one of those debates where we seem to unanimously be supporting a piece of legislation. The next logical step here is to send it to committee and to let the committee start to do its work so we can keep the process moving.

Will Conservatives let us have a vote on this? Will they let the debate collapse so we can vote on it and let it go to committee to do that work?

If the member does not have an answer to that, would he be willing to commit, once he has finished his speech, to go into his whip's lobby and talk to the whip about doing that so we can see this piece of legislation move forward, or will this be another one of those pieces of legislation that we all agree on but the Conservatives will just not let pass?

**Mr. Philip Lawrence:** Mr. Speaker, I will certainly go to our whip's office and tell him that we need important, diligent debate on this issue, as we need it on everything. I appreciate that.

I thought I was fairly persuasive in the fact that I asked his colleagues two substantive questions about the bill, and they had no idea what was there. It is sad that the government does not know its own legislation. The speech I made was about 95% substance. I went through the procedure. It was not filibustering. It was meant to be a meaningful conversation to bring up issues for debate and discussion. I was hoping the questions might reflect that.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think there will be much debate on Bill C-9. It appears to have unanimous support.

However, my question for my Conservative colleague is about what comes next after this bill. Does he think that the next issue in line for amendments should be the process for appointing judges, so that we can improve the process?

**Mr. Philip Lawrence:** Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question and I intend to work with my colleague on judicial appointments.

[*English*]

I have been troubled, as I think a lot of Canadians have been, by some of the news stories. It appears there is some connection or correlation between donating to the Liberal Party and being appointed as a justice. I appreciate this question.

● (1550)

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I greatly appreciate the member's thoughts. As my colleague from the Liberal Party suggested, this is a time when we are in this House and we all agree on something, which is nice. I would like to see the bill fast-tracked so we can focus on really important issues.

I have been talking a lot about the toxic drug crisis. I know my colleague cares deeply about this as well. The expert task force on substance use made it unequivocally clear that criminalizing people who use substances causes more harm. BIPOC Canadians are impacted more than other Canadians. Reforms to the justice system would help eliminate systemic racism.

Does my colleague agree that we need to fast-track this bill and get on to these really difficult challenges that we can address by working together?

**Mr. Philip Lawrence:** Mr. Speaker, I share my colleague's deep concern, empathy and sympathy for all Canadians who are unfortunately addicted to substances across the country. I have certainly seen it in our towns of Port Hope and Cobourg, the havoc it can wreak, not just on the individuals who are addicted to these substances but on their family members. It would give me no greater joy in life than if we could get good people off this terrible stuff.

Getting back to the bill, although it is not contentious, there are several issues. As I said, I brought this up for debate, such as the reduced hearing review panel, which would have a bit of an unusual impact, the way it happens. Our justices receiving rebukes or dismissal is a serious issue. Although it is not contentious, I do want to build this collaboratively and I do believe it merits discussion.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I think we are enjoying today, in this debate on Bill C-9, a remarkable degree of unanimity. To the extent that there is hesitation, it is not unreasonable, obviously. This is a piece of legislation that many of us have not studied before, but it is not contentious. It is updating a system that has been overdue for an update, to streamline it and make it more effective. I think my hon. colleague will agree that there are many areas that we want to see streamlined in this country. Let us get at one of them.

My question is more of a comment. If we do get the opportunity for unanimous consent to get Bill C-9 out of here and done, we know how much that will help us get on to other issues, like the urgent opioid crisis, the urgent climate crisis and many other issues. Let us get Bill C-9 passed, if we possibly can. If it comes forward for unanimous consent, I urge the hon. member to consider just saying "okay".

**Mr. Philip Lawrence:** Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member has a long track record of speaking in this House about the importance of debate. I would call upon those comments. I know her comments are made with the best of intentions, but I still believe this bill deserves additional study and conversations.

*Government Orders*

Whether it be the appointment of an individual screening officer versus the executive director, or whether it be the exact prescription of the sanctions that are potentially put on justices, including a public rebuke, I think having some parliamentary conversation about that could be important and I think it could improve it. Although not contentious, it is still very important. How we resolve judicial misconduct is an important issue. We saw that in Rona Ambrose's bill and everything she brought to light.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question to the member who spoke previously was slightly tongue-in-cheek. We all know what is going on here. The same question that I asked was asked by the NDP and then it was asked by the Greens. The question was, why will the Conservatives not just let this go? Why will they not just let it collapse?

For those who are at home and wondering what this madness is, I will explain it to them. What is going on right now is that we have a bill that everybody in this House agrees on, more or less, I should say. It will definitely pass when it comes to a vote, but the reality is that the Conservatives will just not let that happen. They do not want to see a vote on it. Why? It is not because they are against it or they do not want to see the work happen. They want something in return. Their whip's desk is saying that they do not want to let this pass, because if they let this pass, they are giving something to the government without getting something in return. Unfortunately, that is how petty this place has become. On an issue that we are all passionate about and want to see move forward and go to committee so that it can be studied and come back to this House, an issue we know is long-standing and outstanding, we are now literally seeing it deadlocked here because the Conservatives will not let this debate collapse.

In that vein, I have a speech here, but I am not going to bother reading it, because I do not think it is important at this point. I think what is important is that we move on and get this to committee.

I will be sharing my time with the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

That is all I have to say.

• (1555)

**Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am sad my colleague did not take up some time to actually explain his position on this bill because that is what the floor of the House of Commons is for. I will ask him about the pettiness he referred to. We are attentive, and we want to hear what he has to say about this bill. That is not petty at all. It is about understanding what the legislation is for.

If he is going to rise above his pettiness, can he please address his concerns about the bill? A lot of people think there is some good stuff in this bill, and we would like to hear about it.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, I do think this is a good bill. I want to see this bill move forward. My reference with respect to pettiness had nothing to do with the bill or the content of this bill, but indeed with the actions of the Conservative Party right now. I am trying to be as respectful as I can about this, but the reality is the Conservatives will just not let this go forward because they

want something in return. They are holding this hostage right now, even though everybody wants it, just so they can use it as a bargaining chip to get something in return.

This bill is a very important bill, and it is important it moves forward. It needs to go to committee. Am I an expert on the content of this bill as the previous speaker is? Of course not. However, I do know this is in the best interest of Canadians. I take great comfort in knowing it is unanimously supported in the House. Therefore, it is, at the very least, worthy of going to the next stage, which is for the committee to study it.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I can understand my colleague's eagerness to finally get this bill to committee. It makes sense because that is where amendments can be made, and amendments are improvements.

In fact, speaking of improvements, a lot of people say there are no separatist judges because a separatist judge would not promote Canada. I understand that too. The problem is that any separatist who goes to court could say that they do not want a particular judge to hear their case because the judge would be biased.

How can we make sure judges are unbiased?

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, the member obviously has a greater perspective on it than I do. Just the fact she is asking the questions means that it means something to her. I interpret this to mean she wants to work on finding a solution to ensuring that independence still occurs, even if it is a judge who fits the description she had.

That is exactly what the committee can do, and that is the place where those kind of questions are going to be properly addressed. If indeed an amendment is required, the Bloc Québécois can put forward that amendment at committee. That is the perfect place for that to occur.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member who just spoke. It is very rare there is a bill that comes to the House for which everybody largely has consensus. We want to see the work get done, so hopefully we can do that. It is unfortunate he feels there is a power struggle between his party and the Conservatives.

I am just wondering if the member could talk about what might be more important to talk about. In my riding, I can think of people who are desperately looking for housing. The cost of housing is exploding in ways we could have never predicted just a few years. There are so many people who are experiencing life without a home because of the realities we are facing.

Is that not something we should be talking about in the House, rather than what we are talking about right now?



*Government Orders*

• (1600)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, we could be talking about housing, pharmacare and climate change. The list could go on and on. I am not suggesting for a second this is not very important. What I am suggesting is we already know the will of the House with respect to this. It is very clear, if one has been sitting here since 10 a.m., as I have, what the will of the House is on this.

I am just suggesting that it is time for the House to move on to talk about housing. I would like to talk more about housing. The irony is that, while the member was asking that question, a heckle came from across the way telling me to thank her for her hard work, as if somehow the member for North Island—Powell River and I both believing that housing is an important issue means we are somehow in collusion. That is how the Conservatives interpret it. Yes, I am willing to collude with this member as it relates to working on housing issues and making housing more affordable for Canadians.

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a few remarks on Bill C-9, an act to amend the Judges Act. I am not a lawyer or a full subject matter expert on this bill, but having read the bill kit, I have put together a few words. It seems there is some unanimity and some good work has been done by our government. Hopefully this bill can be sent to committee for study by the learned members that have the honour and privilege of sitting on the justice committee here in Parliament.

It is, as always, great to see everyone this afternoon. I hope everyone is doing well, and that their loved ones at home are doing likewise.

[*Translation*]

I am here today to discuss a matter of crucial importance to our judicial system. The Canadian judiciary has a solid reputation and has long been respected here at home and abroad, which is one reason it enjoys the confidence of Canadians and the admiration of societies the world over.

There is a reason for that. Our judicial system is strong. It has been reinforced and improved continually over time thanks to the decisions rendered and measures taken by the people who make the system tick. Our system gets better and better because of the skill and hard work Canadian judges bring to every case, along with their unimpeachable character and exemplary conduct.

[*English*]

This is why allegations of misconduct against a judge can have such a corrosive effect on the bright enamel of our justice system. While these allegations are rare, they are highly significant for the judges and the individuals concerned, and they have deeper importance for public trust in the integrity of justice. It is critical that the public have confidence in a system for investigating judicial misconduct allegations that is scrupulously fair, effective and, most important of all, guided by the public interest at its heart.

The minister and the parliamentary secretary have eloquently provided context for Bill C-9, as well as presented its key features. To complement this, I wish to focus on the theme of accountability. In the context of judicial conduct reform, this concept has three important dimensions: First, there is accountability as applied the pub-

lic. Second, there is the accountability of judges. Third, there is financial accountability. I will briefly touch on each.

[*Translation*]

As I have already said, public confidence in the justice system is critical. The law and the administration of justice exist to serve the public. The bill before us today is intended to strengthen that trust through a more robust mechanism for dealing with complaints against members of the judiciary. This mechanism will also ensure greater transparency and greater public participation.

Furthermore, the reforms in question were developed following extensive consultations. This inclusive approach, involving members of the Canadian public as well as academic experts, legal professionals, the Canadian Judicial Council and the Canadian Superior Court Judges Association, underscores the government's commitment to strengthening public trust.

The consultations also revealed a strong public interest in a more transparent and accessible judicial disciplinary process, with increased participation from representatives of the general public who are not legal professionals.

• (1605)

[*English*]

Bill C-9 codifies a space for public representatives as part of the judicial conduct complaint review process. Whereas the existing model can be rigid and opaque, the proposed reform would inject responsiveness and transparency. Following the reforms contained in this bill, a panel made up of both public and judicial representatives would review all allegations of judicial misconduct that are deemed worthy of investigation. These panels would consider complaints through written submissions and be authorized to prescribe remedies short of removal from office where this is appropriate. Remedies could take the form of mandatory education or training, formal reprimands or the issuance of an apology. In this way, representatives of the public would be directly involved in ensuring the fairness and integrity of judicial conduct investigations.

The new regime would also require that a representative of the public serve on panels holding the most serious hearings, those that may culminate in a recommendation of removal from office. This properly reflects the fact that the public's wisdom, as well as its best interests, should feature centrally in addressing the most serious allegations against a judge. I have no doubt that this measure would enrich the quality and integrity of those hearings, just as it would provide an appropriate mechanism of transparency and public participation.

*Government Orders*

I will now turn to the issue of judicial accountability. Judges are the faces of the justice system. Their decisions and conduct make the law tangible, not only to those who appear in proceedings before them but also to the broader public as well. The extent to which the administration of justice is determined by the degree of confidence in those who make it work, judges included. Consequently, the conduct of judges is rightly scrutinized more closely and more critically than that of perhaps any other professionals.

Upholding this high standard relies on the integrity of the individual judges, as well as on the effectiveness of the system designed to address complaints. As I alluded to previously, in the context of public participation, a key indicator of the trustworthiness of a mechanism is its responsiveness. Currently, the Judges Act only empowers an inquiry by the Canadian Judicial Council to consider removal of a judge from office. This blunt approach is both too restrictive and too broad. Where the conduct at issue fails to meet the high threshold for judicial removal, public confidence is undermined by the absence of appropriate remedies for conduct that may nonetheless raise reasonable concerns.

Conversely, there is the risk that a lack of remedial alternatives causes lesser misconduct to be addressed through the full force of a public inquiry.

[*Translation*]

A more nuanced approach will help to meaningfully address a greater variety of allegations of misconduct in a way that will be both more efficient and cost-effective. The bill includes new opportunities for early resolution and for adapting procedures based on the seriousness of the allegations in question. This capacity to adapt strengthens the trust in the process and supports the integrity of the judiciary. We guarantee that every case of misconduct can be properly sanctioned and that no judge will fall through the cracks or be subject to procedures that seem disproportionate in the circumstances.

The responsibilities introduced by the bill are complemented by the accountability with respect to the funding of the process. More specifically, the legislation sets out a more stable funding mechanism, as well as protection measures and additional controls that will guide the use of public funds.

As such, the Canadian Judicial Council will be able to carry out its mandate to investigate allegations of judicial misconduct, a mandate that stems from the constitutional principle of judicial independence. Currently, the efficacy of the funding is compromised by the fact that the usual mechanism for obtaining funding simply does not meet the unusual needs related to the process.

Bill C-9 proposes a new funding mechanism that would actually separate the cost of the process into two components. The investigations will be paid for out of non-discretionary funds and the amounts required for fair and robust hearings will be paid directly out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Expenses paid out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund will now be more transparent and stable thanks to three main measures. First, a regulation will be adopted under clause 144 of the bill to limit the number of lawyers participating in the process who can charge for their services. Second, under clause 145, the policies for the regula-

tion of other process-related expenses will be developed by the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs, whose office provides key operational support to the Canadian Judicial Council and is ultimately responsible for all the costs of the process.

• (1610)

[*English*]

Judicial conduct review mechanisms generally receive broad attention only on those rare occasions when high profile allegations of judicial misconduct focus the public's mind on them.

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was actually up in my office and I came down, because I was listening to the member for Kingston and the Islands speak as though there were some dirty little secret around here as to the way things operate. In fact, last night, through a unanimous consent motion, we actually moved Bill C-14 through the process.

It is the government that actually sets the legislative agenda in this place, and it is the government that put Bill C-9 on the Order Paper today as a matter of business in this House. This bill was introduced in October. These are the first hours of debate, and there are 338 members in this House, who represent millions of voices of Canadians across this country, who have things to say on this bill, maybe to make it a little better.

I am sorry if this taxes the patience of the member for Kingston and the Islands. Perhaps if he does not want to be a member of Parliament, he could go be the president of the local soccer association in his riding. We debate things in this place. This is Parliament.

Does the hon. member believe that the voices of Canadians are important in this place and that debate matters?

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Mr. Speaker, it is always important for all pieces of legislation to go through the scrutiny of being debated in the House and then looked at in committee, to go through the rigorous process where we call witnesses in and there is a good debate of ideas. We can always strengthen and improve legislation that obviously impacts the 38-odd million Canadians who are blessed to live in this country.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the process of how we handle complaints against federally appointed judges has not been updated in 50 years, so I am happy to see that we are all on the same page of finally doing this work.

Does the member not agree that we need to move forward on this and turn our attention to tackling issues like systemic racism in the judicial system or finally addressing the toxic drug supply emergency where people are dying daily?

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member comes from a beautiful part of British Columbia.

I wholeheartedly agree with the member that we need to tackle Bill C-9, get it through and get it done. At the same time, there is the death toll that opioids have cast on this country, and how many thousands of people have died from opioids. Our government is seized with it. All Canadians are seized with it. All parliamentarians need to be seized with it. I agree we need to tackle those issues.

On systemic racism, obviously I was very disappointed to see the story come out from the Toronto Police Service on systemic racism against the Black community in Toronto, but I was also happy to see that an apology was issued. We need to work on that issue as well. Much work remains to be done to break down barriers, walls, whatever stands in the way of beating back systemic racism against any Canadian from any group in this country that we live in today.

• (1615)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we know very well that there are currently problems with the process for appointing judges and that some judges have abused their power. There was a case in my riding. A judge who was appointed used all the provisions until the end of his so-called process, then retired without facing any consequences.

Will Bill C-9 give more power to the Canadian Judicial Council to take action against a judge guilty of a serious or less serious offence?

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou for her question. It is very important for the system that Bill C-9 be very effective.

[*English*]

It has to be very efficient. It has to be timely. It cannot land in a very long, bureaucratic standpoint. That is why I am so happy to see that in the 50 years this system has been in place, there is a re-vamp going on that takes it in that direction.

**Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for South Surrey—White Rock.

It is an honour for me to be here today to engage in the debate on a very important topic, the reform of the Judges Act.

Bill C-9 introduces comprehensive reforms to the Judges Act. It introduces comprehensive reforms to the process through which judicial conduct is reviewed and sanctioned. The proposed reforms to the Judges Act aim to enhance the Canadian Judicial Council's capacity to effectively respond to all allegations of judicial misconduct. It is not necessarily highly contentious instances, but also instances of lower measure.

The proposed measures seek to promote procedural fairness in an independent, effective and efficient judicial conduct review process designed to minimize delays and to contain costs. The Canadian Judicial Council, under this new set of rules, this new legislation, will be able to respond to all allegations of misconduct. The process of the investigation and review will be streamlined. There will be new tools for procedural fairness. There will be fewer delays. Importantly, there will be funding to make sure that all of this is done in a cost-effective and efficient way.

Importantly, there is also procedural fairness for judges in their pensions in the event they are dismissed for misconduct, if that is ultimately what the finding is. Of course, we all want to be fair to our judges.

### *Government Orders*

There will be new powers for the Canadian Judicial Council to make orders such as ordering a judge to make an apology publicly, or require that a judge undergo counselling, if that is the right response.

There will also be a capability for the Canadian Judicial Council to order that the judge undergo continuing professional development, something that we all agree with, something that judges and all professionals should engage in, as we all have to do. There are a number of members of the bar here. They have to undergo continuing professional development every year.

There will also importantly be a right of appeal for judges. My colleague, the member for Northumberland—Peterborough South, went into some detail as to what all the new processes and procedures are. I will not read them into the record.

What is important here is that we want to be fair to judges, but we also want to be fair to complainants, people who feel they have been wronged by the conduct of a judge.

Very importantly also is that Canadian society wants judicial independence. This is so important to help Canada operate as a country. Judicial independence is a cornerstone of our judicial system and indeed of our whole democratic system. We are a society that believes in the rule of law. Everybody is subject to the law. Everybody is equal before the law, including the judges who make the law and including politicians who make laws.

It is important that judges be free from political interference, that the whole justice system be free from political interference. Unfortunately, we have seen some bad situations, for example, with the SNC-Lavalin scandal a couple of years ago, where politicians tried to interfere with the judicial process, rather than allow it to operate the way it is supposed to under judicial independence rules. It is inappropriate for politicians to get involved in that.

It is also important to understand that judges must be free from political pressures. The superior courts are masters of their own scheduling, of their own operations. That is fundamental to the way we operate.

• (1620)

Courts are self-governing when it comes to judges' professionalism, competence, ability and conduct. This came up in the previous Parliament under Bill C-3. This was new legislation that was brought in requiring judges to undergo sexual assault training. At that time it was a deep concern to many members in this Parliament and previous Parliaments and to many Canadian citizens that not all judges were properly trained for sexual assault cases. We deemed it important that judges understand how sexual assault cases are different from other kinds of criminal cases.

*Government Orders*

The reason I raise that here is that judicial independence became an issue then. That was another bill where everybody was in agreement. We deemed it important that it be debated because the issues surrounding that were so important to Canadian citizens. There were, at that time, academics and jurists who said that Bill C-3 was going in the wrong direction and undermining judicial independence. Here again, it was Parliament telling judges what they had to do and saying that they needed to take a course in this and they needed upgrading in that.

After a lengthy debate, Parliament came to the conclusion that there is a balance to be found between integrity of the judicial system and allowing judicial independence. That bill, I submit, found that right balance. After a lot of debate, it went to committee. We heard from experts and we deemed that to be the right way to go with the right balance between judicial independence and ensuring that judges have proper training. The same is true here. It is so important for us to find that right balance.

I said earlier that one of the key cornerstones for judicial independence is that judges be free from political pressures and from outside pressures as well. Sometimes it is difficult for citizens who are not trained in the law to understand how judges operate and how they make decisions that are perhaps controversial.

One example comes to mind. It is going back a lot of years, but it is the O. J. Simpson trial in the United States. Mr. Simpson was charged criminally, but the jury found him to be not guilty, yet he was sued on the same set of facts in a civil court and was found to be liable. People did not understand how that worked and why one court could find him not guilty and the other one could find him civilly liable. That is the difference between the criminal benchmark for finding somebody guilty beyond a reasonable doubt and the civil courts where a judge or jury find that someone is liable on the balance of probabilities. That is just one of the important points of judicial independence.

That said, judges are also human beings. They are Canadian citizens. They know what is going on in the world, so we require them to be sensitive to community standards. Sadly, that is not always the case, as we saw recently in the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in *R. v. Bissonnette*, where the Supreme Court of Canada found that consecutive sentences were unconstitutional. Many Canadians are having a hard time understanding that. This Parliament needs to look into that to ensure there is fairness according to common-law conditions, and also so that the citizens of this country know that the courts are operating in a way that values and understands community values.

In another case, *R. v. Brown*, just very recently, a person was found to be not guilty by reason of extreme intoxication and therefore he could not form *mens rea*, as we call it, which is the guilty intention to commit a crime. Again, Canadian citizens have a hard time understanding that. It needs to be reviewed as well by this Parliament, and I hope that happens soon.

• (1625)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, just circling back to the comment made by the House leader of the official opposition, I want to say that he made my

week. I am flattered that the House leader of the opposition was sitting on the third floor of this building in his office, caught word of what I said in the House and came running down here to ask me a question. I had no idea that he hung on every word that came out of my mouth like that, so I thank him.

To this member, does he not agree that it is probably in the best interests of the House, Canadians and those who would be affected by this legislation to let this get to committee so that the committee can do its work and report back to the House, and we can move along with it?

We all agree on it. The question from every member of the House to the Conservatives—at least from the Liberals, NDP and Greens—has been, why are we talking about this? Can we not talk about other more important things? It is not because this is not important, but because we know we are unanimous and want to move it forward.

**Mr. Tako Van Popta:** Mr. Speaker, this is very important legislation. This goes to one of the cornerstones of our democratic society, and that is judicial independence and whether Canadians have confidence in their court system. This is one of the most important things that we are going to debate in this parliamentary session.

Even though we are all in agreement, it does not mean that we do not debate the issues. These issues have to be brought to the attention of people who are interested enough in this to be watching this or to be reading about this in the papers. Canadians want to know that these issues are being debated thoroughly in the House of Commons.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Langley—Aldergrove for his speech. He was one of the first people to say hello and welcome me here when I was first elected back in 2019.

I listened carefully and, from what I understand, Bill C-9 is important to him and to everyone here, and we are debating it now because it is so important.

What will it take to finally get this bill sent to committee so it can be studied and amended if necessary?

[*English*]

**Mr. Tako Van Popta:** Mr. Speaker, I would just underline that this is important legislation. This goes to the very foundation of what Canadian society is. We are a nation that is built on the rule of law. For us to feel that we need to hurry this very important piece of legislation through Parliament just because we are all in agreement is something I disagree with.

*Government Orders*

I was ready to speak to Bill C-14 today. I did not realize that this was so important to the Liberal government that it wanted to have it on the agenda today. It was introduced months ago. Why was it not here earlier? Why are the Liberals now suggesting that we are the ones who are stalling things? This is important legislation. I want it to be fully debated.

• (1630)

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, the Canadian Judicial Council, which is comprised of chief and assistant chief justices, was doing consultations on this process as early as 2016. The Canadian Bar Association, responding to the council's consultations, in 2019 also talked about the importance of these processes being implemented.

In a sense, this is not necessarily new legislation that is being considered. There was a previous bill that was already discussed. In effect, this is not brand new and it does not sound like it is a new initiative. I read in the mandate letter given to the minister that this needs to be a priority.

Has the member read the mandate letter that initiates this process and that says having it completed is a priority?

**Mr. Tako Van Popta:** Mr. Speaker, I agree that this is a priority and I would like to thank the member for Nunavut for pointing that out. The Conservative caucus fully agrees that this is an urgent matter that needs to be discussed. I wish the government had put it on the legislative agenda earlier so that we would not be rushing it just before the summer break.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, like some others in the House and like my colleague who was just speaking, I am a lawyer, and the practice of law has been a large part of my life. My son and two of my daughters followed me into the legal profession, and it is a source of pride to me as they pursue their professional careers.

I continue to be grateful to have been appointed a Queen's Counsel some 23 years ago, and to have been elected president of the B.C. branch of the Canadian Bar Association the year previous. I have a deep appreciation and passion for the law and its unbiased application.

In the plainest of terms, Bill C-9 amends the Judges Act to replace the process through which the conduct of federally appointed judges is reviewed by the Canadian Judicial Council. It establishes a new streamlined process for reviewing allegations of misconduct that do not reach the threshold for a judge's removal from office, and the process by which recommendations regarding removal from office can be made to the Minister of Justice.

These provisions also apply to persons other than judges who are appointed under an act of Parliament to hold office during good behaviour. This bill was previously tabled in the Senate as Bill S-5 on May 25, 2021. The legislation before us is the result of consultations conducted by the federal government in 2016 on reforming this process. That is six years ago.

It is incredibly important that the judicial system be just and fair, holding accountable those who are both behind and in front of the bench. Increasing public confidence in the judicial system, while ensuring the independence of the judiciary, is necessary for the

foundations of our justice system to continue to function as intended.

Many will recall that in response to comments from Justice Robin Camp at a sexual assault trial in 2014, former interim Conservative leader Rona Ambrose introduced a bill to require seminars on sexual assault be taken by federally appointed justices

At the time, the Alberta Court of Appeal panel ruled that Justice Camp seemed not to understand laws on consent and an alleged rape victim's sexual activity, and that his acquittal of the man may have been coloured by "sexual stereotypes and stereotypical myths, which have long since been discredited." Justice Camp's ruling was thrown out and a new trial date set. Justice Camp went on to resign from the bench in 2017, after the Canadian Judicial Council ruled he should be removed from office.

Before this case, there were volumes of case law and newspaper columns about jurists who misapprehended sexual consent or post-assault behaviour, who then went on to preside in court and rule again on other such cases.

An earlier version of the bill received royal assent on May 6, 2021. This bill can be viewed as an attempt to increase confidence in the judicial system, which had been shaken by the words and actions of Justice Camp and others.

Fairly representing victims' rights is an integral aspect of the proper functioning of the judicial system. One important aspect of the court process is the submission of victim impact statements: written statements from a victim or victims that describe the physical or emotional harm, property damage or economic loss that the victim of an offence has suffered. Our courts take these statements into account when an offender is sentenced. This gives victims of crime a voice in the criminal justice system.

The government has not been prioritizing victims' rights, and it is failing Canadians and the integrity of our judicial system as a result. Inexcusably, the role of the federal ombudsman for victims of crime has been vacant since October 1, 2021, with the justice minister's office saying it will be filled "in due course."

The ombudsperson has a critical role in highlighting and reviewing systemic issues that negatively affect victims and emerging issues. This vacancy is simply unacceptable, and sends a message to survivors and Canadians alike that they will not necessarily be represented fairly in the justice system. Adding to concerns that victims of crime are not being heard is Parliament's failure to complete a review of the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights. The review was supposed to happen in 2020.

### *Government Orders*

Canadians' perspective of the judicial system reflects, in part, these failures. According to the Justice Canada studies, regardless of whether their cases did or did not go to trial, participants were asked to rate their level of confidence in the police, the court process and the criminal justice system in general.

• (1635)

Few stated that they were very confident. Indeed, approximately two-thirds of the responders stated that they were not confident in the administration of justice in general. This data is not coincidental. It is imperative that our judiciary system continues to adapt to effectively represent Canadians fairly.

A Department of Justice report stated that:

For the 2016/2017 fiscal year, 42% of all sexual assault case decisions (levels 1, 2, and 3) in adult criminal court resulted in a finding of guilt.

According to StatsCan, statistical evidence classified 14% of level 1 sexual assault incidents as unfounded in 2017. In comparison, the more serious levels of sexual and physical assault were classified as unfounded in only 9% of level 3 sexual assaults, 7% of level 2 sexual assaults, 3% of level 2 physical assaults and 1% of level 3 physical assaults. Why is there a difference?

This bill would modify the existing judicial review process and allow for sanctions such as counselling, continuing education and reprimands. Improvements in the administration of justice will result.

The bill states that the reasons a judge could be removed from office include:

- (a) infirmity; (b) misconduct; (c) failure in the due execution of judicial office;
- (d) the judge is in a position that a reasonable, fair-minded and informed observer would consider to be incompatible with the due execution of judicial office.

In the case of a complaint that alleges sexual harassment or discrimination, it would not be dismissed. The full screening criteria would be published by the Canadian Judicial Council. The minister and Attorney General may request that the Canadian Judicial Council establish a full hearing panel to determine whether the removal of a judge from the office of a superior court is justified.

The council would submit a report within three months after the end of each calendar year with respect to the number of complaints received and actions taken. This is a prudent measure that would ensure transparency and accountability from a senior group of jurists exercising quasi-constitutional duties.

Such provisions in this bill would enhance and strengthen the Canadian legal system as a whole. As a former parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Justice, I welcome this legislation. Bill C-9 is a move in the right direction. It is not the end of the journey, but the start of the journey.

**Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her contribution to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, when I served there with her. She certainly brings a wealth of experience to the House, and I appreciate her perspective on this bill.

One of the things that has come up in the course of debate is why we are debating this bill today. I would like my hon. colleague's

comment on two things. One, this bill was last introduced in October of last year, and my understanding is that the government controls the legislative agenda, so it was just brought forward for debate today. The other is whether she could comment on something I am concerned about, which is that the position for the ombudsman for victims of crime has been vacant for nine months. Does she think that should be addressed immediately?

• (1640)

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his vast contributions on the justice file in this place. He is very knowledgeable, and I certainly always appreciate our collaborations.

The vacancy of the ombudsperson for victims of crime is actually appalling. This is such a crucial aspect of our judicial system and of confidence in that system being fair and just. I am sure there are many worthy candidates, and I am sure there have been many worthy applicants, which means the government simply has chosen not to move forward with that appointment. It should be done. It should be done quickly. It should have been done a long time ago, but I would love to see it done quickly for all victims in Canada.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I agree with much of what the member said in her intervention. Does the member agree we should be proceeding quickly with this relatively uncontroversial bill and getting it to committee to get the work going on this so the House can spend more time dealing with many other issues, such as the toxic drug supply that is seeing too many people dying every day, or the reforms to the justice system that would help eliminate systemic racism?

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** Mr. Speaker, I always love getting a question from someone representing Nanaimo—Ladysmith because I was born in Ladysmith and raised in Nanaimo. I love hearing from people from Vancouver Island, and I thank the member for standing today in the House.

I agree that this bill seems to have widespread support, for which I am grateful. However, the management of the legislative calendar lies squarely with the government, and if the government felt this was as important a bill as I do, it should have been brought forward earlier for full debate and comment. Obviously, there are many people in the House who want to comment on this bill, give interventions and get the message out to the people they represent in Canada regarding why this bill and its passage will be beneficial to our administration of justice.

Here we are shortly before the summer recess debating a bill that I support, but I would like to see a whole debate on it. Then we can move forward in due course.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, going back to the question that was just asked and answered, the member suggested, and she is absolutely right, that the government sets the agenda. However, the opposition has tools that it should and can use from time to time to slow down legislation and the legislative process in here.

My question to the member is very simple. Does she not think we would have been able to table this bill and start debating it sooner had the Conservatives not held bills up, such as Bill C-8, the fall economic statement, which they held up for five or six months in the House? If we had seen fewer partisan games to slow the process down, would we not have been able to deal with items like this sooner?

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** Mr. Speaker, I certainly do not feel the Conservatives need to take any lessons on partisanship in the House from that member in particular. The government seems to have fallen in love with closure and shortening debate. We do not agree with that. If it is something worth talking about, we want to talk about it.

● (1645)

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, a place I am hoping to visit sometime soon.

It is always an absolute privilege for me to stand in this place and work for the people of Canada. That is certainly true today. I will also say that it is absolutely an honour for me to rise on behalf of the residents of my riding of Davenport to speak to Bill C-9, an act to amend the Judges Act and the Criminal Code.

I always like beginning my speeches with a quick summary of what a bill proposes to do and some of the key changes that are being proposed. Then I go into a bit more detail in my main speech.

Bill C-9 proposes amendments to the Judges Act to replace the process through which the Canadian Judicial Council reviews the conduct of federally appointed judges. It would establish a new process for reviewing allegations of misconduct that are not serious enough to warrant a judge's removal from office, and it would make changes to the process by which recommendations regarding removal from office can be made to the Minister of Justice. This new process would also apply to persons, other than judges, who are appointed under an act of Parliament to hold their office during good behaviour.

The proposed amendments to the Judges Act would do the following. First, they would amend and streamline the process for more serious complaints, where removal from the bench could be an outcome. Second, they would address the current process' shortcomings by imposing mandatory sanctions on a judge when a complaint of misconduct is found to be justified but not serious enough to warrant removal from office. Such sanctions would include counselling, continuing education and reprimands. Third, they would require the Canadian Judicial Council to include in its annual public report the number of complaints received and how they were resolved.

Indeed, Bill C-9 is unique. Let me provide a few more details about why, and at the same time elaborate on what Bill C-9 proposes to do.

Canadian judges are rightly held in high regard not just in Canada, but around the world. Their decisions carry great weight for individuals appearing before them, whose lives are so directly and meaningfully affected, and for society as a whole. Canadians rightly expect much of judges: to make decisions that apply the law

### *Government Orders*

correctly and fairly, and to do so in a way that embodies unimpeachable character and meets the lofty standards to which judges are held. The confidence of the Canadian public in individual judges and the judiciary as a whole depends on it.

We know that public confidence is well placed, but neither we as lawmakers nor Canadian society as a whole can become complacent. We all have a role to play to ensure that confidence in the judiciary continues to be merited. Part of that is making sure Canadians know there are avenues open to them to make complaints about a judge's conduct and that appropriate recourses are available. For this reason, processes have been established that allow for such complaints about the conduct of individual judges.

At the same time, judges must be able to respond to complaints and be assured that they will be treated fairly and in a way that is in keeping with their judicial independence. For this reason, the Canadian Judicial Council, comprising the most senior judges in Canada, was created and has the authority to manage the processes by which complaints about judges are investigated.

Parliament also has a role to play. In 1971, Parliament established the Canadian Judicial Council and charged it with establishing and managing the process for investigating complaints against federally appointed judges. The legislative framework that Parliament set out for the judicial conduct process remains with us, largely unchanged, several decades later.

Today, we have reached a unique point in history. We have before us the opportunity to build on Parliament's past work by modernizing the judicial conduct process, ensuring that it continues to reinforce public confidence. I urge every member of the House to seize this opportunity.

The existing mechanisms used to review allegations of judicial misconduct are in urgent need of renewal. The current process was established more than 40 years ago. Since then, the administrative law landscape surrounding the process has changed. The values and standards that help shape expectations of judicial conduct have evolved too. The judicial conduct process, however, is largely the same. We know that it is out of date and that it demands reform.

● (1650)

The Canadian Judicial Council, with its decades of experience running the judicial conduct process, has called for such reform. The council's chair, Chief Justice Wagner, had identified this as a priority from the beginning of his time in his role. At his welcome ceremony as a new chief justice of the Supreme Court of Canada in 2018, Chief Justice Wagner noted the need to modernize the mechanisms for addressing complaints regarding judicial conduct.

Several recent judicial conduct cases have highlighted the importance of reform. They have shown us that under the current system, cases can be marked by exorbitant legal fees, lengthy delays and multiple inefficiencies. This is not a process that inspires abiding public confidence, but today, by supporting Bill C-9, we have a chance to fix this.

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Bill C-9 addresses the shortcomings of the current process and launches the long-awaited renewal of the judicial conduct process. The reforms proposed in Bill C-9 would make the process more efficient by, in part, preventing parties from seeking judicial review of decisions that are made during the judicial conduct process. This would reduce costs and prevent delays. The bill would also increase accountability by establishing a more robust role for the public in the process.

The bill before us today proposes a set of carefully considered, well-informed and broadly supported reforms. These reforms come out of robust consultations and substantial engagement with the Canadian Judicial Council, which would remain responsible for carrying out the judicial conduct process, and with the Canadian Superior Courts Judges Association, which represents many of the federally appointed judges to whom the new regime may be applied.

In June 2016, our federal government launched public consultations on modernizing the judicial conduct process. Over the following months, we were pleased to receive multiple submissions reflecting the importance that this process holds for the legal community and for Canadians as a whole. We heard from individuals and organizations who provided thoughtful comments on the existing process and suggested meaningful reforms. The Canadian Judicial Council and the Canadian Superior Courts Judges Association participated in these consultations, as did the Canadian Bar Association and the Federation of Law Societies of Canada and members of the general public.

These consultations sent a clear message that there is broad support for the reform and modernization of many aspects of the judicial conduct process. The process should be more efficient and more transparent and should provide for greater public accountability. The reforms set out in Bill C-9 embrace this message, responding to the concerns expressed in the consultation process.

Following the consultations, our government engaged closely with the council and the association on multiple occasions to develop and refine proposed reforms to the judicial conduct process. This close collaboration ensured that the reforms before us today are informed by the experiences of the people who work with the process directly, and the experiences and perspectives of Canadian judges themselves.

In conclusion, Bill C-9 sets out the changes that are required to modernize and renew a process that is key to public confidence in the justice system. The proposed reforms before us today address a long-standing problem. They were carefully developed. They are widely supported. They reflect the experience, wisdom and knowledge of the judiciary itself. More importantly, they advance the best interests of Canadians who interact with our justice system.

Fellow members, let us work together to strengthen and modernize the mechanisms for addressing complaints about the conduct of federally appointed judges, and reinforce and foster public confidence in our judiciary and our justice system. Let this bill and its passage mark an important point in the history of the judicial conduct process in Canada. I urge all members to join me today in supporting Bill C-9 and passing these long-awaited changes to the judicial conduct process.

**Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that Bill C-9 was first introduced and had its first reading on December 16, 2021, more than six months ago. Now here it is, just a couple of days before the summer break, and we the opposition are being urged to pass it without further debate.

If the issues are so important, why was it not brought forward to the House of Commons earlier so that we could have a full debate without feeling rushed?

• (1655)

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** Mr. Speaker, I think there are always competing demands for the time in this House. All of the legislation that is introduced at whatever point in time, whether it is two days before the summer break or two months before the summer break, is extraordinarily important.

I do not think that any Canadian or anybody listening should consider this bill as less important because it was introduced just before summer break. It is something that has been studied for over seven years. It has been discussed widely. I think there is wide agreement with the changes that are being proposed. I hope the member will consider supporting this bill.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have a very simple question for my colleague from Davenport. How does she think we could speed up the process and get the bill passed? Everyone supports it.

[English]

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** Mr. Speaker, I think that if the House were to ask for unanimous consent to pass this bill, we would be able to pass it very quickly.

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, does the member agree that there have already been a lot of consultations and there has already been a lot of public engagement warranting the quick passage of this bill?

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** Mr. Speaker, I think there have been a lot of consultations. I listed a number of associations from the legal perspective, from the broader perspective and also from the general public that were invited to comment on the proposed legislation. I mentioned that this legislation, or the deliberations about updating or modernizing this approach, has been talked about for about seven years now. There has been a lot of opportunity for a lot of input. It was widespread. I have all the confidence that there has been a lot of opportunity for anybody who has wanted to provide input to have done so. I think it has been honourably encapsulated in the legislation we have proposed before the House.

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Mr. Speaker, it is clear there is widespread support in the chamber for this piece of legislation, and it has been suggested by some that the only reason it is still being debated is that there is some trading going on between parties.



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I know the member cares about the quality of the discourse in this place. Could she share her reflections on her aspirations and what it would take for this place to rise past more transactional politics and focus more fully on the most critical issues we face?

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** Mr. Speaker, the member is right. I do care about the discourse in this chamber. I think we are at our best when we share our best ideas in addressing the biggest challenges before Canadians. I think that is how we can best serve Canadians on all of the issues, challenges and opportunities that face Canadians today. I agree with him. I encourage all sides to constantly find ways to share our best ideas and work together so we can create an even better Canada.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned unanimous consent. It is possible when parties speak to each other. We are in a Parliament, so the parties must talk, negotiate and use diplomacy. Is that happening right now? Are the parties in talks to reach unanimous consent, given that we all agree?

[*English*]

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** Mr. Speaker, I am not part of the team that is negotiating on this particular bill and what is actually happening in this House. It is with great hope that they are talking about it and that they are putting unanimous consent as an option on the table. I do agree with many who have spoken in this House to say that there is widespread agreement and that we should pass this swiftly.

• (1700)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise here today on the traditional territory of the Algonquin Nation. *Meegwetch.*

I really had hoped to be allowed to ask the member for South Surrey—White Rock a question, and I will tell members why, because I think they might enjoy this.

The hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock mentioned that she used to practise law, and I used to practise law. However, the member was actually part of the governing party when we were both first elected in 2011 when she helped me with a family law case. I just wanted to put that out there.

One of my constituents had a grandchild pretty much kidnapped by a non-custodial father who took the toddler to New Hampshire. I was going crazy, as were the mother and other members of the family, trying to figure out how to get the baby back. Speaking of judges I do not like, I would mention the family court judge in New Hampshire who thought that a court order from the Supreme Court of British Columbia for full custody of the little girl was something out of a Cracker Jack box that the judge was free to ignore. It was quite the case. The hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock gave me some very good advice, which helped me get the baby back. She is now 16 and living with her proper family, and so it all came out quite well.

I want to talk about Bill C-9, which would reform the Canadian Judicial Council.

As I was speaking of a U.S. judge, it reminded me of this whole experience when I was at Dalhousie law school. We had one professor who challenged us on a case one day. We spent hours trying to figure out the rationale for the judge's decision. It made no sense to us. Obviously, the judge had ruled it, and so we had to figure out the legal reasoning, because there must be legal reasoning. It was a contract case and it made no sense. After about an hour of us tearing our hair out and putting forward solutions, our professor asked, "Is it permissible to ask if the judge was bribed?" The judge was, which is why the decision made no sense, and he was thrown off the bench for it.

This was an episode for us in real-life judicial reasoning. Sometimes the judge is bribed. Now, I do not know if this has happened in Canada, but it might happen sometime, and this is why we need a judicial review process. This particular process has been in place since 1971, and there are good and real reasons that it needs to be fixed.

There is another real-life case that I found explanatory. For the general public who may be watching this debate today, it has been a little dry, so I figured I would give a real-life example, which some members may know.

The judge was from the Quebec Superior Court, Michel Girouard, who, I think 13 days before being elevated to a being a judge, was caught on video buying cocaine. This is similar to a Netflix true-crime story. Judge Girouard was challenged in 2010 when there was a complaint to the Canadian Judicial Council.

It is pretty clear that when a judge is caught on video buying cocaine from one of his clients who was then before the courts that we really do not want that particular gentleman on the court. If we want to talk about something that brings the justice system into disrepute, that would be it.

The case started in 2012 and did not end until 2021, when the Supreme Court of Canada refused to hear Judge Girouard's appeal. At that point, he had managed to use every possible legal avenue to fight the finding that he was not qualified to be a member of the judiciary. He fought it, and for those of us who are trained in law can imagine, there are many ways to be creative and litigious, and this gentleman was very litigious. Not only that, under the previous law that we had, the people of the province, the taxpayers, had to pay all of his legal fees, because he was a judge and it was under the judicial complaints process.

I will point out one thing that Bill C-9 would do. We obviously learned a lot from that experience, and we do not want to have someone who is challenged dead to rights who should not be a member of the bench, able to keep exploiting every possible appeal and then charge the taxpayer for the legal fees. Also, there should be a way of limiting how many accesses to judicial review through the federal courts someone in this situation should have.

*Government Orders*

• (1705)

Bill C-9 would do something quite straightforward that I have not mentioned yet today. If a judge going through this process wants to find ways to appeal, they are all in Bill C-9. The only court that a judge who is being challenged in this way can get to is the Supreme Court of Canada, at the very end of the process. The judge cannot keep finding a judge somewhere to hear some aspect of a complaint the judge is fighting.

Just to make it clear, under this legislation, there would be complaints, a screening officer, a reviewing member, and they can create certain kinds of review panels and hearing panels together, but they are not clogging up the regular court system. The judge that is the subject of the complaint is precluded from going to any other court, but at the very end, has the right to an appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada.

The law also gets rid of the idea that the people have to pay for the legal costs of a judge. The opportunity to appeal to the courts under the new process, proposed section 158 of Bill C-9, specifically bars any legal challenges or other forms of judicial review. This is a very helpful change.

Everything about the way the bill has been constructed has been the subject of a great deal of consultation due to cases, and there have not been a lot of cases. Let us face it, in the 40 years since the Canadian Judicial Council was created, as far as I could find, and it was the same figure that the hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke used, which means it is probably right, was that there were only 14 reviews in the last 40 years. This speaks to a very high level of ethics and integrity within our judiciary.

However, if someone does have a problem, there are very large stakes in getting this right. We do not want frivolous complaints from, for instance, people who have lost cases in front a judge and that disaffected previous litigant having the right to make a judge's life hell, to pursue them and subject them, in social media or wherever, to unfair charges. The judge subject to a complaint clearly has rights and has to be treated fairly. That side of getting the balance right is well reflected in Bill C-9.

The other aspect is we do not want public confidence in our justice system to be shaken by having someone serving as a judge who clearly does not meet the standards of ethical conduct, the way it is expressed in this new bill. The ones that used to be there are infirmity, misconduct, failure of due execution and, this is the new one that is relatively traditional, the judge is in a position that a reasonable, fair-minded and informed observer would consider to be incompatible with the due execution of judicial office.

In the time remaining, I want to mention that all of us here should think about the benefits of this new approach. The system we are currently under really has a binary choice: The judge is off the bench or the judge is on the bench. This new system says that maybe the judge needs some training, some counselling or a warning. There is a different approach here, again something short of the kind of misconduct that says the judge must leave the bench altogether, that allows for help.

One can imagine these are stressful positions. Mental health issues affect everyone in every profession, so there could be conduct

that is questionable, but, on the other hand, overall the person is a good judge. Bill C-9 would allow that judge in that circumstance to be treated fairly, but it also protects the public and the taxpayer from judges who would do absolutely anything to stay on the bench, even if, as in the case I cited, they have been caught on video buying cocaine.

With that, I hope we can expedite the passage of this bill. It has been around even longer than some members have mentioned, because it was Bill S-5 in the last Parliament in the Senate and died on the Order Paper when the last election was called. Let us get this bill passed.

• (1710)

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I agree with so much that was said in the intervention by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands today, again reinforcing the many reasons that we need to be moving forward with these changes to the Judges Act, getting this bill to committee and moving forward on what we are all agreeing on today.

I may be new in this role as a member of Parliament, but I cherish every moment to stand up and speak in this chamber, and I hope that never changes.

I reflect on the fact that our time may not be being used in the most efficient way right now. We have so much that is happening. I am hearing from constituents who are worried about the climate crisis that we are in and are struggling to make ends meet, and I am wondering if the member can share a bit about how she feels about using our time in the best way possible to speak to the concerns that we are hearing from constituents day in and day out.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, we have a responsibility to look at every piece of legislation, but we are spending an entire day on a piece of legislation that nobody can oppose and on which nobody can suggest the need to get it to committee for amendments.

This is a bill that was essentially drafted by the Canadian Bar Association after numerous studies looking at the Canadian Judicial Council and with the full engagement of the existing Canadian Judicial Council, so it is an excellent piece of legislation that has been well drafted.

I agree with the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith. It has been almost three years to the day since this Parliament passed, on June 18, 2019, the motion declaring that we are in a climate emergency. We have yet to act as though we understand that we are in an emergency, and I think the more we talk about anything else, the closer we go to a place that is a point of no return for our own children.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I think this is an impactful bill. It will help shorten these processes, establish a mechanism to deal with complaints ranging from the less serious to the more serious, and ensure that the misconduct is punished.

Does my colleague agree with fast-tracking the adoption of this bill?

*Government Orders*

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I completely agree. It is a good bill. It is well drafted and clear. It is the result of a decade or more of study and reflection. I think we have a duty to do whatever we can to adopt this bill as soon as possible.

**Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands for her speech.

I agree that the fight against climate change is very important. It is the greatest existential challenge of our generation. I hope that she will also agree that everyone needs to work together to fight climate change, and that doing so takes social cohesion.

It is very important, especially for minority groups, such as racialized people, that a bill like this one is passed. Canadians of all backgrounds will then have confidence that, if they appear before a judge or a court, they will be respected and judged on the merits of the case. They will not be concerned that a judge may have an unwarranted bias that may undermine justice.

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

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, it is clear that we need to have a system that gives each and every Canadian and Quebecker confidence that the system is fair and free of racism. We currently live in a society where systemic racism is found in every institution, group, and province, because racism is built into the system, even though not everyone is racist.

That is why we need to do more.

• (1715)

[*English*]

**Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as always in the House, it is a pleasure to rise to speak and raise the voice and the message from my constituents in the eastern interior riding of Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry. I will be splitting my time here this afternoon with our opposition House leader, the member for Barrie—Innisfil.

I want to start my intervention and notes on Bill C-9 today with a bit of a personal parliamentary perspective.

We are hearing a lot of criticism here today on this bill. I will say at the forefront that I agree with this specific piece of legislation on the need to modernize our judicial system and to improve confidence in it in a timely fashion. We will hear from our Conservative colleagues some reasonable questions, comments and perhaps amendments to strengthen it. At the end of the day, when we talk about a general intent and the high level of opportunities for us to build strength and confidence in our judges and a process for removal if necessary, we would be deeming that appropriate.

As a bit of context on this piece of legislation, it was tabled six months ago, and this is the first opportunity to discuss it. It is not as if it had been debated for weeks and months on end here in the House of Commons. This is the first time we have had a few hours to discuss it. In my limited time here of two and a half years as a member of Parliament, I have seen that we have to learn how we can most effectively find ways to get our voices onto the floor of

the House of Commons on issues that are important to our constituents.

I will take some time and note a bit of the background on the bill, but I will talk as well in general about some of my concerns and frustrations with the government's direction or tone or intention or narrative when it comes to building confidence in our Canadian judiciary.

The bill before us would update a piece of legislation. When I was looking at the background, I had to go online, and it was kind of interesting. The current process for complaints of misconduct against judges was introduced in 1971. Pierre Elliott Trudeau was our prime minister, and the minister of justice and attorney general at that time was future prime minister John Turner. I think we could agree in the year 2022 that there have been amendments over the years but that we are going to need to tweak and change and edit legislation over the course of time.

I will give credit to the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, who just spoke for a few minutes and gave some very tangible examples of how we need this reform to go. Right now, one of the issues is that if a serious complaint is made through the process of the judicial council and if the misconduct is deemed less serious, the individual member may negotiate a resolution to the process. That lacks accountability and transparency, and I think there is agreement that we need to reform that process.

The proposal in Bill C-9 would change that so that if it is deemed less serious, there still is an opportunity. A member would review it and could either dismiss the complaint if it was wholly without merit or refer it to a three-member review panel. This would provide an opportunity to make sure all reasonable and credible allegations of misconduct, and their severity level, would go through a proper process, which again would give Canadians confidence.

I will also note from my colleague from the Green Party's intervention that there have not been many of these over Canadian history. That speaks to the integrity, the ethics and the strength of the bench in Canada for decades, but I also think we need to update this to make sure that, again, the cases that are deemed "less severe" would still require a review in a public, transparent process in terms of the review panel, the hearings and so forth.

One of the things I want to raise when we talk about building confidence in the judiciary is the government's intention when it comes to mandatory minimum sentencing. One of the pieces of legislation we have debated here is Bill C-5. That can relate to, and the government is proposing to remove, several mandatory minimum penalties. The government is saying that if we oppose the removal of those mandatory minimum penalties, we do not support the Canadian judiciary and the discretion of judges. That is not the case. We believe, as Conservatives, in victims' rights and in supporting those who have gone through trauma or issues and have gone through being a victim of a crime. There deserves to be a minimum punishment.

*Government Orders*

● (1720)

One of the things we talk about when we talk about removal is that this is not for simple things like simple possession. I want to list the things that we have been standing up for, as I believe confidence can still be maintained in our Canadian judiciary and individual judges.

A number of mandatory minimums are being removed related to gun crimes. Mandatory minimums are gone for robbery with a firearm; extortion with a firearm; weapons trafficking, importing or exporting, knowing it is unauthorized; and discharging a firearm with intent. The mandatory minimum in all of these cases is gone, and the list goes on.

Also, some of the legislation we have been dealing with would eliminate mandatory prison time for drug dealers by eliminating six mandatory minimums in the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act: trafficking or possession for the purpose of trafficking, importing and exporting or possession for the purpose of exporting, and production of a schedule 1 or 2 substance. What does that mean? It means heroin, cocaine, fentanyl, crystal meth. There would be a removal of those mandatory minimums.

This, again, is the first time we have been dealing with the bill in this Parliament, as it was over in the Senate. The government progressed at one point, and then it called the election, so it has been stalled several times. This is the first time that we have an opportunity.

I have advice to the Bloc and the NDP, which are complaining that I would like to stand up and have a 10-minute intervention on confidence in our Canadian judiciary: It is that I do not believe in the direction the government is going when it comes to eliminating mandatory minimums. We may agree on the need for reform; there is what is in the legislation, but, most importantly, it is what is not in the legislation, and we have an opportunity to stand up here in the House of Commons and raise those concerns.

It also gives me the opportunity to be the voice for my constituents as well when we talk about the process. Bill C-9 is one example, and Bill C-5, which is terribly flawed, in my opinion and in the opinion of our caucus and in the opinion of many members of law enforcement as well. One of the things that we are not seeing, among the easy things to do, is a whole bill dedicated to reforming this. It means that they are not putting in legislation to address some of the other things. We are calling it out when we see it.

A perfect example is the lack of services for those in the Canadian justice system who are dealing with addiction or battling addiction. We are seeing changes in an effort, through legislation, to try to distract us from the lack of investment in mental health and addictions treatment for those who truly need it. We are taking mandatory minimums away from people who are trafficking and preying on some of the most vulnerable in our society, yet we are not providing the resources to get them the help that they truly need.

When we have a bill like this, it is an opportunity to talk about the views from our community on the portfolio of the Attorney General, the Minister of Justice. It is an opportunity to perhaps find agreement on this, yes, but I can also find time to join the floor of

the House of Commons and say what is not in forthcoming legislation, what is perhaps not in budget bills to address some of the flawed aspects of the government's intentions.

I will just say this as we wrap up, and I have always said it: Somebody who is battling addiction does not need prison time. That is a universal agreement in our country, of law enforcement, I believe, and of the House. We need to target our resources and our criminal justice system on those who are preying on these people and victimizing them. At the same time, we need not only pieces of legislation like Bill C-9 to increase confidence in our justice system; we need investments that can actually get victims, those who are dealing with addiction, out of our justice system and into proper help to get back into a better trajectory in life and a more positive future for themselves.

I will say in review of this bill that it is time for an update. I look forward to questions and comments and I appreciate the opportunity to speak broadly about confidence in our justice system.

● (1725)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleague to tell his party to let him speak more because, especially in his conclusion, he talked about diversion-related values that I would like the Conservative Party to address more often. I would like to hear more about that interesting idea.

In the current context, I would like to ask him what measures he would propose to make this a little more efficient, if he were the justice minister. There seems to be a lot of tension in the House today.

In closing, I would like to point out my colleague's good taste in clothing. I really like his tie.

[*English*]

**Mr. Eric Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comment on my tie, and members will note I am wearing the “loud MacLeod” tartan today, which represents the Glengarry county part of my riding.

To the member's comment, I will go back to the opportunity to speak more broadly about criminal justice reform and reform to our justice system. On this piece of legislation, I know some of our Conservative colleagues, from conversations, look forward to hearing from witnesses, and many of them have been quoted in various debates today. I think we may find some reasonable amendments to strengthen the legislation, and I will defer to them specifically on that.

I had the opportunity to speak in general support of the bill, and again, we will see where it goes in committee, and also to raise some of the things that are not in the government's justice agenda and legislation.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member made reference to other legislation, Bill C-5, which is on minimum sentences, and he is very offended by the fact that that legislation was brought forward. Getting rid of minimum sentences does not mean someone who commits an act would get off scot-free. What it does mean is we would be providing more opportunity for judges to use their discretion. Judges, in vast majority, are very well educated and have a very good understanding of the system. They can take a look at the circumstances and are in a better position to be able to give a disposition. I would not want him to give a false impression that, because we are getting rid of minimum sentences, people would get off scot-free. That is just not accurate.

My final thought is regarding the calling of the legislation. Surely to goodness the member would realize that, even though it was introduced and had first reading in December, there are many other legislative agendas. The Conservative Party never approached the government to call for Bill C-9 either. It is here today because the Bill C-14 debate collapsed last night. Bill C-14 was another piece of legislation that was extended because of the Conservative filibuster.

**Mr. Eric Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I was not suggesting that people would get off scot-free. What I am saying is that Conservatives believe that, for the serious cases I listed, with the removal of mandatory minimums in Bill C-5, there should be a floor, a benchmark or a minimum punishment for some of the most severe and serious crimes being committed to go after the people who are going after our most vulnerable.

Again, I alluded to this in my comments. These are highly educated judges, and I have respect for our judiciary. I also have respect for victims. I believe when somebody is committing robbery with a firearm or extortion with a firearm, or they are producing heroin, cocaine, fentanyl or crystal meth, there should be a benchmark and a minimum. They would have the discretion to go higher, but there would at least be a floor. It is standing up for victims and their rights.

I will not apologize for that, and I reject the premiss that to support mandatory minimums in these serious cases is somehow saying we do not trust our judiciary. I trust the need to stand up for victims and for there to be proper consequences for those who harm them.

• (1730)

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, does the member not realize this bill would actually enhance fairness because of the mechanisms that would be established, and that, through the enhancement of these fairness systems, it would help improve the protection of victims?

**Mr. Eric Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, to clarify for my colleague from the NDP regarding this piece of legislation, I agree. Looking at the proposal and the draft, this could strengthen it and ensure there is a full process for every complaint that goes through to a review of judicial misconduct. The bill would improve and modernize that.

What I was alluding to in my speech was an opposition to Bill C-5 and the elimination of mandatory minimums. Again, one can

support and respect the independence and quality of our judges in this country while still believing there could be a minimum floor.

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill C-9, an act to amend the Judges Act, a bill that was originally introduced last year, and I may have referenced earlier that it was October 2021, but it was actually in December 2021.

I will begin, and I know he is not going to like this because he is sitting just over my right shoulder here, with some praise for our shadow minister for justice, the hon. member for Fundy Royal. Since his re-election in 2019, he has had to deal with pieces of legislation, government legislation, government fixes to legislation that have been beyond any expectation of what any opposition critic, or shadow minister, as we now call them to mirror what the parliament of Britain calls their shadow ministers. He has done incredible work holding the government to account, and it is a complicated file to be able to disseminate what all of these pieces of legislation are, how they impact Canadians, and how they impact the judicial process and the court process. He has done that honourably and with great conviction.

As we know, when we are dealing with these sorts of pieces of legislation, it is not just us, it is also policy advisors within our offices and legislative staff who comb through many of these pieces of legislation to try to make them better, to try to come up with legislation that is good for Canadians. I would argue that there is nothing more important when we deal with pieces of legislation than those dealing with our court system, those dealing with judges, those dealing with Criminal Code issues. I really want to thank our shadow minister for justice, the hon. member for Fundy Royal, for the work that he has done on many of these files.

It is difficult because, when we are dealing with pieces of legislation like what we are dealing with today, Bill C-9, we know it was introduced in December 2021. This is a bill that has obviously languished in the legislative process. We are now at second reading debate on the bill and these hours of debate today are the first for this piece of legislation, but it is piece of legislation that has received broad support right across the country. My expectation is that it will move through the legislative process rather quickly.

Some of that support has come, for example, from the Canadian Bar Association, which has expressed its support for the legislation. As I said earlier, it aims to change the judicial complaints process, which was first established 50 years ago. This is a piece of legislation that requires an update to reflect the realities of the current environment in this country. Bill C-9 proposes changes to the Judges Act to restructure the process for dealing with misconduct allegations against federally appointed judges.

*Government Orders*

In particular, the bill will amend the process through which the Canadian Judicial Council reviews the conduct of these judges in three significant ways. One, it will create a process for reviewing allegations not serious enough to warrant removal from office. Two, it will improve the process by which recommendations on removal are made to the Minister of Justice. Three, it will ensure that the determination of pensionable service for judges ultimately removed from office reflects the actual time of service and excludes the time for review.

As I said earlier, the Canadian Bar Association is clearly in support of this, and I expect that, when it gets through second reading and eventually ends up at committee, we are going to hear from the Canadian Bar Association. We will hear from other stakeholders as well, showing their strong support for review of a piece of legislation that has not been updated over the course of the last 50 years, so it is about time.

● (1735)

One of the most important things about this place is that we have those voices of Canadians. There are 338 members in this place who are elected to express the views of their constituents. Those are important views, and these type of debates become increasingly important in a polarized society, so we can reflect on what the pieces of legislation can do and make these pieces of legislation better. I expect, at committee, the strong voices of those stakeholders and advocates who are for the bill or against the bill will perhaps come together and really reinforce or make this piece of legislation that much stronger.

This is not the first iteration of what we have seen. The bill was originally introduced in the Senate as Bill S-5 on May 25, 2021. I went through the criteria of what the bill actually does fix, but again, like every other piece of legislation that was introduced, not only here in the House, but also in the Senate, before September of last year, this bill fell off of the Order Paper.

If we look through some of the issues with the bill, one of the things that it focuses on is the issue of process reform and consultations as well. Bill C-9 follows the 2016 federal government's public consultations on potential reforms to the federal judicial discipline process. Within the consultation report, the judicial discipline proceedings had been marked by significant increases in costs and delays, and reforms were necessary to ensure that the process was cost-effective, efficient and transparent, and to preserve public confidence in the judicial system.

Under the current system of CJC, interim or final decisions can be challenged through three layers of judicial review. One is the Federal Court, the other is the Federal Court of Appeal. There is also, with leave, the Supreme Court of Canada. As a result, the judicial conduct inquiries can be subject to multiple, drawn-out legal challenges that can take years to resolve.

I mentioned the judicial conduct and review process, but there are several other key points in this legislation. It also addresses complaints. Under both existing and new processes, anyone may submit a complaint about a judge's conduct to the CJC. Under this new process, the CJC may make a complaint only when there are at least two of its members who have reasonable grounds to believe that the public's confidence in the judge's impartiality, integrity or

independence, which is critical as we know, could be undermined for any of the reasons stipulated in proposed paragraphs 80(a) through (d). An anonymous complaint, for example, would face the same threshold test as a complaint made by the CJC.

The other aspect of this bill is that it proposes a screening officer be added to the existing process. The CJC's executive director screens complaints and may dismiss those that are clearly without merit, do not involve a judge's conduct or are not in the public interest. Under the new process, the CJC designates a screening officer, who may be a judge, to conduct an initial assessment. This is proposed section 88 in the bill. Complaints may be dismissed if they are clearly without merit, are not related to one of the reasons listed in new section 80 or do not meet other screening criteria that may be established and published by the CJC under proposed section 90.

A reviewing member, as in the existing system, and this is another important piece of the new process, holds the complaints that are not dismissed after being screened by a member of the CJC. That is in proposed section 91. The judge whose conduct is the subject of the complaint may make written submissions at this stage under proposed section 93.

There are more aspects of this bill that are important, but after 50 years, it is time for an update to this review system. I am glad that we are here today debating it in our House of Parliament, and I will be glad to answer any questions that anybody might have.

● (1740)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I just want to thank the member for Barrie—Innisfil for that in-depth analysis of this bill, and for putting forward his position on it and how he feels about it. It was truly remarkable.

He spent the first three minutes of his speech thanking the member for Fundy Royal for his hard work on it and indeed referenced the fact that the member for Fundy Royal had to do some in-depth analysis. I think his words were he had to “comb through” the legislation to look for changes.

Could the member for Barrie—Innisfil inform the House of the changes the member for Fundy Royal came to conclude upon after that in-depth analysis of the bill?

**Mr. John Brassard:** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his question.

[Translation]

#### MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed the following bill, to which the concurrence of the House is desired: Bill S-8, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, to make consequential amendments to other Acts and to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations.

[English]

It being 5:43 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

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### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

#### NATIONAL FRAMEWORK ON CANCERS LINKED TO FIREFIGHTING ACT

The House resumed from April 4 consideration of the motion that Bill C-224, An Act to establish a national framework for the prevention and treatment of cancers linked to firefighting, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it truly is an honour to participate in the debate on Bill C-224. I thank the member for Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine for bringing this important legislation to the House. We may disagree on a lot of things, but I know that she is equally passionate about serving and fighting for those brave men and women who serve our communities and our country.

If members will indulge me for just a moment, I would like to recognize a friend of mine and a champion in my hometown of Williams Lake, whom we lost far too soon last week. Des Webster served in the Williams Lake fire department for over 24 years. He retired as fire chief in 2018, after leading our community through the worst fire season and the largest mass evacuation our province had experienced during the 2017 wildfires. Des had literally just become a grandfather. My condolences go out to his family and friends back at the fire hall in Williams Lake. Des will be missed.

We are losing far too many of the men and women who serve our communities, either due to moral and mental trauma they experience or from exposure to the deadly substances and related cancers that they develop through their service to our community. I want to thank the over 26,000 Canadian men and women in the IAFF for their service to their communities and to our country. I would also like to thank the IAFF 1372 back home in Prince George.

All firefighters truly are heroes. They put their uniforms on every day, knowing full well they will experience human tragedy and may have to make the ultimate sacrifice. These brave men and women run into burning buildings. Let us think about that for a moment: They run into burning buildings. When every fibre of their being is screaming at them to find safety, they run toward danger. When people try to escape the tangled wreckage of car accidents,

#### Private Members' Business

they dive straight in to save lives. They hold our hand as we take our last breath.

I believe we must fight for those who fight for us. I have dedicated the last seven years of my elected service to ensuring that we are fighting for those who fight for us, our silent sentinels who stand. They leave their families each and every day, not knowing whether they are going to return. Sadly, their families are far too often forgotten and left to pick up the pieces.

When I see legislation like this, it makes me proud to know that we can actually make a difference in someone's life. Simply put, Bill C-224 will save lives. More than 85% of all line-of-duty deaths among firefighters in Canada are due to occupational cancers. Can members imagine getting up every day and going to work knowing that there is an 85% chance they will die of cancer? How many members of this chamber would want to come to work if they were told they had an 85% chance of contracting cancer from our work in the chamber? Awareness and education are essential to help firefighters detect the early signs so that they can get screening early and treatment as soon as possible.

The increased use of plastics and resins in modern building materials means that the work environment for firefighters becomes more toxic with each passing year. While the average Canadian has a one-in-three chance of being diagnosed with cancer, firefighters are diagnosed with several types of cancers at rates that are statistically higher than in other occupations. Firefighters are exposed to both known and suspected carcinogens during their work. Although exposure is often for short periods of time, exposure levels can be high. Studies in fire chemistry show toxic levels of hazardous substances such as formaldehyde, sulphur dioxide, benzene, toluene, and ethyl benzene, among other substances, in the smoke during the knock-down and overhaul firefighting phases, in structure fires as well as vehicle fires. With exposure, these hazardous chemicals coat their protective gear as well. They seep into every fibre. Incredibly, the gear that is designed to save their lives can also contribute to the exposure to these carcinogenic substances.

Cancer-related deaths are a growing concern among the members of the industry, and anything we can do as parliamentarians to mitigate that risk is an important first step. Bill C-224 proposes national standards for firefighting cancers, including measures to explain the link between the disease and the profession. It calls on the government to identify the educational needs of health care and other professionals and to promote research and information sharing.

*Private Members' Business*

● (1745)

There are so many things that we take for granted on a daily basis, moments that slip by us unrecognized, people, places, things that impact us without our even noticing. When we get dressed, have breakfast and leave for work, it never, in a million years, occurs to us that this could be the last day we see our loved ones, the last time we hug our wives or children, the last time we tell a friend or family member that we love them.

Firefighters have to live with this realization each and every time they put on their uniform. They go to work knowing that this could be the last time they see their families. They go to work each day to protect us. They go to work to literally save our lives and to fulfill their oath to serve our communities, to protect other families and mine, regardless of the threat to their own personal safety.

I attended the funeral of a fallen firefighter last year and I was given the Firefighter's Prayer. With the indulgence of the House, I will read it into the record:

When I am called to duty, God, wherever flames may rage,  
Give me strength to save a life, whatever be its age.  
Help me to embrace a little child before it's too late  
Or save an older person from the horror of that fate.  
Enable me to be alert to hear the weakest shout,  
And quickly and efficiently to put the fire out.  
I want to fill my calling and to give the best in me,  
To guard my neighbor and protect his property.  
And if, according to your will, I have to lose my life,  
Bless with your protecting hand my loving family from strife.

Passing Bill C-224 and creating a national framework that will raise awareness of cancers linked to firefighting seems such a small price to pay, a small price that will have a major impact on this essential profession, a small price that will save lives. I believe it is incumbent on all of us as leaders within our country to do whatever we can to fight for those who fight for us, whether it is fighting for the mental health supports that they desperately need so they can be well and be healthy, or whether it is fighting for legislation such as Bill C-224, which would be life-changing and help those struggling beyond their career.

None of us know what the future will bring, but at the very least, we can provide those mechanisms, put those mechanisms in place to educate health care professionals and provide resources for the families and the firefighters who put their lives on the line every day. I hope that members of all parties will join me in supporting this important piece of legislation.

Once again, I thank the member for Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne for bringing it forward. She reminded me today that it was five years ago this day that she stood in the House in support of my bill, Bill C-211, making Canada the very first country in the world to develop legislation to fight PTSD for those who fight for us: our frontline heroes.

I thank all members of Parliament in this debate today and all who have come before us. I thank my good colleague from Barrie—Innisfil, who himself is a retired firefighter, as well as the member for Essex. I thank them for their service. I thank those in the gallery today.

God bless.

● (1750)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Madam Speaker, today I am speaking to Bill C-224, sponsored by the member for Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne. This bill provides for the development of a national framework designed to raise awareness of cancers linked to firefighting and to support improved access for firefighters to cancer prevention and treatment, while also designating the month of January as firefighter cancer awareness month.

This bill has some very good points that we fully agree with, as well as some that are not so good, even though they come from a good place. Since we are at the stage of passing the bill in principle, I would like to say from the outset that we will be voting in favour of the principle of Bill C-224, so that it can be sent to committee to be studied and improved.

We fully support the idea of officially designating January as firefighter cancer awareness month. Firefighting is considered to be one of the most demanding professions, both physically and psychologically. It is important to recognize that and focus on it.

Ever since childhood, it has been ingrained in our collective imagination that firefighters are real-life superheroes, and for good reason. Firefighters endure extremely difficult working conditions. They are constantly surrounded by hazards such as fire, electricity, chemicals, and toxic fumes. There is the ever-present risk of injury and burns. They often have brushes with death, and some of them even die. They push their bodies to their physical limits. In everything that they do and every move that they make, they are in a race against time, and each passing second wreaks havoc and ratchets up the danger level.

To further complicate matters, a number of recent studies show that firefighters also face invisible threats in the form of toxic chemicals that can cause long-term occupational illnesses, including heart disease, lung damage and cancer, and it is easy to understand why. When firefighters battle a blaze inside and outside a building, they are exposed to dangerous toxic gases. Wearing a respirator helps protect them by minimizing exposure to inhaled chemicals, but particles can stick to and contaminate their protective clothing, mask, boots and gloves, meaning that by touching them, firefighters can become contaminated through their skin. This is a real problem that cannot be ignored and must be addressed quickly. That is why we will vote to accept this bill in principle.



We want firefighters to know that this issue matters to us, that we recognize the amazing work they do and that we are deeply grateful to them. The federal government can play a huge role in many aspects of firefighters' health, and this bill puts forward some very interesting ones, such as the following points that would be in the national framework:

(a) explain the link between firefighting and certain types of cancer;

...

(d) promote research and improve data collection on the prevention and treatment of cancers linked to firefighting;

(e) promote information and knowledge sharing in relation to the prevention and treatment of cancers linked to firefighting;

It is very important that the federal government fund research on these cancers and their treatments and make that information widely available. That really is an essential part of the equation that goes hand in hand with collecting data on prevention to increase our knowledge about illnesses related to this profession. What did we know 30 years ago about toxic residues being absorbed through the skin and how serious that could be? Very little.

● (1755)

The federal government also contributes through the memorial grant program for first responders, the heavy urban search and rescue program, and the plan to protect firefighters, which is based on managing and authorizing chemicals.

The problem with Bill C-224 is that the strategy it proposes is flawed. The work of firefighters generally does not fall under federal jurisdiction, yet two of the bill's suggestions are outlined as though the government did have jurisdiction in these matters.

First, paragraph 3(3)(c) requires the strategic framework proposed by the member for Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine to include measures to “provide for firefighters across Canada to be regularly screened for cancers linked to firefighting”. The idea that professionals exposed to a cancer risk should have access to periodic cancer screening obviously makes sense. That is clear to us. That should happen. The problem is that the federal government has no jurisdiction here, and so it is difficult to imagine that this aspect of the bill would be of any use in advancing our firefighters' worthy cause.

If the federal government wants to ensure that firefighters' cancers are detected in time, it should give the Quebec and provincial health care systems the means to make that happen by increasing health transfers to 35%, with a 6% escalator. This would get the health care systems in Quebec and the provinces back on track and help them detect cancer in firefighters and other patients in time to treat them effectively. That is the federal government's responsibility.

Furthermore, paragraph 3(3)(f) requires the national framework to include measures to “establish national standards to recognize cancers linked to firefighting as occupational diseases”. Unfortunately, while the federal government does have free rein to set national standards for the firefighters under its jurisdiction, such as firefighters working in the armed forces, it cannot under any circumstances set federal standards that would infringe on the jurisdictions of the Quebec and provincial labour boards.

### *Private Members' Business*

Under the Constitution Act, 1867, workplace safety is a provincial jurisdiction, excluding federally regulated businesses. In Quebec, the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail, or CNESST, has the authority to compensate workers who contract work-related illnesses. In Quebec, nine cancers are currently recognized as being linked to firefighting. That said, the Bloc Québécois agrees that this is far from perfect and that more needs to be done. Let us be clear: Nine is not enough.

We support these demands from firefighters and believe that what is recognized in other provinces for the same work should logically also be recognized in Quebec. However, that is not for Bill C-224 to determine. These are recommendations and submissions that will have to be made to the proper authorities. The federal government has no role to play here. If Bill C-224 were adopted as is, it could wind up causing a jurisdictional battle at the expense of firefighters. The last thing we want to do is exploit them.

According to the Constitution Act, 1867, municipal institutions fall under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. In Quebec, for instance, the responsibilities associated with fire prevention, fire preparedness and firefighting are clearly set out in the Fire Safety Act, which divides the responsibilities among citizens, municipalities, the provincial government and the various fire departments.

We recognize that progress has been made and must continue to be made to ensure that firefighters have better protections, but ultimately, we need to remember that the federal government has no jurisdiction over workplace health and safety or over occupational diseases among firefighters. Interference in jurisdictions is never an effective solution, in the short or long term.

Let us work together to advance this cause and reach out to the authorities who actually have the power to change things. We will vote in favour of the principle of the bill. We want to improve it in committee to ensure that the bill can meet its objectives and protect our firefighters.

● (1800)

[*English*]

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the NDP supports protecting firefighters from occupational health and safety risks. Firefighters risk their lives every day to protect our communities. They have our backs when we need it most and, in turn, we have a responsibility to take care of Canada's firefighters. With that in mind, I will reiterate the words of my colleague for Vancouver Kingsway: This bill has our hearty support.

New Democrats stand with firefighters in the battle to extinguish occupational cancer and all occupational hazards they face. We must take immediate action to reduce the risk of cancer for Canadian firefighters through improved awareness, prevention, screening and treatment, which are all the things this bill proposes.

*Private Members' Business*

By way of background, occupational cancer is now the leading cause of early death among firefighters. Firefighters are regularly exposed to concentrated carcinogens in the air that can be breathed in as well as absorbed by the body. All firefighters are exposed to these realities, yet there is inconsistent recognition of occupational cancers among firefighters all across Canada. That is unfair. All Canadian firefighters should have the highest levels of protection, regardless of where they practise their profession.

Currently, across Canada, a firefighter's cancer may or may not be recognized as occupational depending on the province or territory in which they work. In addition, not all provinces and territories formally recognize the same cancer types as occupational among firefighters. For example, as the member beside me recently mentioned, Quebec recently enacted presumptive legislation for its firefighters, being the last province to do so. It only recognizes nine types of occupational risks, yet we know that there are at least double that number. With each province and territory having its own list of cancers that are presumed to be linked to firefighting, this alone is a reason to enact legislation to bring equity across the country.

British Columbia is one of the provinces that is leading in acknowledging the proven link between increased rates of cancer and the profession of firefighting. It leads in pre-emptive cancer recognition in Canada, recognizing certain cancers for firefighters since 2005. This is very much due to the leading work of Local 18. In 2017, the B.C. government moved forward with an amendment to the Firefighters' Occupational Disease Regulation under the Workers Compensation Act to add presumptions for breast cancer, prostate cancer and multiple myeloma as occupational diseases for firefighters.

I am going to get upset. I ask my colleague to read it for me.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** I thank my colleague.

“A very important woman in my riding was involved in that advocacy to include breast cancers as pre-emptive. Her name is Jenn Dawkins, captain and acting training officer, Vancouver Fire and Rescue”—

• (1805)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I am sorry, but the hon. member cannot take the member's speech. I would just give a minute to the hon. member to be able to get her breath again. I know that this is quite emotional, and I appreciate the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith wanting to give her colleague that support.

The hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:** Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me a moment. I practised my speech, but it does not get easier. I am sure it does not get easier for anyone.

Captain Dawkins did not know back in 2016 when she was advocating the inclusion of breast cancer that she would be going through it herself only a few years later. During COVID, she was diagnosed with breast cancer, and I am happy to say that she is now back to work after a mastectomy and four months of chemotherapy.

She said, “This is an actual result of simply going to work and doing my job.”

Female firefighters are still a rarity in this country. There are very few like Captain Dawkins who have been with the service for 20 years or more, and there is little data about impacts unique to the sexes. San Francisco is further along on data collection. It began hiring women firefighters in the late 1980s. Today, the city has the largest population of female firefighters in the U.S., but unfortunately it also has a high rate of breast cancer among women 40 to 50 years old.

A few years back, it reported that of the 117 female firefighters, 11 had been diagnosed with breast cancer and one had died. That is six times the normal rate. These alarming stats are just another reason this national framework is important. Cancers that affect females need to be included and protected as pre-emptive across the country.

Jenn Dawkins is a constituent in my riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam, and not only did she advocate for the addition of pre-emptive cancer types for firefighters, but she is leading other women into the profession. She started a program called Camp Ignite many years ago. It takes place over four days each summer at different locations in metro Vancouver, hosting girls in grade 11 or 12 who are sponsored by their local departments in their own districts. Each day of the camp is different, with activities like first aid, rope training, aerial work, live fire handling and auto extrication. I think about how this bill could protect those aspiring firefighters.

Protection from illness by raising awareness about the risks of this profession is crucial to help firefighters identify early signs of cancer for testing and treatment. What this bill seeks to do is save lives. It is such important legislation.

Over a firefighter's career, they will go to hundreds of fires, and their risk of cancer increases as they move through their career. Although a firefighter's protective gear is made to withstand 1,000°C, it cannot fully protect from cancer-causing agents because the clothing has to breathe.

That is why the national framework must include measures to do the following: explain the link between firefighting and certain types of cancer; identify the training, education and guidance needs of health care and other professionals related to the prevention and treatment of cancers linked to firefighting; provide for firefighters across Canada to be regularly screened for cancers linked to firefighting; promote research and improved data collection; promote information sharing and knowledge sharing; and establish national standards to recognize cancers linked to firefighting as occupational diseases.

*Private Members' Business*

Going back to the experiences of female firefighters in San Francisco, Anita Paratley was a battalion chief for the San Francisco Fire Department. She developed breast cancer in 2003 when she was just 46 years old. She said, "I remember when I raised my hand to swear-in (to the fire service), thinking 'please be safe, don't get hurt'.... I never thought about cancer."

In closing, the national framework would provide a number of things, including measures to bring equity to firefighters across the country as it pertains to certain types of cancer for all sexes so that no firefighter in any province is left behind.

• (1810)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I know how personal that was for the hon. member given her history and knowledge of what breast cancer does to women, so I want to thank her.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Kitchener South—Hespeler.

**Ms. Valerie Bradford (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank the previous speaker for her very heartfelt interest in this bill.

I am honoured to rise in the House to speak about such an important bill. I would like to thank the member for Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine for the work she has done to create this bill and educate members and the public about how vital this legislation is, and for advocating for the protection of firefighters all across our country. I would also like to thank the International Association of Fire Fighters, the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs, the Kitchener Professional Firefighters Association and the Cambridge Professional Fire Fighters' Association for the work they have done lobbying for support for this bill and for the work they do every day to keep us safe.

The importance of Bill C-224, an act to establish a national framework for the prevention and treatment of cancers linked to firefighting, cannot be overstated. All across the country, from coast to coast to coast, firefighters put themselves in harm's way for the safety of others. They regularly enter unknown and unfamiliar situations that pose an immediate danger to the public. However, long after the situation has passed, the long-term and lasting effects of their service are largely unknown.

As members of Parliament, we have a moral obligation to do everything in our power to protect those who so selflessly protect us and those we represent in the House. This bill would ensure that no matter where a firefighter is serving, at least some of the long-term threats posed to them will be recognized equally. Whether they are responding to a car accident in British Columbia, a structural fire in the Yukon or a hazardous materials incident in Newfoundland, the risk of cancers posed to them because of their service will be recognized.

It is heart-wrenching to consider how many mothers have lost sons and daughters, how many spouses have lost partners and how many children have lost parents because of occupational cancer. More than 85% of all duty-related deaths among firefighters are caused by occupational cancers, a prevalence of roughly three times more than the average Canadian.

Although progress has been made by the government to limit the chance of exposure to harmful chemicals that are known to be carcinogenic, a national framework is necessary, as it would help address, all across the country, the threats faced by substances when we do not know what exposure could lead to. For firefighters, exposure to a harmful substance can occur at any time of day, but a physical reaction to a substance can occur at any point in their lives. The recognition of occupational cancers for firefighters has been a struggle for far too long.

In the city of Kitchener, in March 1987, Kitchener firefighters were called to a structural fire. It was a large fire that occurred at a local manufacturing company. Multiple alarms were called, and there were only two units in the entire city that were not at the fire at one point or another. Some of the witnesses at the scene described "smoke and flame that was every colour of the rainbow". The blaze continued through the night and into the following morning until it was finally extinguished. In total, 69 firefighters took part in fighting this fire.

At the time, the fire marshal reported that there were no significant injuries from the incident. The only exception to this was Captain Ed Stahley, who went to the hospital, as he had a green appearance. It turned out to be nothing more than green dye used in the manufacturing of Oasis floral foam. However, what no one knew at the time was that while it just seemed like a busy night for a mid-size fire department, the exposure to the chemicals used in the manufacturing of this foam would have tragic consequences for years to come.

It only took two years for firefighters to begin dying of cancer caused by their participation in this fire, with several fathering children with birth defects. Dave Ferrede was the first to pass, and tragically not the last, dying only six weeks after being diagnosed with primary liver cancer. He was 32 years old. Those who attended the fire experienced a wide array of physical ailments, with 23 of the 69 firefighters getting either cancer or Parkinson's disease.

• (1815)

For decades, Kitchener firefighters fought to have their voices heard about the effect this fire had on their lives and the lives of loved ones. While many studies have now shown the correlation between cancers and firefighting, this has not always been the case and even now the recognition of cancers is clearly not equal.

This is a tragic story that happened in my community, but there are stories just like this in communities all across this country.

*Private Members' Business*

Recently, I met with two local firefighter unions, the Kitchener Professional Firefighters Association and the Cambridge Professional Fire Fighters' Association, to discuss this bill. The president of the Cambridge union, Steve McArthur, captured the sentiment of this bill perfectly, stating that every firefighter knows someone affected by occupational cancers. That is every firefighter, not just firefighters in Kitchener or Cambridge, not just firefighters in Ontario, but every single firefighter across Canada. In fact, mere weeks after saying this, Cambridge firefighters lost one of their brothers to cancer.

Many provinces, such as Manitoba and Yukon territory, have almost 20 cancers recognized as being linked to firefighting. Others are very behind, with some recognizing as few as six.

A national framework would also promote research and information sharing, so that the lessons learned from one tragic experience may result in it never occurring again in Canada.

We must ensure that those cancers affecting female firefighters are also acknowledged and recognized. This is particularly important as more and more females are joining this band of heroes. This means ensuring that cancers unique to women, such as breast, ovarian and cervical cancer, must be recognized everywhere in Canada and that all measures possible must be taken to protect them, such as having proper-fitting equipment.

While we debate many subjects in the House, I hope the need for occupational cancers to be recognized equally no matter where firefighters serve is not debatable.

This bill is not some abstract policy proposal. This is a bill that has many faces and many names of those who have served, those who continue to serve and those we have tragically lost. From 2012 to 2021, 400 Canadian IAFF members got cancer as a direct result of their duties. This is by far the number one cause of line-of-duty deaths in Canada. We must do more to prevent firefighters from getting cancer and to treat those who do get cancer.

People often think that the greatest threat facing firefighters is something they can see, such as a burning building, fallen debris, raging water, but it is more often the things they cannot see. That is why the other part of this bill is so important, designating the month of January as firefighter cancer awareness month.

This would help increase awareness and educate people about this most serious threat that firefighters face. The ability to identify symptoms early and provide knowledge about the occupational hazards present when performing duties is necessary for reducing the number of firefighters affected by occupational cancer.

By dedicating an entire month toward firefighter cancer awareness, we can help ensure there is a meaningful dialogue about this terrible reality and make sure the public prioritizes protecting firefighters everywhere from occupational cancers.

Firefighters are heroes. They run into danger while the rest of us run away. They put their lives on the line at great personal risk. Unfortunately, all the risks they are exposing themselves to are not known at the time and often the damage from unknown toxins, etc., only manifests itself years later.

Firefighters have our backs. I urge all members of this House to support Bill C-224 to ensure that firefighters know that Canadians have their backs.

• (1820)

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to start by thanking the member for Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne for proposing Bill C-224. I also want to thank the hon. member for Saskatoon West, because just 10 minutes ago, he gave up his time so that I could speak to this bill. I want to thank him for that.

In 1982, I was an 18-year-old kid. I had gone to Humber College for radio broadcasting. My first job was working the all-night shift at a country music radio station in Brandon, Manitoba. I had never listened to country music in my life. I grew up in Montreal and Toronto. I moved to Toronto when I was 12 years old. I realized very quickly, like most fledgling radio careers, that I was not going to make much money.

My uncle was a firefighter in Toronto. My Uncle Pete—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I will let the hon. member take a few seconds to catch his breath. I know this is a very emotional subject and I can certainly understand that many have personal stories that affect them as well.

The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

**Mr. John Brassard:** My Uncle Pete, who inspired me to be a firefighter, recently developed throat cancer. He spent almost 35 years on the job with the City of Toronto. In 1985, I got a job with the City of York Fire Department as a dispatcher. I had radio experience and naturally fit in as a dispatcher, but it was not enough for me. I saw the guys and girls on the floor. I saw what they were doing, and I wanted to be a firefighter.

In 1987, I applied to the Town of Markham Fire Department. It was the Town of Markham at the time. I got on the trucks. I actually became a firefighter. I could not believe it. I was 22 years old at the time, just turning 23. There I was, with five weeks of training, in the middle of January, training to be a full-time firefighter. It was never anything that I ever wanted to do. I had always wanted to be a radio broadcaster.

The equipment they gave us at that time was unlike the equipment today. We had hip-wader boots, basically. We had long coats. There was never, ever any protection for the groin area. Everything could come up. We actually got red fireballs gloves. For those who are here today, they were effectively made of plastic. If anybody got into a fire, they would actually melt on their hands. The equipment is nothing like it was with bunker gear.

*Private Members' Business*

Often there were times when we went to fires at that time and we would go back to the fire station and take a shower after a fire, and the whole basin of the shower would be black. The soot and the carbon that we took in would actually have been absorbed. Everybody thinks about the impact that inhalation has on a firefighter, but it is actually the absorption. We would be sweating. All of those materials that were burned, the carbon and the soot would actually go through our skin. We would go back and the whole basin of the shower would be black.

Just imagine what that was doing to our bodies, how it was impacting our bodies. I can tell the House first-hand how it impacted many of my colleagues.

There was a fire very early on in my career at Greenspoon, a demolition company on Woodbine Avenue. They would pack all of their materials in oils. I remember that day. I was not on the actual fire, but I did spend two or three days there. The first-in crews were talking about what they had seen. Literally, the flames were 100 feet in the air. It was black smoke. Just imagine oils burning. There was black smoke everywhere. It took literally three or four days to get that fire under control. Things were burning underneath.

At the time, the breathing apparatus that we had was known as a 2APD. It was not a Scott system or a regulator system, like we have now. We would actually have a hose dangling to an exterior regulator. We would attach the hose to the regulator. That is how we breathed with compressed air on our back.

Oftentimes, at that time, not knowing what we know now, and again, this was 30 to 40 years ago, we would take the hoses off. I spent two days there, and we would take the hoses off and let them dangle. All of that stuff we were breathing in, came in through the hose, which was a direct conduit to our lungs and to our bodies.

Because of that fire, Larry Pilkey, Paul Donahoe, Harold Snowball, Lorne Martin, Doug Kerr, who recently passed away, and Jason Churchill passed away. There were six people from that fire who passed away, because of an occupational-related cancer.

I remember Jason Churchill who died at 51 years of age. Nobody changed occupational health in this province of Ontario more than Jason Churchill did. This guy was a dogged advocate for health and safety for firefighters. I am sure his name lives on for many people in the fire service.

• (1825)

I worked with Jason for a while. I remember sitting in the wash-room of the station. He came in and he had this giant lump under his arm. He asked me, "What do you think of that?" I said, "You have to get that checked out. That's not good." He was literally dead within a year. There is no question in my mind, no question in my colleagues' minds that it was as a result of that Greenspoon fire that Jason Churchill died. I think of others as well. Gord Hooper is struggling with cancer right now. Bruce Zimmerman, my former captain, has been dealing with stomach cancer. All of them were at that fire.

I heard the hon. member for Kitchener Centre speak about the fire in Kitchener. I was at Ed Stahley's funeral. I know about that situation and how many of those Kitchener firefighters died. It is

the same thing with the Plastimet fire in Hamilton. There are still firefighters today who are suffering from occupational illnesses as a result of those two fires, just like there are with the Greenspoon demolition fire.

This does not affect just the firefighters who contract cancer and eventually die. It affects their friends and families who live with the loss all the time. I can think of Luanne Donahoe and Larry's wife who have had to move on. I can think of the families that have to deal with this cancer. It does not just affect them emotionally; it affects them financially. For their entire lives they will have to deal with the financial loss of losing one of their loved ones.

I know there has been some discussion today about birth defects. I can tell members first-hand that for many of these firefighters and their families the greatest joy in the world is having a child, but many of the children suffer from birth defects as a result of what their parents contracted at these fires.

I am really lucky. I will share personally that I have a urologist who, when I retired at age 51, after I was elected to this place, took a baseline measurement because he has seen too many firefighters come through his office who have suffered from occupational cancer, whether it is prostate cancer, bladder cancer or brain cancer. There are 12 cancers that are recognized in Ontario right now as an occupational illness, at least at last count. He has taken that baseline on me every year I go for a check-up because he wants to know, because of my occupation, whether I am going to contract cancer as a result of all of those years of taking in, not just by inhalation but also by absorption, many of those carcinogens that are being created as a result of the materials today.

The equipment has improved; there is no question about it, but making sure that we are looking after our firefighters and their families becomes critical. With respect to that fire, the fire in Kitchener, as well as the one at Plastimet, we also have to think beyond firefighters, because there were police officers and EMS officers who were on the scenes who are suffering from those occupational illnesses as well.

Let me clearly and unequivocally state that I stand here as a former firefighter who loved every minute of my job every single day. There was not a day that I did not want to go in there. Maybe I did not feel like it the day after Joe Carter hit the home run to win the World Series in 1993. I am thinking maybe I should not have been at work that day.

This is an important piece of legislation not only for firefighters who have contracted cancer and passed on, but their families and friends as well.

• (1830)

**Mr. Mike Kelloway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House today to support my colleague, the hon. member for Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, and her Bill C-224, an act to establish a national framework for the prevention and treatment of cancers linked to firefighting.

*Private Members' Business*

I am equally proud tonight of all members in the House for their speeches and for sharing their personal experiences. It shows how important this particular topic is to all of us, so I say a special thanks to them.

Firefighters, as we have heard tonight, play a critical role in keeping our communities safe. We all depend on their training, skills and expertise when an emergency arises. That is why I am proud to support my colleague's bill.

In April of this past year, I sat down with firefighters in my community to discuss what their needs were when it came to being able to do their jobs safely and go home at the end of each shift to live happy, healthy and long lives. Each firefighter, to a person in the room, pointed to Bill C-224 to do exactly that.

This bill seeks to develop a national framework to promote greater awareness and education about occupational cancers linked to firefighting, and to support prevention and early detection of these terrible diseases all across the country. Occupational cancers, as we have heard tonight, are the leading cause of death among firefighters, according to the International Association of Fire Fighters.

It is impossible to imagine the number of carcinogens in the air as a firefighter bravely runs into a building that has gone up in flames. More than that, how many of these carcinogens follow the firefighters back to their stations and homes on their gear, trucks and equipment? This hazardous material cannot be easily washed away, as we have heard tonight, and can quickly lead to illnesses such as cancer among firefighters in the line of duty.

One of the goals of Bill C-224 is to explain the link between firefighting and certain types of cancers. It also provides measures that would explain the link between cancer and the profession to better identify the education needs for health care and other professionals to promote research and information sharing.

Without identifying and understanding the problem, we cannot fight the problem, so it is essential that we work to fully understand the way firefighters are put at different levels of risk than other first responders based on the nature of their work. This national framework would help us to better understand the real numbers behind occupational cancers among firefighters.

The words "national framework" are a very important part of Bill C-224. According to the International Association of Fire Fighters, and we heard this tonight, there were more than 400 deaths that were formally accepted as job-related. However, the association believes the true number of occupation-related firefighter cancer deaths is likely higher, considering that not all provinces and territories formally recognize all the same cancer types as occupational among firefighters.

For example, Manitoba recognizes 19 cancers as occupational cancers, while B.C. only recognizes nine. Quite frankly, and we have heard this tonight, our firefighters deserve better. By establishing a national framework, we could ensure that education, information and training to prevent occupational cancers could be shared across this country.

While this bill seeks to create standards across the country, we can learn from other provinces' successes and failures when it comes to supporting our fire services, and where the inequalities lie when it comes to recognizing occupational diseases. For example, women in the fire service continue to be left behind, with only five of our 13 provinces and territories recognizing that cervical and ovarian cancer can be caused by occupational health hazards female firefighters face in the line of duty.

I must say I am very proud of my province of Nova Scotia for announcing this year that, effective July 1, these cancers and 11 others would be formally recognized as occupational, bringing the recognized occupational cancers in Nova Scotia to 19, which is the highest recognized number in the country.

Speaking of Nova Scotia, as a member whose constituency is primary rural, I would also like to acknowledge that most rural communities in Canada rely on volunteer fire services. While professional fire departments may have state-of-the-art equipment for decontamination and gear storage, small and local volunteer firefighter operations may not have the same tools and best practices to keep them safe. That is why the ability to share standards across the board is so critical and so valuable.

Firefighters and their families deserve to know and to fully understand the risks associated with their careers, how to mitigate them and what the best practices are to keep them safe in the line of duty. We can help to make that happen.

● (1835)

I have spoken in the House quite a bit about my dad, Mick Kelloway. Dad was a first responder in mine rescue. I think back to the work we did as a country to support our miners' occupational health and safety, and I firmly believe that as a government and a group of individuals, it is incumbent on us to do the same for our fire service. Firefighting, we know, is a dangerous occupation as it is, let alone when we think about the toll that the work takes on people's bodies. Whether they are responding to a highway accident or dealing with hazardous materials, cancer continues to be an epidemic within Canada's fire service.

Firefighters, both career and volunteer, have the backs of our communities and have protected us when we needed them the most. Now, they need us and I have no doubt that each member in the House knows that, especially after listening to the speeches tonight. By working together, we can do what is right and what is fair, and I urge all members to join me in supporting Bill C-224 for the betterment of our fire services from coast to coast to coast.

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I was not expecting the speeches tonight. I want to thank my husband Chris and my father Dave who are firefighters, my friend Chris Ross, and firefighters in Montreal and Longueuil for bringing this issue to us. There are now 338 members of Parliament who know that firefighting causes cancer. I am sure each and every one of us learned something over the course of this debate, and for that I am so thankful, because that is what this bill is about. It is about bringing awareness not only to firefighters, but to their families and the doctors who treat them so they know to ask those questions.

The member for Barrie—Innisfil had it right. He knows to ask about the firefighter in rural Canada who does not know not to put his bunker gear in the back of the car because it is contaminated. That is what this is about. This is about bringing the provinces, territories, indigenous communities and members of the Canadian Armed Forces who served as firefighters together to share that information.

[Translation]

The provinces and territories need to share all their information. For example, one province recognizes 19 cancers, while another recognizes only nine. What information can they share with us?

At the end of the day, the provinces and territories have the final say. I want to explain it very clearly to my friends in the Bloc: The purpose of this bill is to save lives, full stop.

• (1840)

[English]

I will not apologize for wanting to save lives.

A lot of my colleagues here who have had a chance to work with me know that I am a kind of *pratico-pratique* kind of gal. I like to GSD, or get “stuff” done, because I do not want to use unparliamentary language. We were sent here to do things, and this is something we need to do. We need to bring together our colleagues at every level of government to say: “How are we going to beat this? How are we going to prevent cancer in firefighters?”

Right now, when a firefighter passes, God forbid, depending on where they live, they may or may not be eligible for the memorial grant that we put in place, yet they may have died from the same cancer from doing the same job, and that is not fair.

To the firefighters watching, and some are here in Ottawa right now, I thank them. To the firefighters watching at home, I thank them. I thank their families who fear for them every time that bell goes off, and even worse, fear this is the year they will get that diagnosis, because that is the real killer.

Our government has put in place initiatives, whether changing the national building codes or looking at toxic chemicals in flame retardants on sofas, but there is more to do. We need to share that information, because before this, I am sure some of us did not know. All of those young boys and girls who want to become firefighters need to know about this so that they can take the proper precautions, so that they can make sure to decontaminate after a fire, and so that they can make sure to tell their doctors that they are firefighters and to ask for those tests.

### Government Orders

What are the tests that provinces are using? This is what I am talking about with this bill. It is about sharing information about the tests and so on. How do we prevent this from happening, and how do we support those who put their lives on the line every single time that bell goes off?

[Translation]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The question is on the motion.

[English]

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

The hon. member for Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine.

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Pursuant to an order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 22, at the expiry of time provided for Oral Questions.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1845)

[English]

### GLOBAL FOOD INSECURITY

(House in committee of the whole on Government Business No. 18, Mrs. Carol Hughes in the chair)

**The Deputy Chair:** I would like to remind hon. members of how the proceedings will unfold. Each member speaking will be allotted 10 minutes for debate, followed by 10 minutes for questions and comments, pursuant to order made Wednesday, June 15. The time provided for the debate may be extended beyond four hours, as needed, to include a minimum of 12 periods of 20 minutes each.

[Translation]

Members may divide their time with another member, and the Chair will receive no quorum calls, dilatory motions, or requests for unanimous consent.

**Hon. Mark Holland (Ajax, Lib.)** moved:

That this committee take note of global food insecurity.

[English]

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of International Development and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Chair, first of all, I want to acknowledge all the firefighters who were here today and thank them for their sacrifice.

### *Government Orders*

Vladimir Putin's unwarranted invasion of Ukraine has triggered the largest shock to the global food system in the past 12 years. It has caused global food prices to rise over 30% since January of this year, and over 60% since the beginning of the pandemic.

Just last month, when I was in South Sudan, I met with some of the people who are being directly impacted by the rise in prices, with over 75% of South Sudan facing severe food insecurity.

The World Food Programme estimates that an all-time high of up to 49 million people in 46 countries could be at risk of falling into famine or famine-like conditions in 2022. The humanitarian situation in Ukraine and its neighbouring countries, as well as the global food security crisis, are top priorities for me and our government. We continue to work closely with our allies and key international partners to respond effectively to this rapidly evolving, multi-faceted crisis.

Over the past weeks and months, I have spoken with my G7 counterparts, UN officials and the head of the World Food Programme to see what more we can do to help. We have been acting to support the most vulnerable during these unprecedented times.

In the Sahel, in April, I announced over \$82 million to support United Nations agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations in their work to address acute malnutrition and food insecurity.

In the Horn of Africa, I announced \$73 million for gender-responsive humanitarian and development assistance to meet the needs of people in Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia to respond to the severe drought conditions that could result in over 20 million people across the region needing emergency food assistance in 2022.

In Syria and the neighbouring countries like Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Turkey, we are seeing refugees fleeing from conflict who need additional support, including food assistance, which is why we announced over \$169 million in humanitarian funding to help people meet their basic needs.

In Yemen, where years of conflict have caused the suffering of so many people, especially women and children, who bear the brunt of the crisis, we announced over \$62 million to provide life-saving food and support for health care, clean water and sanitation.

We know that Canada cannot be an island of stability in an ocean of turmoil. Eventually, the ripples of conflict will reach our shores. We know too well that food insecurity and conflict are part of a vicious cycle. People who are desperate make desperate choices to feed their families, with poverty and food insecurity leading to political unrest and social tensions, and fuelling conflict.

Since the invasion of Ukraine by Vladimir Putin, we have seen public demonstrations in many places, which have left us concerned about the risk of broader social unrest. Citizens are taking to the streets, protesting against the rapidly increasing food and fuel prices. These strikes and protests are happening against the backdrop of continuous conflicts and violence driving acute food insecurity in countries like Ethiopia, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen.

It is why we have been taking action and will continue to take action on food insecurity, because, at the end of the day, international assistance is conflict prevention.

As we speak today, millions of people cannot meet their basic needs for food and clean water, with women and children most severely impacted. It is why our feminist international assistance policy looks at the unique challenges that women and girls face. Women's involvement is essential in order to find long-lasting solutions for all. Our focus on the nexus between conflict and food security must be done with a clear understanding of gender dynamics and support of women as positive agents of change.

Given the rapid rise in food insecurity, especially among women and girls, we must respond to the immediate humanitarian needs while simultaneously supporting the resilience of vulnerable families and communities. This means investing in agriculture and food systems. While I was in South Sudan, I met with women farmers who were working on innovative, sustainable solutions for agriculture, feeding not only themselves and their families, but their communities, the surrounding regions and their country.

• (1850)

We are working to urgently implement long-term solutions, solutions that promote sustainable peace and break the vicious cycle of poverty, hunger and conflict.

Against this backdrop of large-scale challenges, we have been working with our partners in the G7, with multilateral organizations like the World Food Programme, UNICEF and UNHCR, and with non-governmental organizations like the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, Save the Children and Nutrition International, so that we can make sure that we have a coordinated and effective response to this challenge.

We are already mounting a considered and comprehensive response to respond effectively to the growing food security needs. We are already providing over \$514 million in humanitarian assistance in response to the global food crisis to address growing emergency needs, both in Ukraine and in more than 40 developing countries most affected by this crisis. Our funding is supporting activities such as the provision of emergency cash, vouchers and in-kind food assistance, as well as effective nutrition intervention.



In addition to providing emergency life-saving humanitarian assistance, Canada is also committed to addressing the root causes of food insecurity. Through development assistance, we work to support the resilience of agriculture in vulnerable countries impacted by the global food crisis. In the last fiscal year, Canada provided over \$547 million to support the resilience of agriculture and food systems in developing countries.

Since the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Canada has provided over \$125 million to the African Development Bank to support small and medium-sized agri-businesses in Africa, and to the International Fund for Agricultural Development to support climate-smart agriculture in rural communities located in developing countries.

We are also doubling our investments in the Agricultural Market Information System, and we will work in close collaboration with partners to look into expanding it to monitor the fertilizer crisis. We believe that advocating for market transparency is crucial to keeping prices down, stabilizing price volatility and ultimately reducing poverty and food insecurity for the poorest and most vulnerable people who struggle to access food.

Canada will continue to provide both humanitarian and development assistance in response to this evolving crisis. We must stand in solidarity with Ukraine and those affected by this war. We must stand in solidarity with countries and communities in the developing world that are now facing the pressing food security crisis triggered by Vladimir Putin's unnecessary and inhumane war. We must strengthen the weaknesses in agriculture and food systems globally, in partnership with nations that need assistance. I also look forward to working with Canadian NGOs in matching and enhancing their efforts.

We must act urgently to address the immediate needs in this food insecurity crisis.

**Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Madam Chair, I heard the minister's comments and I wanted to ask him about the amount of food we are producing in the world and how we are going to continue to produce that amount of food, given that we are cutting back on so many of the food inputs, which includes the fertilizer that we know is being cut off in the Ukrainian conflict with Russia. At the same time, we are actually talking about cutting back more of our fertilizer production here in Canada. I am talking about ammonia fertilizer, which is about 35% of the world's fertilizer. If we stop producing fertilizer, we will stop producing enough food in the world and we will have more hungry people. A world growing from eight billion people to 10 billion people will have less food.

Does the minister see this formula changing any time in the near future?

• (1855)

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Madam Chair, the member rightly points out that this is a multi-faceted problem. First of all, we have an immediate crisis to feed the hungry because of the food that Vladimir Putin is not allowing to leave the ports, like Odessa. That is the immediate need.

There is also an extra challenge now. The growing season for next year is going to be reduced because of the lack of fertilizer. We

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are now looking at how we can increase fertilizer so that we can have enough to grow. In addition to working with my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, and also working with multinational partners, we are looking at trying to increase the fertilizer so that we can have more.

The third most important step is to make sure that we have a different solution, a solution for agriculture, so that places in Africa can be self-sustaining. I have more to say about this later.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Madam Chair, the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food is currently studying the emerging food crisis. One of the things that we have identified in relation to the Ukrainian conflict is the need to open up the ports so this year's crop can be exported. The crops are ready to go, but they cannot leave. It appears that the shelling also targeted critical infrastructure.

I would like to know if there have been any developments and how Canada is involved in these negotiations to open up the ports.

In committee, we have also discussed the urgent need for temporary storage facilities in Ukraine. Canada could provide significant assistance in this respect. Could my colleague elaborate on that?

[*English*]

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Madam Chair, as I stated, the grain is not allowed to leave the ports because of Vladimir Putin's war. His choice right now not to allow it to leave is creating a significant problem.

We are working with our European partners and looking at how we can get the grain out, but even by using alternative methods, we would not be able to get enough out. We need to get the ports open. I know there is active work taking place. I was talking to David Beasley, the head of the World Food Programme. I know that the Secretary-General of the UN is also in negotiations and that work continues.

I would like to say I am hopeful, but I will be honest that from what we have seen from Vladimir Putin, we cannot count on that. We will continue to work as hard as we can.

We are also looking at temporary grain storage and what support we can provide so that we can have that storage. That way the new harvest can also be stored so that when the grain can come out, we can eventually get it out. We are looking at all options.

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**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Madam Chair, I am really concerned about the situation where food and hunger are being used as a chip in Putin's war against the people of Ukraine, and now the world. It speaks to a larger destabilization that is happening. We are just learning about the Colorado River. With 80% of it going to agriculture, it feeds 40 million people, and the climate crisis in the southwest is now going to have severe impacts on agriculture. We depend on that agriculture as well. We have Putin blocking the ports, using food as a hunger weapon, and we can see increasing destabilization from climate change.

I want to ask the minister what steps Canada will be taking in the long term to ensure food security and to ensure that we can actually respond to this destabilizing global reality that we are living in 2022.

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Madam Chair, Canada has a lot to offer, given the agricultural heartland within the Prairies. I also mentioned that we have a lot of NGOs in Canada that we can work with. I know there are significant investments being made in agriculture technology and in finding new methods. That is something that we can continue to leverage.

We have to be mindful that the impact of climate change is real and we have to adjust to it. We also have to look at the supply chain. COVID has shown us that we have to look at supply chains differently. We have to look at the war that Putin has caused. As we look to increasing our own food production in our own country, we also have to look at what tools we can use to assist the global south. That is also very important. As we look at how the world is coming together over Ukraine, we need to send a very strong message to the global south that is suffering needlessly because of this war.

Canada has been there for them, but we want to look at how we can use our technology, look at water management systems, work with partners and get those regions of Africa to be more self-sufficient with technology within their own needs, so that we can change all the parameters around the supply chain and not have to rely on traditional systems.

● (1900)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Chair, the minister said something in his speech that really stuck with me: "international assistance is conflict prevention". I think this is so critically important. I believe we all understand and appreciate the fact that given the incredible country we live in, we are certainly in a position to do some of our global responsibilities socially. Indeed, it is a fact that it is more than that. Just by having that assistance there and by contributing internationally, we are also contributing to global security and global peace.

I wonder if the minister can expand on that particular comment he made.

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Madam Chair, anyone who has read about the history of conflict knows that a lot of the conflicts have started because of the lack of food. If we just look at the Syrian crisis, we see that it was because of food prices increasing that protests took place in Syria, and the Assad regime went extremely hard on the population when the uprising started. Right now we

have to be very mindful, from previous experience, to look at the touchpoints where food insecurity is taking place.

We are coordinating our approach so that we can make sure we are showing support, but it is absolutely vital, not just within Canada but also in the international community, that we send a strong message to the global south, which is dealing with this crisis, that we will be there for them while we deal with the crisis in Ukraine.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Chair, we have complex crises and emergencies: the climate crisis, the pandemic, an energy crisis, the war. All of them are affecting food insecurity. When so many complex systems present themselves in crises, there is more we can do than provide food aid, as his department can do. How do we think strategically to actually confront these multiple crises?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Madam Chair, this is exactly what we are doing now. In addition to providing direct support, we are looking at the systems that we have put in place. A lot of investments have already been made. I visited a research lab in Nairobi that is looking at drought-resistant seeds and fertilizers, so there are a lot of things that we can leverage.

We need to look at nations that have the ability to increase their food production. Right now, our department is working on a plan in collaboration with some of our partners within the G7 and the United Nations. This is exactly what we need to do. We need to change the dynamics of how we look at a long-term solution so that we do not rely on the traditional supply chain systems for food.

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Madam Chair, I want to say at the beginning of my intervention that I am encouraged by the words of the minister that the Liberal government now understands the importance of things like fertilizer and gene editing and seed technology and the role they will play in the future for food security, because I would think we are in the midst of a food security crisis. This is not something that will happen; this is something that is happening right now. I would hope the minister understands the critical geopolitical role that Canadian agriculture can play, not only here at home but around the world.

To put this in perspective, Ukraine is the breadbasket of much of Europe, Asia and Africa. The uncertainty that is going around with this conflict is certainly have a significant impact on the price of these commodities, and not only in Europe. We were very naive if we thought we were not going to be impacted here at home as well.

We had the honour of having the Ukrainian minister of the economy at committee the other day, and I want to mention a quote from him. He said that Ukraine is seeing a catastrophe on top of a catastrophe, with a global impact seen since World War II, and that farmers have dropped their breadbaskets to stand in breadlines. That is very apropos and puts some perspective on how serious this situation is.

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We also had the Ukrainian agriculture minister at committee. She said that Russian soldiers have occupied 23% of Ukraine. They are stealing grain, destroying critical infrastructure and blockading Ukraine's ports. This will seriously impact Ukraine's ability to export whatever harvest of commodities it may be able to achieve this spring and again next year. As the minister said, this will lead to social unrest, famine and, very likely, conflicts around the world, especially around the Horn of Africa. How we respond here in Canada to this tragedy and this food insecurity crisis is critical.

I am going to go in a different vein than the minister did, because I think Canadian agriculture has a key role to play in addressing this food insecurity crisis. I was speaking to Canadian farmers across the country over the last few weeks and months as this started to unfold, and every single one of those farmers has said it is our moral obligation to step up and do everything we possibly can to address this food shortage crisis. They want to be there to help their allies and their friends in Ukraine. Certainly for us in western Canada especially, our agriculture sector was developed and the ground was broken by Ukrainian immigrants who came to Canada more than 100 years ago. We are in their debt.

However, for Canadian farmers to be able to do that, to reach that potential and to reach out and help to address this food shortage, they have to have the tools they need to be successful. Farmers certainly understand that there are many variables outside of their control, but there are some things they rely on from the federal government perspective to have certainty. These things include competitive regulatory and tax regimes, an efficient and reliable supply chain, bankable and efficient business risk management programs and access to global markets. I would argue that unfortunately the government is failing agriculture on all of these pillars right now, which is certainly handcuffing our ability to reach our full potential, to increase our yields to not only meet our commitments, not only here at home but around the world, and increase our ability to step up in times of crisis, as we are seeing right now.

One example of that is the federal carbon tax that the government has imposed on Canadian farmers. We heard at committee today from the Grain Farmers of Ontario about Bill C-8, which is what the Liberals have said is the carbon rebate program to farmers. The message that we are getting from the Liberals all the time is that the carbon tax is revenue-neutral, that whatever a Canadian is paying into that carbon tax, they are getting back. However, we heard in testimony today from the Ontario grain farmers that they are getting back between 13% and 15% of what they pay in the carbon tax. That is a long way from being revenue-neutral. In fact, I would say that it is misleading Canadians when the government says this program is revenue-neutral. It is far from that. The impact is that it is hurting Canadian farmers in their ability to innovate, invest and grow their business and certainly to grow their yields.

The CFIB pretty much ratified those numbers from the Ontario grain farmers, saying that what the farmer is going to be paying in a carbon tax is going to go from \$14,000 on average to \$45,000 on average as a result of the increase on April. According to Finance Canada today, the average farmer gets back \$800 a year. The farmers are putting in \$45,000 and getting \$800 back. Again, that is nowhere near revenue-neutral.

• (1905)

This program is devastating and unnecessary to Canadian farmers, especially when we have put forward a much better solution in Bill C-234, which would exempt farm fuels from the carbon tax, especially natural gas and propane for heating barns and drying grain. This would allow farmers to reinvest that money in the things they need to improve their operations.

The Food and Agriculture Organization has said that the linkage between energy prices, such as the carbon tax, and fertilizers has put the agriculture sector at significant risk. Renowned agriculture trade expert Robert Saik has said we must be making decisions based on science, not ideology, to ensure the sustainability and health of the agriculture sector.

The World Food Programme has said that 800 million people are facing food insecurity around the world. As a result of the conflict with Russia and its illegal invasion of Ukraine, they are expecting another 13 million people to be at risk of food insecurity. That shows us how serious this situation is and how important it is for Canadian farmers to be competitive and able to reach their potential.

To put that in perspective, the United States has not put a carbon tax on its agriculture sector. The United States is our biggest trading partner but also our biggest competitor on the global stage. In fact, the United States is also not punishing its farmers with a tariff on fertilizer. Canada is the only G7 country in the world that is charging a tariff on fertilizer.

We have asked the Liberal government to exempt the tariff on fertilizer purchased from Russia before March 2 to ensure that Canadian farmers are not carrying that burden, and I want to be really clear here: Vladimir Putin is not paying that tariff. The Russian military is not paying that tariff. Only Canadian farmers are paying that tariff. Now we have seen the numbers, and that tariff is going to cost Canadian farmers, especially in eastern Canada, about \$150 million a year.

That is \$150 million taken directly out of the pockets of Canadian farmers and going to the Liberal government's coffers. Not only is that a financial hit, but as a result of that we are going to see farmers using less fertilizer. The consequence is that we will have smaller yields. We already had a 40% decrease in yields last year because of weather issues. Depending on the weather, if we see that yield decrease further or not return back to our normal, it is going to have a significant impact. We are going to see food prices increase, not only around the world but here at home as well, and it will impact our ability to try to address food insecurity issues around the world. This only punishes Canadian farmers. It does not punish Vladimir Putin.

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We also heard from the Ukrainian minister of agriculture that Ukraine needs seeds, machinery, fuel and temporary storage facilities for its grain and commodities. What it needs is for Canadian agriculture to be firing on all cylinders to make sure we can step up and help when it is needed. However, at this time of a global food security crisis, again when we need Canadian agriculture to be punching above its weight, the Liberals have decided to put burdensome red tape, regulations and taxes on Canadian farmers.

Another example is front-of-package labelling, which is a \$2-billion bureaucratic burden on the industry. Not only will that impact Canadian beef, pork and veal farmers, but it will also impact our processors, manufacturers and consumers. We are talking about the food insecurity crisis and the impact it would have on people around the world, in Europe and the Horn of Africa, but food insecurity is also an issue here at home. If we cannot take care of our own, how are we expected to step up and take care of others in their time of need?

This is also sending a very frightening message to our trading partners. Why should they be importing Canadian beef and pork when we are admitting to the world that we feel our products are unhealthy?

In conclusion, in a time of crisis, instead of treating Canadian agriculture with disdain or as a carbon tax cash cow, the Liberals need to see modern Canadian agriculture and our farm families as a way out, as a way to step, as a key geopolitical tool in the fight against totalitarianism and the likes of Vladimir Putin.

• (1910)

[Translation]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Chair, I want to commend and congratulate my colleague on his speech.

As my colleague said, the war in Ukraine means that there is less food globally, which is deplorable, hence the explosion that we can already see in food prices. We may be facing a worldwide shortage and famine.

At the same time, we see that our farmers here need fertilizers, which are produced primarily in Russia on a global scale. In many cases, these fertilizers were ordered, purchased and paid for before the war in Ukraine. However, deliveries are arriving now, if not a few weeks or months ago.

The government chose to bring in the 35% tax to punish Russia. However, since the fertilizers were already paid for and ordered before the war, the only ones hit by this tax are local farmers. Obviously, this is going to be reflected in the final cost, at a time of skyrocketing food prices and shortages.

What does my colleague think about this?

• (1915)

[English]

**Mr. John Barlow:** Madam Chair, my colleague is exactly right. We now know that this is going to cost Canadian farmers about \$150 million. We support sanctions against Russia. It is very important that it is held accountable for its illegal actions. However, we do not want those actions to be paid for on the backs of Canadian farmers.

We have asked the Liberal government to exempt that tariff on any fertilizer from Russia that was purchased before March 2. Another alternative was, at the very least, to provide compensation to farmers. Rebate that tariff on fertilizer to Canadian farmers that was purchased before March 2. However, in both of those cases, the Liberal government has refused to step up and help Canadian farmers.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Chair, this is a very important debate, and I am glad to see people in the House contributing to it.

One of the big issues I have is that, in foreign affairs and international development, Canada has not contributed its fair share of food security funding for a long time. Right now, we are set at \$250 million a year. That is about where we have been through past Conservative and Liberal governments. One of the things the sector is asking for is that food aid be indexed to the price of food so that when it goes up, our contribution goes up.

I am wondering if the member believes that indexing our commitments for food security would be appropriate.

**Mr. John Barlow:** Madam Chair, I had the honour of travelling to Guatemala a couple of years ago before COVID with the World Foodgrains Bank. What is really impressive with programs such as that is that it is not necessarily always about the money. It is about going to those communities and teaching them how to grow their own food, providing them with the assets, resources and technology they need to grow their own food and become self-sustaining.

To my colleague's question, I absolutely believe that Canada has a pivotal role to play in financial commitments to food security around the world, but rather than indexing that or hitching it to something, it is more important that we leverage those federal dollars with the private sector and NGOs to make those countries more self-sustaining.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Chair, I really appreciate the work of my hon. friend from Foothills in making sure people understand how important it is to have fertilizer for our farmers who grow our food here. We also know that the silos in Ukraine are still full because they have been unable to offload them. If they are able to grow anything, they need places to store it.

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In terms of the complexity here, and I know we may not see eye to eye on this, but it needs to be said, the climate crisis has exacerbated the food crisis. To pull back on climate action in Canada when our own efforts are so inadequate to what is needed will worsen the food security problem and worsen our military threats. I put to the member the words of one of Ukraine's leading scientists, Dr. Svitlana Krakovska, who said that the war in Ukraine and the climate crisis have the same root cause, which fossil fuels and our inability to move away from them.

**Mr. John Barlow:** Madam Chair, I am really happy that my respected colleague asked that question because it gives me the opportunity to reiterate the fact that there is, what I will call, a misconception that Canadian agriculture is the problem, when I would profess that Canadian agriculture is the solution.

We have seen how Canadian farmers have improved their operations and the technology and innovation that has happened. I spoke about gene editing. There are seed varieties that are drought resistant and pest resistant. This has allowed us to grow higher yields on the same amount of land with a fraction of the inputs. Whether it is spray, fuel, zero tillage or precision agriculture, we are making those advances, and we are doing that without having to pay a carbon tax. That is what I say is an incredible success by Canadian agriculture.

• (1920)

**Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Madam Chair, I know my colleague is very well versed in this field. When the cost of everything is going up, including the cost of fertilizer for farmers, and there is less fertilizer because of the war in Russia and Ukraine, what is going to happen of course is that people and farmers are going to need to start making choices. Those farmers could make the choice to not put fertilizer on their land because it is too expensive. Could the member please explain to us what the reduction in food production on that land would be with less fertilizer being used?

**Mr. John Barlow:** Madam Chair, if farmers can find ways to be efficient and more cost-effective while protecting their land and improving their yields, they will do it. They use fertilizer as efficiently as possible through programs such as the 4R stewardship program.

To my colleague's question, it is critically important that if farmers are using less fertilizer, yields will go down. It is a simple fact. When we are facing a global food crisis, that is not direction we want to go.

The Liberals have also said that they want a 30% reduction in fertilizer emissions, whatever that means, but what it means is we are asking Canadian farmers to use less fertilizer when they are doing it as efficiently as possible. In Canada, we are 70% more efficient in fertilizer use than any other country on the planet. I will say again that is a great success story for Canadian agriculture. It is something we should be embracing and not criticizing.

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Madam Chair, could the member share with the House how important it is to see the issues of global food security and energy security and how closely tied together they are, and especially the ways Canada could help address both of those absolutely essential elements of our world's economy?

**Mr. John Barlow:** Madam Chair, he is exactly right. Through this illegal invasion of Ukraine, Canada is seeing we have two very important geopolitical tools in our tool belt, and those are energy and agriculture. We should be doing everything we possibly can to build those two industries up to play a critical role around the world.

Unfortunately, the government is taking a much different approach to those two critical areas. I found it quite interesting that the Liberal government, after the invasion, said that we needed to increase oil production by 35,000 barrels a day. It has been doing everything it can to cancel out that industry, and it is not like it can turn around on a dime. I will tell the House why.

Most of our drilling rigs have left Canada. Most of our best and brightest in the energy sector in terms of labour have left Canada, and they are not coming back just because the Liberals say they are going to temporarily increase energy. I just find it so hypocritical that we have been trying to say for years how important agriculture and energy are not only to Canada's economy but also to global security, and now they are finally waking up when we see a conflict in Ukraine.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Chair, the economic situation is out of control. People are worried about inflation, and rightly so. For instance, gas is at \$2.24 a litre today in my riding, Joliette. This is devastating. The hardest hit are obviously low-income families whose obligations force them to drive a lot. The current reality is also really tough for businesses in certain sectors such as transportation, of course, as well as agriculture. Rising prices will help the energy transition in the long term, but will increase misery in the short term.

The cost of housing is no more encouraging. Finding available affordable housing has become mission impossible. The price of houses and condos has exploded. However, according to experts, rising food prices could soon overtake energy and housing prices by a wide margin. The world is at risk of a food shortage this year, which will lead to skyrocketing prices and a serious global famine.

The current situation is in large part a result of the war in Ukraine. Russia and Ukraine are the world's breadbasket. These two countries account for 30% of global wheat exports and 20% of global corn exports. They also export 65% of the world's sunflower oil. Russia has significantly cut back on its exports so that it can continue to feed its citizens at the same cost. As for Ukraine, its existing reserves are difficult to export, and there is a great deal of uncertainty about potential future harvests.

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Food prices in Ukraine are skyrocketing, and Ukrainians could be facing a famine. For example, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, or FAO, around half of the wheat reserves and nearly 40% of the rye in Ukraine are in war-affected areas. The damage caused by the war will reduce grain reserves and limit production and cultivated acreage for years to come.

The damage to infrastructure makes it difficult to get humanitarian aid to Ukraine and to transport the resources that can still be saved.

According to the World Bank, global agricultural commodity prices rose 41% between January and May and are still rising. During the same period, the price of corn jumped 54%, and the price of wheat jumped 60%. With its current budgets, the UN World Food Programme cannot feed as many people.

Also according to the FAO, war and climate change are the main causes of global food insecurity, in Ukraine and elsewhere. It predicts that 44 countries will require food aid in 2022, particularly in West and East Africa due to conflicts in those regions, food commodity prices, and crop failures.

Faced with the expected risk of food shortages, several countries have begun halting exports in order to strategically prioritize their own people. For instance, India stopped exporting its wheat, and then Indonesia halted palm oil exports. This food protectionism could trigger a domino effect with even more tragic consequences.

Here, as elsewhere, production costs will soar, because the price of inputs has also exploded. For example, fertilizers come mostly from Russia and Belarus. Their prices had increased even before the war. Now they have doubled or tripled. What is more, this government is still imposing a 35% tax on them, even though they were ordered and paid for before the invasion of Ukraine.

The rising cost of diesel fuel must also be taken into account. When economist Sylvain Charlebois appeared before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance last month, the agri-food market expert said that supply chain issues are making it difficult for farmers to plan. Their inputs are not consistently available. He also reminded the committee that last summer, western Canada, the United States and Russia experienced major droughts, while Germany experienced major flooding. The result of all this was that the 2021 crops were so poor that reserves are currently low. They were counting on 2022 to replenish their reserves, but with the war, that will not be possible. The economist also added that it was not possible to increase cropland acreage in the short term. However, he did say that the spring flooding in Manitoba is not expected to have much of an impact on the harvest, as it delayed seeding by only a few weeks.

• (1925)

All that adds up to significantly higher food prices in the coming months, much higher than what we are seeing now. For example, Germany is expecting grocery prices to increase by an average of 50%. Food will be 50% more expensive. It should be less than that in Quebec and Canada. That is how it is likely to play out in rich countries.

People in poor countries will likely face famine, which is why international institutions are calling for greater solidarity, especially seeing as less wealthy countries were encouraged to go into debt to get through the pandemic more easily. As a result, they are now deep in debt and will not likely have the means to import enough food at high prices.

Add to that the fact that many of them are already subsidizing basic foods to make sure their citizens can feed themselves. These countries will have to import food at high prices even as they spend more of their budget on food subsidies. African countries are particularly vulnerable.

A significant portion of crops are now traded on the stock exchange. For example, a future crop can be sold in advance and traded several times on the stock exchange. This practice can drive up the price of commodities for speculative purposes. It is a bit like oil. People take advantage of the context to drive prices up and line their pockets. This situation is a reminder of the limits of using markets.

The situation is such that food will be a major problem this year and for years to come. According to a partner with the firm McKinsey, even with an optimistic view of the crisis, things are unlikely to return to normal before 2024. The food crisis will require an exemplary demonstration of international solidarity. It also reminds us that war always has a greater impact than anticipated. Let us hope that a peaceful resolution will be negotiated to end this war, primarily for the sake of the Ukrainian people, but also to limit the effects of a food crisis that has already begun.

We have an obligation to show solidarity to combat hunger on a global scale. We also need to do more to support our farmers. Finally, we must do more to ensure global peace and do our part to limit climate change. I hope this government is taking notes right now.

• (1930)

[*English*]

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I appreciate that we are able to have this discussion tonight on the importance of global food security.

Certainly, one of the things that my constituents often bring to my attention is the close connection between food security and energy security. This is no more evident than in Ukraine. Those issues are closely connected, even just the industrial connection between modern agriculture and the energy industry, natural gas, for example, being required for the production of nitrogen-based fertilizer.

I would value hearing the thoughts of my colleague from the Bloc on how we can ensure that Canada plays a productive role in both solving the food insecurity challenges that exist, but also being a primary player in global energy security.

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[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Mr. Chair, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, or the FAO, said that the current global food shortage and the current risk of famine have two root causes: the war in Ukraine and climate change.

We have a collective duty, here in the House as well, to go green as quickly as possible in order to limit upheaval and ensure greater stability over the seasons so that there are fewer crop failures due to drought, as we saw last summer. This is urgent and it is very important. Clearly, this must all take place in an orderly manner with a predictable transition. That is what the government and we, the legislators, must propose and implement.

With respect to the war in Ukraine, yes, there are energy concerns. We are seeing the repercussions in Europe. In the very near term, Canada obviously cannot magically create pipelines or infrastructure to export its natural gas or oil. That would take 10 years.

The Bloc Québécois believes that the next 10 years would be better spent going green. The planet needs it, and we have an increasing number of examples at present.

[*English*]

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Chair, one of the challenges dealing with fertilizer is along the Great Lakes where we actually have over-fertilization that has affected the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Great Lakes with algal blooms. There is a lack of planning and supports to protect our fresh drinking water supplies and the effect on fish habitat. That is going to create continued complications for sustainability for those types of areas.

What are his comments on the need for us to invest much more in the Great Lakes? The United States is putting over half a billion dollars into the Great Lakes. We finally are making our commitment to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission equal, but we are still lagging behind.

I would like to hear from him on that.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague for his question. Obviously, more needs to be done to protect our ecosystems. That includes the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Seaway, which provide drinking water to many communities in both Ontario and Quebec. More needs to be done. Do we need to do a better job of protecting riparian buffers? We need to consult and listen to the experts.

With respect to fertilizers, we must continue to ramp up research to improve production and quality with the resources we have, while minimizing the negative environmental impacts.

In the short term, however, our farmers are concerned about fertilizers. They ordered and paid for fertilizers from Russia before the war in Ukraine started. Since the war broke out, the Canadian government has imposed a 35% surtax that will penalize them, without penalizing Russia one bit, since it was already paid for and they were only waiting for delivery.

We have been asking the government to find a solution for our farmers. However, the government seems to be too preoccupied

with other things, like passports or airports. There is no shortage of issues, but this is an important one and it should be dealt with quickly.

● (1935)

**Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague for his speech and his concern for the agricultural sector. What does he think would be the best way to support our Canadian agriculture in order to sustain ourselves, but also to go a bit further in our international assistance?

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague from Beauce and I commend him for all his work and the positive contribution he makes to the House.

There are many things that can be done. When I tour my riding and I meet with our farmers, I am always very touched. In the agricultural sector, the women and men who put food on our tables are not, in my opinion, given enough credit by the public, by the entire population and by elected members. The first thing to do would be to recognize the essential role they play for all of us here.

If we compare the support the government provides to agriculture, Canada does half as much as the United States and three to four times less than Europe, according to the numbers from my critic colleague. If Canada is able to produce a lot with less support, then that is great, but let us never forget that agriculture is a strategic industry since it meets a basic need: feeding the population.

The sector needs recognition, which could take many forms, including real crop insurance.

The labour shortage is another issue. I was on the phone again today with the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship's team, talking about temporary foreign workers. Then there is the tax on Russian fertilizer that was purchased and paid for before the war started in Ukraine. We have a lot to do.

I believe that society as a whole needs to be more involved to better support our farmers, who experience a lot of stress because they are isolated and drowning in work. There is nothing more important to society than the work they do, the critical work of feeding people.

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ):** Mr. Chair, this crisis is incredible, and its effects will be lasting. I cannot help but think of the old saying, give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.

Millions of dollars in food aid is like giving people a fish, not like teaching them to fish. I would like my colleague to comment on how knowledge, local knowledge, especially in African countries, is essential to helping people develop a local, responsible, sustainable agricultural economy.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Mr. Chair, that is a very good question.

In the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, international institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, recommended that developing countries that were struggling—the ones with subsistence agriculture that were struggling to feed their people—specialize in growing cotton, for example. They were telling these countries that they would be able to export it, generate revenue and then import their food.

At the same time, the rich countries that properly support their agricultural industries set up aid programs for these countries. When the harvest was good, the rich countries helped them by giving them their surplus crops or selling those crops to them at a low cost.

All of this led to the collapse of local agriculture in developing countries, because they were obviously not able to compete with the rich countries' donations in good years. International institutions encouraged countries to move away from this sector and specialize in export sectors. As a result, these countries have had their subsistence agriculture dismantled.

When the harvest was bad, they did not receive any aid from rich countries. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank told everyone to grow cotton, so many countries grew cotton. Large corporations were the ones leading it, and the price of cotton collapsed. The do-gooders in rich countries and international institutions thought they were fighting poverty, but they actually made it worse. Who are we to tell those countries what to do?

They knew how to go about it. In order to receive international aid, they had to listen to the rich countries, and this made the situation worse. We have to think about that.

● (1940)

[*English*]

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I have to say I am absolutely delighted that we are having this debate today and that we have the opportunity to speak about this issue. I firmly believe that the food security crisis that is facing the global community is one of the most pressing issues affecting the world right now. I am going to speak about the impacts of Ukraine on this issue, but I want to start by saying that where we find ourselves today is not just a result of what has happened in Ukraine. In fact, before the war in Ukraine and before February 24, there was a food security crisis on the planet.

Before COVID, food insecurity was increasing significantly. During COVID, those numbers jumped massively, to the point where we had hundreds of millions of people around the world who were food-insecure. Then, the war in Ukraine happened. Two weeks ago, Russia destroyed a major grain warehouse in the city of Mykolaiv, Ukraine. The terminal plays a crucial role in getting grain out of Ukraine into the global market. Many people in North Africa and many people across the Middle East, which some people will describe as the “ring of fire”, are very dependent on the grain that comes from Russia and Ukraine. That major grain export warehouse was the hub for moving those grains around, so the conflict in Ukraine is making what was a very dire situation around the world in terms of food security much worse.

I have heard in the House tonight some talk about how we need to make sure that we give people the tools to produce their own food. I absolutely agree with that, but this is not an issue of giving people tools so they can access their own food. This is the fact that we have an emergency and crisis where there is no food going into these regions. People are urgently at risk of starving to death. This is the reality we are in. The reality is not that we should figure out how to get fertilizer to Canada. That is a different issue. This is not a reality of “we should figure out how to make sure that our development dollars are more effective”. That is a different issue.

What we are dealing with right now is an urgent food crisis where people around the world, in Afghanistan, Lebanon and North Africa, are going to die because they do not have enough food. It is a different conversation that we need to be having in this place right now. I understand the desire to talk about a whole bunch of different things, like the price of oil and gas or the issues that farmers in western Canada are facing. I come from western Canada, and I understand that, but this debate needs to be on the lives of the millions of food-insecure people around the world who will die if the global community does not step up and deal with this.

I want to talk about the implications of that a little. What we are seeing with Vladimir Putin is a madman who has no interest in caring for people around the world. He knows exactly what he is doing when he stops food and crops from leaving Ukraine. He is causing and sowing mayhem in other countries.

Members know what happens when there is not enough food: There is conflict. That happens. People go to war if they cannot feed themselves and if they cannot feed their families. What a perfect way for Vladimir Putin to make the west blink: to make the west divert its attention from Ukraine by having conflict in North Africa, Afghanistan and the Middle East. It is a perfect plan if western countries and the globe do not come together and respond appropriately.

I have to tell members that we have some very clear solutions. We have heard from experts. I will quote until the end of time one of my very favourite people in the entire world, Mr. David Beasley, who is from the World Food Programme and who incidentally has asked time and again to have food security commitments from this country be indexed to the price of food. That is a very clear ask from the World Food Programme. I hope people in this place are listening when I say that this is something the community has asked for. It is something that specialists and Nobel Prize-winning organizations have asked for.



*Government Orders*

• (1945)

I also want to mention some of the other things we can do. I think it would be irresponsible to come to this and talk about the people who are starving around the world and not provide those solutions, those options, of what Canada can and should do, because there are options here. The next G7 meeting will be happening in Germany in a few weeks' time. The NATO summit is in Madrid, and will take place at the end of June. The Government of Canada can ensure that the global food crisis is on the agenda at those meetings and Parliament can ensure that this happens. We can make sure there is pressure we are putting on our government. We can ensure that famine prevention and response are a core part of the 2022 G7 agenda and at other global forums such as the G20, as well as in the discussions ongoing with the World Bank and the IMF. We can make sure that food security is on those agendas.

Canada right now should be pledging \$600 million toward food security around the world. That is the ask, and this urgent pledge needs to happen and be announced very quickly. That \$600 million needs to be spent fast. It needs not just to be promised. I do not want a minister to stand up and promise these dollars and not deliver them for weeks at a time. This needs to happen very quickly. This is an urgent need. This money cannot come from other pots. It cannot be money that was devoted to women and girls or to humanitarian aid in Ukraine. It has to be money that is used for food security.

I will say as well that Canada needs to up its game on food security in the long run. I have mentioned in this place before that we give \$250 million a year. We are not providing our fair share of food security money to the global community. We need to up that to at least \$400 million a year, and it needs to be an annual commitment. It needs to be something Canada stands for. If we are a country that believes in human rights, that believes in women's rights and that has a feminist foreign policy, that is something Canada can do and needs to do right now.

I will tie this very quickly to our responses with respect to Ukraine. We have heard from members of the government and the opposition that there needs to be more commitment to defence spending with NATO. The call has been to ask for 2% of spending for NATO. Do members know what we spend on humanitarian aid in this country? It is 0.3%. What we are saying is that as a country that believes in human rights, in multilateralism and in global solutions to global problems, we are prepared to spend 2% on defence spending and get nowhere near that in humanitarian aid or in official development assistance. We just have that as a fraction. I look around the world and see places like Denmark, which spends 2% on NATO. That is great. It also spends the promised 0.7% on ODA. It also meets its commitments in humanitarian aid. I would say if we are going to raise one we cannot not raise the other because it means that we do not believe in people. It means that we are not supportive of that.

I know I am running out of time. I am going to quote David Beasley from the UN World Food Programme one more time. He came to the foreign affairs committee and told us that Canada and other developed countries have an option. We have a choice. We can pay right now, or we can pay a thousand times more if we wait.

That is only in dollars. That is not in human lives, that is not in human suffering and that is not what Canada should be doing.

• (1950)

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, I want to thank my hon. colleague for Edmonton Strathcona for her dedicated commitment to this issue. I think we share a lot of the same commitment and passion for what really is an absolute crisis in the world.

One thing I would ask my colleague is about the \$250 million a year figure she cited. I know the minister earlier pointed to \$514 million just for this current crisis, plus the \$100 million we are giving to the African Development Bank, but even last year there was \$306 million given only to the World Food Programme. That does not include everything else we are doing in food assistance. Could she perhaps clarify the statistic there?

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Mr. Chair, I will say that there have been additional promises made. As I said in my speech, I really do hope that it is urgently delivered and not just another promise, and that it is not going from one pot to another pot, because we have seen that in the past.

I will also say that I have asked for transparency on our dollars and on what has been spent, but I have not been given any of that information. As a parliamentarian, it is almost a point of privilege that I am not able to get the information I need to adequately assess what the Government of Canada has spent on food security and where we actually are at this point.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I believe the hon. member across the way has very much outlined the problem, and I agree with many of the points that she raised in that regard. She also drew attention to the fact that this is really about people, and I appreciate that, because I think we have to consider the human face.

The member also stated that we need more money to be contributed in order to help solve this problem, so my question is this: Where will the more money that is needed come from?

I do not believe that the member opposite has spoken about the importance of entrepreneurship, innovation, small business owners and industry within Canada, and getting that part of our economy back up and running so that we can have those individuals actually helping to fund these types of initiatives. Government does not have money of its own, so I am just curious: Where does it come from?

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Mr. Chair, first of all, I would say that hunger is a choice and that this is something we do have the ability to solve, but the global community has not yet seen fit to do so.

*Government Orders*

One of the things that the New Democratic Party has put forward is a wealth tax. Right now, \$6 billion would go a very long way to solving the global food crisis that we are experiencing. Elon Musk is worth \$300 billion, so a wealth tax would be a really interesting way that we could actually start raising money to use for this.

I also talked in my speech about tying humanitarian aid to defence spending. We could lower our defence spending and increase our humanitarian aid, which I think would be another way.

We could take away oil and gas subsidies and use the money to subsidize farmers in Alberta, and also use it for the food crisis around the globe. That is another option that we could use, and there are many. I could go on, because I have a lot of other options.

• (1955)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Chair, I want to congratulate my colleague on her speech and commend her for her commitment to the cause. It is sincere.

I want to clarify something. When we refer to the price of agricultural inputs, even in the Canadian market, it is all in the perspective of global production and global prices. It is pretty clear that a people at risk of starvation is about as serious as it gets, despite all the other important issues they may face.

My colleague talked about the important commitment to allocate 0.7% of GDP to international aid and the fight against hunger. I completely agree with that commitment. I deplore the fact that the government, regardless of its political stripes, never meets it.

I wonder if the opposition parties would be able to pressure the government to commit to the 0.7%. Are these the kinds of concerns that could be included in a co-operation agreement with the government?

[*English*]

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Mr. Chair, I must say the work that I have done for decades is to try to move both Conservative and Liberal governments further on this issue, and much of it was before I was elected as a member of Parliament.

It is the short-sightedness that really worries me about our global response, because when one is unwilling to contribute multilaterally in the short term, the long-term costs are massive. The long-term costs to Canada's reputation as a country are very difficult. We saw that when we tried for a UN Security Council seat. There is a reason that Canada was not able to get one. Canada is no longer respected in the world as playing a role that punches above its weight, which is sad, because it is something that we were very proud of, and should be very proud of as a country. We have that potential as a country.

I look at the things Pearson had promised. It was Lester B. Pearson who actually said that 0.7% is what every country should be contributing. We have never made it. Other countries have made it, and have been able to maintain it through economic ups and downs. Canada has never come close, and it is obscene, to be honest. We could do it. We have every ability to do it.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I want to thank the member for her very impressive speech in the House today. I learn something from her every time she presents here.

One of the core messages I heard is that we have never gotten to the goal. I want her to explain that to the House. Despite Conservative and Liberal governments taking turns, why is it that we still, as Canadians, have never reached this commitment to make sure that we are supporting people across the world so they do not go hungry?

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Mr. Chair, I would like to thank my colleague for her question. It is a question that we all need to be grappling with. The sewing of a flag on a backpack is such a truly Canadian thing to do. We sew our flag on backpacks when we travel around the world, because we are so deeply proud of our contribution globally. However, right now in peacekeeping, which is something that Canada was known for, we have not met even a fraction of our promises. We have also not met a fraction of our promises on having a feminist foreign policy. None of that has happened.

I wish the government, whether it was Liberal or Conservative, had done more. Certainly once the NDP is in government, we will.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Mr. Chair, I really appreciated the member's intervention today, but I took a bit of an exception to one of the last comments the member made. She said that Canada does not punch above its weight and that is why it did not get a UN Security Council seat. I would encourage her to visit our troops participating in Operation Unifier and Operation Reassurance in eastern Europe and talk to the other countries on the ground there about whether Canada punches above its weight. I am sure she would hear a much different story than she indicated in the House.

I find that sometimes when I talk about global assistance and Canada playing its part in other parts of the world in helping to take care of people, inevitably a certain number of people come back and ask why we are not taking care of people at home first. They ask, "Should we not be taking care of everybody at home first before we start spending money in other parts of the world?"

I certainly disagree with the concept that we should not be participating in and contributing globally to these various programs, for the reason the member has been talking about: If we do not pay for them now, we will end up paying so much more later.

*Government Orders*

● (2000)

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Mr. Chair, first of all, I will address the fact that the member's Prime Minister promised 600 peacekeeping troops would be deployed. We currently have 60. We are ranked the 70th country in peacekeeping around the world. I do not think we are punching above our weight, as we would like to do.

I think that realistically, as we are parliamentarians, we are meant to do what is best for the country. We are meant to be a multilateral force. The argument that we cannot play a role internationally because of our obligations domestically is a bit juvenile, to be honest.

**Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, I will be sharing my time with the Minister of Northern Affairs this evening.

I am very pleased that colleagues in the House have called this take-note debate forward this evening, because the question of global food security as a result of the war in Ukraine is the most important question right now that we all collectively face.

I am very proud to be the chair of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food. We have started a global food security study because of what we are seeing around the world and because we have seen the explicit targeting, by the Russian Federation, of Ukrainian assets that feed not only Ukrainians but the whole world.

It is important to start by giving some context to how important Ukraine is in the global food conversation. It represents 47% of sunflower oil exports to the global market, between 10% to 12% of wheat exports to the global market, 18% of barley and a really high percentage of corn as well. Suffice it to say that not only is Ukraine the breadbasket of eastern Europe, but it is extremely important in the global food sense.

Another thing that is extremely important is that 50% of the World Food Programme's contributions toward vulnerable states come from Ukraine. As we start to stare down what is truly becoming a global food crisis because of the illegal invasion, because of the war, those countries are the most susceptible right now to being impacted. I commend all members of the House for bringing forward this discussion. It is important and extremely timely.

I want to give some other reflections, although this is a very short period of just five minutes for opening remarks on the take-note debate.

The committee had the chance to hear from Minister Solsky, essentially the minister of agriculture in Ukraine, about the fact that right now they are trying to plant on 80% of the territory that is not yet occupied by the Russian Federation. We heard from member of Parliament Yulia Klymenko that 13% of the arable land in question is being mined right now by the Russian Federation. As we can appreciate, the front line of this combat is fluctuating in eastern and southern Ukraine, and the Russian Federation has been planting mines. That is not going to be solved overnight. We heard from Ms. Klymenko herself that farmers have perished simply trying to harvest their crops and plant on their fields.

I had a conversation yesterday with the ambassador of Ukraine to Canada. She showed me a picture of the artillery shells in the fields in which the Ukrainians harvest not only for their own people, but

indeed for the world. It needs to go on record explicitly that part of the Russian Federation's plan is to create destabilization around the world regarding food security and energy prices. We have to understand that some countries, particularly in the Horn of Africa and Southeast Asia, are reliant on the Russian and Ukrainian importation of food products. Those are the same countries that could fall and then create regional geopolitical challenges, with governments being overthrown, and this could be ripe for terrorism and extremism. That is the testimony we have heard.

I want to talk about what Canada can do in this, because that is the conversation we are having. We know that there is a global challenge. We know that countries are particularly vulnerable. Even though Canada is very food secure generally, we are seeing a huge rise in prices at the supermarket because of some of the import costs as a result of the war. Canada has played and will continue to play an important role in this domain.

Some 22 million tonnes of grain product is sitting right now in silos in Ukraine, but it is not able to be moved because of the blockade in the Black Sea. The challenge in 2022, of course, is that as the harvest comes off the field, what do they do with that grain? It is important that we provide temporary storage. I know the Ukrainian government is looking to Canada to work to try to provide storage on the western border with Poland. That is extremely important.

We also need to make sure that farmers in Ukraine have the capacity to continue their work. For those who are not in occupied territories, we have to be doing everything we can to help. There is a conversation around what type of equipment we can provide for demining some of the agriculture fields. What technical expertise can Canada offer? I think that is an important conversation.

Of course, there is the trade corridor. Conversations are happening right now with the United Nations, Turkey and Russia. What can we do to provide a NATO solution as well to create those corridors?

● (2005)

To finish up, there is also a role we can play in Canadian production over the next couple of years, because this is not just a 2022 issue. We need to help produce more so we can help provide for the global market.

I wish I had more time, but I look forward to taking questions from my hon. colleagues.

**Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC):** Mr. Chair, would my colleague agree with the statement that world hunger is being induced by two causes? The one we think of right now is the lack of availability of food and the situation in Ukraine causing or exacerbating that, but the second thing that is causing hunger around the world, particularly in the global south, is simply the cost of food. It is becoming unaffordable in so many places.

I wonder if he has a comment on that dynamic.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Kody Blois:** Mr. Chair, I would like to thank the member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington for his work on the agriculture committee. We have a great group that has really kept a strong focus on the needs of Canadian farmers and indeed on the conversation we are having today regarding farmers around the world.

He is absolutely right that it is not only a production challenge. However, the reality is that there is a certain scarcity right now because of how important Ukraine is, and this is driving up food prices around the world. We are seeing that in Canada. We have more of a propensity to pay, as one of the richest countries in the world, but those vulnerable countries are going to really struggle.

We have heard this from international humanitarian groups that are seeking additional funding so they can provide money. That is important, but we also need to make sure there is adequate production and availability of product so that we are able to contribute to the countries that are most food insecure.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Mr. Chair, I thank my committee chair for his speech. We agree on many things when it comes to international action, but I would like to hear his thoughts on local production.

I think that Canada will be called upon to play a key role in the global food supply in the coming months and years. Before we look after others, however, we need to look after ourselves.

For some time now, we have been bringing up that infamous 35% surtax imposed on fertilizer orders that were made and paid for before the conflict began. Government members claim to understand the situation and say that they are looking for a solution, but days, weeks and months have gone by without a response. Does my colleague have an answer for us tonight?

**Mr. Kody Blois:** Mr. Chair, indeed, Canada's domestic capacity is absolutely important. I was very happy to see the Nutrien fertilizer company announce that it would increase production by 25%. In addition, the Government of Canada announced assistance for the BHP mining company in Saskatchewan to open the largest potash mine in the world.

Other countries must also increase capacity. It is very important for the department's international development services to help increase the capacity of our allies, especially in Africa and Asia.

The government believes it is very important to find a solution to help farmers with the tariffs imposed on March 2 on fertilizer orders made before the start of the war in Ukraine.

• (2010)

[*English*]

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Chair, we are in a really disturbing time, because all the myths of globalization have been blown apart. We saw it happen during COVID. Supply chain networks, access to PPE and the ability to supply our own communities were severely hampered. We are now seeing Putin use food as a weapon of war, threatening possible mass hunger. We are also seeing supply chain issues from the climate crisis. I was speaking earlier about the crisis of the Colorado River. It

supplies a lot of agricultural support to the southern United States, which feeds world markets.

I want to ask my colleague about the bigger question of whether or not the government is looking at how we deal with supply issues and how we deal with instability in a world where globalization is falling apart and we have war criminals like Putin using food as a hunger weapon. Our old systems are not working. What is the government looking at in terms of a new strategy to get Canada secure and help the world be more secure?

**Mr. Kody Blois:** Mr. Chair, that was a big question, so please permit me just a moment.

On globalization, Canada is a world food provider. We cannot turn away from that. That is a reality. I think we have to look out both ends of the telescope. We need to build domestic capacity in Canada through local food infrastructure to help support, perhaps, import substitution, and Canada still needs to play a global role.

As it relates to food and war, my hon. colleague is absolutely correct. Russia right now is playing from the old playbook, trying to target a country's capacity to feed itself and feed the world. It is creating havoc. It is driving a conversation here domestically.

We need to continue to support Ukraine in its fight for all of us, because this is a playbook of the Russian Federation to try to create disruption in western countries that are committed to international rules-based order.

**The Chair:** Before we go any further, I want to wish my friend from Kings—Hants a happy wedding. I do not know if it is this weekend or next weekend, but pretty soon he will be getting married. We will do this in the House while we can.

Resuming debate, the hon. Minister of Northern Affairs.

**Hon. Dan Vandal (Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, it is a pleasure to stand in this chamber.

[*Translation*]

It is always an honour to rise on behalf of my constituents in Saint Boniface—Saint Vital.

*Government Orders*

[English]

With one of the world's leading grain producers in crisis, the world is looking to Canada to step up. Our world-class agriculture and agri-food industry is a major driver of food security in over 200 countries around the world. Last year, despite the challenges of the pandemic, our agri-food exports topped \$82 billion to 204 countries and territories.

Farmers need tools and support to keep their businesses strong so they can feed Canada and they can feed the world. We have committed to farmers getting them there. Right now farmers are facing shortages and higher costs for their inputs, particularly fertilizer and fuel, due to the disruption of supply chains caused by the conflict in Ukraine. Fertilizer is absolutely vital to Canadian farmers to grow their crops and to feed the world. We are working with governments, provinces and industry partners to ensure that farmers have access to fertilizer for Canada to do its part during this time of global food insecurity.

As well as a leading food producer, Canada is also the world's single-largest producer and exporter of potash fertilizer. We are putting money towards making the largest potash-producing mine in the world one of the greenest. On Monday, my colleagues, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, as well as the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food announced \$100 million in federal support to ensure a new potash mine in Jansen, Saskatchewan, is sustainable. Our support for this innovative project is a long-term investment for global food security and environmental sustainability, and it will ensure Canada's position as a leading exporter of potash.

During the pandemic, we introduced a number of measures to ensure the supply chain worked as effectively as possible, including support for farmers and food processors to invest in safety protocols to keep their farms and plants running. We are also working to strengthen our trade corridors so our farmers can get their world-class products to their global customers on time.

To maximize our trade opportunities, we have worked hard to diversify our trade through agreements with key trading partners, including the European Union, North America and the countries of the trans-Pacific.

However, ensuring global food security starts right here at home. Everyone deserves access to healthy, affordable and perishable food options. During the pandemic, our government worked with partners to deliver important supports to food banks, community food programs and food baskets in indigenous and northern communities, redirecting supplies of food to remote communities to ensure no food went to waste, as well as investments in food infrastructure.

At the start of the pandemic, our government acted quickly, injecting \$25 million into nutrition north Canada. Not only did this make food more affordable in the north, but additional items were added to the subsidy list. Our government also introduced the harvesters support grant, which increases access to country foods by providing funding to support traditional hunting in the north, harvesting and food sharing in 108 isolated northern communities. It recognizes the importance of traditions, as well as hunting, harvest-

ing and food sharing, to the health and well-being of indigenous people and communities.

No single department, organization or initiative has the capacity to address the issue of food security on its own, as the root cause of food insecurity is poverty.

Our government is working directly with partners to address food security in the north and Arctic through a whole-of-government approach that includes working with provinces, territories and indigenous leadership and communities. The best way to strengthen global food security is to support the hard-working individuals producing the world's food and to work with local communities in partnership to address needs here at home and abroad. That is exactly what we are doing.

● (2015)

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Chair, the minister talked in his speech about the importance of fertilizer. Not only is it access to fertilizer, but I think the other issue about fertilizer is affordability. We have seen the cost of fertilizer in many parts of the country go up 100%.

Canada is the only G7 country on the planet that is charging a 35% tariff on Russian fertilizer. Many times we have asked the Liberal government to exempt that tariff on fertilizer purchased before March 2. We now know that this tariff is costing Canadian farmers about \$150 million a year.

The minister just mentioned that the government gave \$100 million to the largest mining company on the planet when they have record fertilizer revenues, not to make increased production at this fertilizer plant near Saskatoon but to ensure that it uses electric vehicles. Would he not agree that a better use of that \$100 million would be to provide compensation to farmers for their own fertilizer tariff?

**Hon. Dan Vandal:** Mr. Chair, I want to say first of all that it is incredibly important that we are having this debate today.

I can speak for the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. Her department is actively engaged not only with provinces across the west, but with the farmers and industry partners to ensure that farmers have access to fertilizer for Canada to do its part during this very difficult period of global food and security.

*Government Orders*

With respect to the BHP Jansen mine announcement in Saskatchewan this week, this will be the largest potash mine in the world. We make absolutely no apologies for doing our part in working with industry. This will ensure potash not only for the medium term but for the long term, and will ensure that Canada will be an actual leading producer for generations to come, creating absolutely hundreds of jobs in the process.

● (2020)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ):** Mr. Chair, a few moments ago, I was speaking about the importance of teaching a person to fish. I used to live in the near-northern town of Fermont, which did not have road access until 1984. I know and remember very well how expensive food can be, such as a \$15 salad. Even a \$25 million investment to help communities even farther north than Fermont, which is after all only on the 52nd parallel, is a band-aid solution.

What steps does the government plan to take and what measures will it implement in order to help communities access reasonably priced, healthy food?

**Hon. Dan Vandal:** Mr. Chair, the \$25 million that I spoke about was an investment from the middle of the pandemic. In budget 2021, we increased the budget by \$163 million for a series of initiatives to address food security in the north, which is very important.

We know that everything is more expensive for remote communities. There are no access roads or transportation. That is why we are also investing in building better infrastructure, roads and different ways to encourage transportation so that these communities can better look after their food needs.

It is going to take more than just one department to make this change happen. It will require initiative from the entire government and all levels of government, including indigenous governments. That is our initiative, and we will continue to find partners to address this serious issue.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Here is where I give my reminder to everyone that the quicker we can ask questions and answer questions, the more people can participate in the debate as we go along.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington.

**Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Regina—Lewvan.

I wish I were speaking more about Canadian food security this evening than speaking about global food insecurity.

Prior to being elected, I farmed for most of my life. I have spent a lot of time in agricultural organizations and I also worked with an internationally focused NGO. It has been mentioned here tonight, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, which deals with hunger, and so, with that background, I have spent a lot of time working for food and talking and thinking about it.

If I had to title my remarks today, I would title them with the axiom that we hear at the farm, “nothing cures high prices like high prices”, and its corollary, “nothing cures low prices like low prices”. Ag pundits often cite this expression when they are talking describing volatile agricultural markets, but we might ask ourselves what this has to do with global food insecurity and why should Canadians care.

Embedded in that expression actually lies one of the solutions to this crisis that we are facing, albeit it is a bit more of a longer-term solution, but respecting and understanding market dynamics is something we all need to collectively do. This works if governments and we collectively respect how markets work. High prices of anything, food and any product, encourage more production and increase supply. Low prices encourage demand and eventually high prices. I will come back to this in a moment but with the corollary that governments understand this dynamic.

Let me speak for a second to why Canadians should care. Obviously, we are all experiencing increasing grocery prices and grocery food. Canada is a rich country. On average, we spend about 10% of our disposable income on the cost of food, which is much lower than in many parts of the world. However, the vulnerable in our own society feel the brunt more than many of us.

We know that many problems do not respect international borders. We are dealing with greenhouse gases and climate. That does not respect the border. As we have learned, travel mandates and things like that have not slowed the spread of COVID-19. So too the effects of global hunger in other parts of the world will affect us.

I am reminded that World War II was not declared in 1939 when Hitler crossed boundaries into Poland and Czechoslovakia. World War II came from a conflation of various regional conflicts. Whenever in any part of the world a population's average caloric daily intake falls below 1,800 calories, there is civil unrest, food riots, hunger, all sorts of other problems. Let us think back to the Arab Spring.

It is important to put a few stats on the record. Global food hunger was actually decreasing through 2014. It has been mentioned that conflict around the world has actually been driving those numbers up. It was down to under 600 million people. The latest figures put it at over 800 million, with 50 million people actually facing acute starvation. There are two issues. As I mentioned in a question earlier, the price and availability of food require both short-term and longer-term responses.

*Government Orders*

To address food instability, food needs to be available. My former employer worked in this space. Certainly, in a short-term response, we do need to supply cash. The Canadian Foodgrains Bank led Canada to delinking our food aid back in 2008, which is a good thing, but what we need to do far more is to drive the cost of food down as well.

For that, our Canadian agriculture needs all of the tools at its disposal, certainly fertilizer and access to fertilizer. Restrictions on the use needs to be balanced with our environmental responsibility, but we cannot be putting policies in place today that impact Canadians' ability to produce food.

The carbon tax has been talked about as well. As I said, high prices cure high prices. More supply is attracted by high prices. For the world's poor, we absolutely need to put more food onto the market, which will lower the cost, which is the second possibility.

Let us put our collective efforts toward those aims.

● (2025)

**Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, as my hon. colleague from Chatham-Kent—Leamington mentioned, he has ties to Ukraine. We heard him contribute in a very meaningful way on the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

I want to ask him a couple of things. He highlighted very precisely what the challenge is in vulnerable countries and the geopolitical dynamic that could come from that, and I applaud that because it is spot on. We heard Kharkiv, which is where the plant-breeding research station is in Ukraine, was targeted directly by the Russian Federation. We heard from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations that it is going to try to salvage some of the varieties that are there.

I am of the view Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada can work constructively to help rebuild some of the varieties where there might be some common overlap. Does he believe that would be a constructive solution the government can work on, and will he constructively raise that to help push the government to work in that domain?

**Mr. Dave Epp:** Mr. Chair, yes, I absolutely will. I enjoy the work my hon. colleague and I do together at the agriculture committee.

We need both short-term and long-term responses. There is a call for an immediate cash injection, and I support those efforts. From a longer-term perspective, Canada has expertise. In my time at the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, I often spoke, and it was referenced earlier by the member for Beauport—Limoilou, about the analogy of fishing and giving a person a fish compared to teaching a person how to fish to reduce the need for further fish down the road. The third stool, which is not often talked about, is access to the pond.

I believe the hon. member's question concerns that third component. We need to not only teach and provide Canadian expertise in other parts of the world, but also give access to the pond so they can fish. There is that seed bank of Kharkiv, as well as other efforts. As Canadians, we have to develop the infrastructure in other parts of the world, and that is something that can absolutely be supported.

● (2030)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Chair, I would like my colleague to elaborate on those examples and tell us how our own expertise can support and develop production in developing countries that are facing food shortages.

[*English*]

**Mr. Dave Epp:** Mr. Chair, some things we, in primary agriculture in Canada, take for granted are actually not very well known in other parts of the world. What we consider as second nature for conservation and agriculture, such as crop rotation and keeping the ground covered with residue, are not well known in places such as Ethiopia. It was the first to plow the land, and has been for 7,000 years, so there is a massive culture change required to bring that about.

I will give honours to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, as its curriculum has been adopted by the Ethiopian government, and it is incorporating that into its agriculture because of the draughts it experiences. It is increasing its food production by adopting some things we take for granted. I was in Tanzania and saw some simple things such as scattering corn versus planting it in a row. Things we take for granted are things we can export and teach.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Chair, prior to being elected, I worked with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank quite a lot, and I think of my colleague as a friend and an ally in this place.

I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to wish Jim Cornelius a very happy retirement from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

Very quickly, I would ask for the member to share some more of his expertise with us tonight. We know the Canadian Foodgrains Bank has worked in countries around the world. Some of the work it has done in Ethiopia has been extremely strong. I wonder if he could talk a bit more about some of the ways western farmers have worked with farmers in Ethiopia and have provided food to people in Ethiopia.

**Mr. Dave Epp:** Mr. Chair, next week I will give a member's statement acknowledging Jim Cornelius and his role.

Yes, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, with a footprint across Canada in the agricultural community, grows food here, sells it into the market and then uses those funds to acquire food. In my remarks, I just touched on how Canada delinked our food aid to the rest of the parts of the world, so we are not destroying local markets when we source food to address food insecure parts of the world. We actually improve their own markets and lead to more sustainability from that perspective.

*Government Orders*

That is an area in which the Canadian Foodgrains Bank led by lobbying the Canadian government back in 2008 to delink that aid. We are actually leading the world when it comes to that, certainly in our efforts in the Horn of Africa with conservation agriculture. As I said earlier, things Canadian farmers do almost by nature these days are not done by nature in other parts of the world. Certainly, that is another area the Canadian Foodgrains Bank has been a leader.

**Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC):** Mr. Chair, this is a very important and timely debate that we are joining here this evening on the floor of the House of Commons. It is really talking about food supply and how Canada can be one of the sources to get food to people around the world.

There are five major points I am going to make in my presentation today about what I see as the issues agriculture producers are facing in Canada that are hindering their ability to supply the world with more of the world-class beef, chicken, wheat and commodities and to get things moved from market to market.

The first thing I see as an issue facing our producers coming down the pipe is front-of-package labelling. It is a big concern. We were reached out to by the Canadian Cattlemen's Association and the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association. They interviewed yesterday, and it is something people are getting more concerned about, that the government is going to put warning labels on our beef and pork.

We should have a really serious debate about whether that is something we need to do going forward because our producers have world-class beef and pork, and we do not need to put warning labels on them. It is a conversation that we need to have in the House of Commons to make sure we are supporting our producers. I believe they are doing phenomenal work from an environmental standpoint and from a food quality standpoint, and the government should not be putting a warning label on the front of packages. We would be the only country in the world to put this burdensome policy on our beef and pork producers.

A second issue we talk a lot about in this chamber that is really hurting the food we can produce is the carbon tax. It is ever-increasing for our Canadian producers. In western Canada, when we have these conversations about the carbon tax, we hear these are serious dollars. Now the PBO has come forward and said Canadians are not receiving as much money as they are paying in the carbon tax.

The fuel bill of a friend of mine has gone up \$15,000 a week, just in the carbon tax, when he is seeding and harvesting. Obviously that is in the high point, during seeding, but that is how much more money this producer is paying to fuel his equipment, and that is just the tractors. It is not counting other pieces of machinery. That is the second thing that is hindering our producers from being able to feed the world.

The third thing, as the member for Foothills talked about, is the fertilizer tariff. We are asking for the producers to get that money back from before March 2. We are penalizing our producers with the government's policies, which are something it has control of. It can make it better for our producers and easier for them to grow what the world needs.

The fourth thing is the 30% reduction of fertilizer. I have talked to stakeholders across the country, and before this emission reduction was put on fertilizer, Fertilizer Canada, Nutrien and BHP were never reached out to. They were surprised by this 30% reduction target. There were never appropriate conversations with the stakeholders to ensure that they knew this was coming down the pipe. It was a surprise for them. It was a subjective target that came out of nowhere and really shook the people who produce the fertilizer that helps to grow the crops we need to feed the world.

The fifth thing has been touched on by colleagues on all sides. It is not a partisan thing. It is the war in Ukraine. Ukraine is the third-largest producer of wheat in the world, and they are in war zone. Those crops are not going to be planted this year. We are burdening our producers in this country with more red tape and more regulations, which will hinder our yields and our crops.

We are not going to be able to use much fertilizer, and that is something that is going to happen in this country. We are going to grow less produce and have smaller yields because producers are going to use less fertilizer because they simply cannot afford it. They will not be able to afford the increase in the cost of fertilizer, and they cannot support an increase in the carbon tax. When we talk about the global food supply, where we should be a major player in the world, the government is hindering the ability for our producers to step up and do what is needed.

• (2035)

**Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, I want to ask the member two questions. I know he is up for it, and I will try to make them very quick.

One is on fertilizer. We have heard the position from the Conservatives for prior to March 2, the idea of trying to indemnify farmers. I agree with that, but there was an opposition day motion just last week that called for the elimination of the 35% tariff from Russian and Belarusian products. I am wondering if he could explain what his or the Conservative position is for after March 2.

The second question is on BHP. The Government of Canada was involved in helping to make a \$7.5-billion announcement in the member's home province of Saskatchewan. I had the chance to look at his social media, and I did not see one single mention of that investment. Does he support what the government has done to make that kind of investment with the private sector in his home province to build security on fertilizer right here in Canada?



*Government Orders*

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** Mr. Chair, I would like to congratulate the member for Kings—Hants on his upcoming wedding. That is amazing. He has probably, like most of us, punched above his weight, so hopefully his wife knows what she is getting into.

On his two questions I would say this: First and foremost, we are the only country in the world that has put a tariff on fertilizer. Other G7 countries are creating policies to help their agricultural producers, and we are creating a policy that hinders them.

On the second question, I would say that I am glad the government found out that BHP exists in Saskatchewan. I know it has been a long time since there has been a Liberal out there, but BHP has been talking about going to phase two since I was an MLA in 2011, so I have a great relationship with BHP. We talk all the time. I have been out to that mine, and we have done the tours. I think it is going to do very well this year with where fertilizer and potash prices are right now, so I wish BHP good luck and all the best.

● (2040)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague for his statement. I respect him and I have had the opportunity to work with him several times.

I agree with several aspects of his speech, with some reservations, which the future groom opposite may share. Generally, he is right in saying that we must protect our sectors that are doing well and help our farmers rather than hinder them.

Speaking of protecting sectors that are doing well, I have one that is very important to me. Last week, the Bloc Québécois introduced Bill C-282 to protect the supply management system, which works extremely well, but has been undermined by recent concessions. Does my colleague believe that we should protect this system for years to come?

[*English*]

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** Mr. Chair, my colleague knows that I grew up on a dairy and beef farm, so I have supported the supply management system in the past. I have many good friends in dairy farming still. I was able to go the National Holstein Convention in Saskatoon and reconnect with a few of them. I am proud to say there were a handful of Conservatives there. They are happy with our policy on supply management, and they know that we will always have their backs.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I am going to bring this back to the global food crisis. I know there has been a lot of discussion about farmers in western Canada, but really what we are talking about is the global food crisis.

I want to let the member know that right now we are facing hunger that is generational in scope. There are 181 million people at risk of starving to death. In Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, one person is dying from hunger every 48 seconds, so this is pretty desperate. I wonder if the member could tell me what he thinks is an appropriate percentage the Canadian government should be spending on food security and support for international development.

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** Mr. Chair, I was an MLA in Saskatchewan. The NDP used to be a driving force in Saskatchewan and western Canada, and this is how far it has fallen. It is quite sad for an NDP member to get up to suggest that western Canadian farmers are not the solution to a global food supply crisis, that they are not the solution to help feed more people around the world.

That is why we will always stand up for our western Canadian farmers. The way the member put them down right there is one of the reasons that the New Democrats will probably never win another seat in Saskatchewan, and it is why they are going to have to try to hold on to a couple of seats in Alberta.

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, I will be sharing my time with the member for Ottawa West—Nepean.

I am exuberant to be here tonight, and I feel the same sense of importance for this debate as my colleague, the MP for Avalon. The date of this debate is particularly timely, given recent events in Ukraine. We all know that Putin's senseless war on Ukraine is having a massive impact on global food insecurity.

The Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, of which I am a proud member, is currently examining this very issue. I have been actively engaged and learning quite a lot about this issue throughout the study of this important topic.

Last week we heard from Ukraine's Minister of Agrarian Policy and Food, who reported that the current situation in his country poses a very serious threat to global food security. Due to the Russian bombardment, grain exports from Ukrainian ports are down by more than half, and spring sowing acreage is down by 25%. Storage capacity is also reduced, as the Russians target silos as well as farm equipment.

Ukraine is a major exporter of wheat, particularly to more vulnerable nations in Africa and the Middle East, and we all know that it has been called the breadbasket. The minister also recently said that Russia's invasion of Ukraine will create a global wheat shortage for at least three seasons by keeping much of the Ukrainian crop from markets, pushing prices to record levels. According to estimates by the Food and Agriculture Organization, by next year the crisis could increase the number of people experiencing severe hunger by 18.8 million and impact 1.7 billion people across the globe.

Russia has bombed key agricultural infrastructure, stolen Ukrainian grain and agricultural machinery and prevented exports from leaving Ukraine. Significant amounts of Ukraine's best agricultural lands have been occupied and land mines have been planted there, affecting Ukraine's arable land.

*Government Orders*

Before the invasion, the vast majority of Ukraine's exports left from the port of Odessa on the Black Sea. However, Russia's control of major parts of the coastline and the blockades it has imposed have rendered these routes virtually unusable.

While some of Ukraine's grain is slowly getting to market, Ukraine is facing logistical challenges and backlogs. In fact, it is estimated that 20 million tonnes of wheat are stuck in Ukraine, and there is an urgent need for export ahead of the spring harvest.

Canada is in regular contact with the Government of Ukraine, the EU and G7 allies to support Ukraine in its efforts to export its agricultural commodities. We have received requests from the Government of Ukraine for assistance to help with its export challenges and we are seriously considering options to provide that assistance. Obviously, I hope that we do provide that assistance.

Ukraine has asked Canada for support towards additional grain storage, for lab equipment to help establish labs in reclaimed territories and for urgently needed support in exporting Ukrainian agricultural products. The Ukrainian Minister of Agrarian Policy and Food said that the storage capacity is significantly down, stating that “Given the current low rate of exports, last year's harvest and our harvest forecast, the shortage of storage capacity will reach 10 million to 15 million tonnes by October.”

We understand the urgency of these requests and that this assistance is needed to support the harvest this fall. Canada is working with Ukrainian officials to determine the specifics of these requests and is coordinating with other countries to determine how those needs can best be met. In the meantime, Canada will continue to assess other requirements for Ukraine's agricultural industry, including the potential for provision of seed and technical and scientific assistance in processing capacity or research support.

We continue to support relief efforts in Ukraine. To date, Canada has provided \$245 million to support the humanitarian response to meet urgent needs on the ground in Ukraine and neighbouring countries.

I have much more to say, but it is clear to me that Canada is doing what it can and is considering all options to support Ukraine. Also, I was particularly interested to hear the good news recently that the President of the United States has talked about setting up temporary grain storage along the Polish border, which I think Canada supports.

• (2045)

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I appreciate the speech from the member opposite.

There is one big concern that I hear from constituents, many of whom are very involved in agriculture, not just locally but in global food production. They speak often about how frustrated they are with the government and the barriers that are being put up in terms of the role that Canada can play, both in addressing global food insecurity and in food production here at home. Both are very closely linked by things like the carbon tax and front-of-package labelling. It is ironic that we are having a debate about global food insecurity when the government here in Canada is pushing an agenda that would have devastating effects on the domestic food industry here, and I understand that the member has been a proponent of it.

What is the message that this is sending to the world about the role Canada has to play in global food security?

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull:** Mr. Chair, I appreciate the member's question because it gives me an opportunity to let this House know about my support of front-of-package labelling and why I feel strongly that it is a good policy and good step forward.

Our government spent many years researching it and consulting on this particular policy. The research has shown that it does impact people's eating choices and dietary habits, and many of the costs to our health care system are based on dietary-related disease. In fact, front-of-package labelling better informs consumers and allows them to make better decisions about what they want to consume. It is a good thing to put that decision-making power and information into the hands of consumers so that they can make better dietary-related decisions.

• (2050)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Chair, I thank the member for his speech.

My question has come up a lot in this evening's debate.

Farmers from here who bought Russian fertilizer, who placed and paid for their orders before the war, will have to pay a 35% tariff that is supposedly meant to punish the Russian economy. We agree with the general principle of punishing Russia's economy for the invasion, but in this case the Russian economy is not being punished at all because the fertilizer was bought and paid for before the war. This government is imposing a 35% tariff on farmers.

Does my colleague think the government should remove the tariff in this specific case?

[*English*]

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull:** Mr. Chair, I know this topic has come up at the agriculture and agri-food standing committee numerous times.

I do believe the sanctions on Russia are completely justified, but I believe there is an impact on our farmers that is pretty hard for them to take, especially given the pressures they are under. We should be doing something for those farmers to help them, especially for the farmers who pre-purchased those supplies.

Perhaps there is a way we can source fertilizer. I know there has been this announcement about the potash mine, one of the most sustainable mines for potash. I know that is not an immediate solution because it is going to take time, but I do agree that the member has rightly pointed out an important issue.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Chair, to follow up on that, previously under the Harper administration, there were some tariff retaliations on the United States with regard to its protectionism, which included milled rice. There is actually only one place in Canada that still does that, and it is the Dainty rice company in my riding. Accidentally, we were going to actually add a tariff on ourselves, and their administration, to its credit, fixed this at the end of the day.

Is there enough political will for the government to do this and fix a glaring problem that is out there with regard to the plan and the dates that are proposed?

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull:** Mr. Chair, I do not know about the specific tariff that the member referenced, but I think he is making an argument analogous to the situation we are experiencing right now with the tariffs on fertilizer related to Russia. From my personal perspective, I think those farmers have been hard hit already. This exacerbates the pressures they are under, and we should be looking at doing something to support them.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, I am very happy that we are having this debate this evening. It could be one of the most important debates that we have in this House.

We know that Russia's unjustifiable and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has had an immediate impact on the food security and nutrition of the world's most vulnerable people. This is adding to the existing food crisis caused by the pandemic and by climate change.

Canada is supporting organizations like the World Food Programme and other Canadian and international partners such as Nutrition International and its partners that are part of the Humanitarian Coalition, to provide emergency food and nutrition assistance to those most in need, as well as to assist in preparedness and response efforts, minimizing disruptions to food supply chains.

We have provided \$514 million in humanitarian assistance in response to the current global food crisis in over 40 countries. For example, in 2021, Canada was the fourth-largest donor to the World Food Programme, providing more than \$306 million in humanitarian funding to support its emergency operations around the world. We will continue to work with our partners to see what more we can do to help the most vulnerable.

In addition, Canada is recognized globally as a leader in evidence-based nutrition programs. It is not enough just to fill tummies. We have to provide the right kind of food and the right kind of nutrition in order to prevent malnutrition. We must think of maternal and children's health.

Canada is in fact leading in technical assistance and innovation and support in this regard, but we know that because of Vladimir Putin and his refusal to allow food out of critical Ukrainian ports like Odesa, his unjustifiable war is driving up the global prices for wheat, maize, oilseeds and other grains. Consequently, millions of the most vulnerable are being forced into food insecurity. It is why Canada has been focused on food security since the beginning of the crisis.

• (2055)

[*Translation*]

Since March, we have contributed \$70 million worth of aid to Ukraine through the World Food Programme. We have helped hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians by providing meals at shelters, emergency food kits, food hampers and cash.

[*English*]

We know that existing food crises are being exacerbated by this conflict. This is why we continue to support the worst-hit regions, for example, \$229 million to Syria and surrounding countries like Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq; \$143 million to Afghanistan to support food assistance, clean water and health; and \$73 million to Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.

[*Translation*]

We are also providing \$82 million in humanitarian and development assistance to address growing food and nutrition needs and to help avert famine in the Sahel and Lake Chad regions. These are just a few examples of the work that Canada is doing. Finding long-term solutions to the food security crisis in the global south is an absolute priority for our government.

[*English*]

That is why we take an approach in which we empower local farmers so that they can have the capacity to feed their people. The Minister of International Development recently announced a \$100-million contribution to the African Development Bank. This money will be used to help small and medium agri-food enterprises grow, with a particular focus on agri SMEs run by or benefiting women. Investing in agri SMEs, half of which are run by women, will not only help with current local food shortages, but will also build long-term economic activity and opportunities. As these agri SMEs scale up, they could also start providing food supply to neighbouring regions and hopefully contribute to greater regional stability. With time, a growing agriculture sector in Africa can contribute to Africa being an economic powerhouse.

I want to be clear. Canada is a key player in the fight against global food insecurity. We will continue to work with our partners internationally and on the ground to see what more we can do to help the most vulnerable.

**Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I have heard a few things here from the government side of the bench. I just heard the hon. parliamentary secretary say that Canada is a leader.

*Government Orders*

There is a recent organization set up by the United States called the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework. Canada is left out of that. Canada is left out of the Quad. Canada is left out of so many international organizations. Our reputation on the world stage is in tatters after seven years of this government because we cannot do anything. We have a natural resources minister that is talking about getting natural gas to Europe without pipelines, without LNG facilities, but he is talking. Nobody believes it.

Does the member really believe that the rest of the world thinks we can deliver food to them when we have ports and rails that get stopped all the time? We have no actual credibility in the world for delivering anymore. Could she please explain that to us?

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld:** Mr. Chair, I would disagree with the premise of my hon. colleague's question. Anyone who looked on the ground and talked to our partners, including our multilateral partners, would see that Canada is very much present. In fact, we are leading. As I mentioned, we are the fourth-largest donor to the World Food Programme.

We continue to lead, particularly on innovation. The very farmers whom my hon. colleagues are talking about are the ones who are leading the kinds of innovations that are leading to the long-term resolution to food insecurity globally.

When it comes to our feminist international assistance policy, Canada has once again taken a leading role in the world and is respected worldwide because of it.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ):** Madam Chair, I am pleased to hear the investment amounts referred to by my colleague to help countries in Africa feed themselves, as well as the steps that are being taken to support small and medium-sized agricultural enterprises in those regions.

That said, I still fundamentally believe that money cannot be eaten. Even here at home, we are at high risk of seeing food shortages. What can we do right here to support not only our own agriculture, but also agriculture in developing countries that are having a very tough time?

• (2100)

[*English*]

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld:** Madam Chair, it is what I said previously about innovation and Canadian farmers and Canadian NGOs that are on the ground.

I spoke recently with the Humanitarian Coalition, whose partners are doing incredibly important innovative work around the world, using Canadian expertise, and also listening to the small-scale farmers internationally. We have projects looking at women farmers who are building co-operatives and building solutions within the global south. That is one of the key things that Canada has been particularly good at doing. It is ensuring that the expertise that is there is allowed to scale up and is potentially going to be part of the larger solution in the long term.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Chair, my colleague works on the foreign affairs committee with me and I know her to be very honourable. We work very well

together. I would like to quote Anne Frank, who said, "Hunger is not a problem. It is an obscenity."

When we fail to address this, that is an obscenity. The member knows as well as I do that 60% of the people who go hungry are women and children. She knows that the implications are dire, outside of hunger, in terms of violence against women, sexual abuse, and trafficking because of hunger and because of the need to work for food.

I have two questions for the member. First, when are we finally going to see the promised feminist foreign policy from the government? Second, when can we finally expect the government to get to the 0.7% of ODA that has been promised since Lester B. Pearson promised it way back when?

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld:** Madam Chair, I want to thank my colleague for her passion and her important work in this regard. She and I have very similar backgrounds in international development.

In fact, our feminist international assistance policy and our national action plan on that have been in place. We are celebrating the fifth anniversary this year, and it is actually creating a change on the ground. Those very women whom the member is talking about who are the most impacted are also the solution. We need to be listening to the women in the global south and making sure that we are scaling up a lot of their efforts.

She quoted Anne Frank, and she is absolutely right. The fact is that we need to end global hunger. The sustainable development goals are central to everything that we do, including ending global hunger, because as long as someone is hungry, she cannot go to school and she is not going to be healthy. Everything else depends on ending global hunger.

**Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC):** Madam Chair, I will be splitting my time with my colleague from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

I rise today to speak on a very serious and urgent issue. The world is facing a global food crisis.

Earlier this year, I shared a quote in this House from Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, a professor and researcher of food distribution at Dalhousie University. He stated, "We need to be clear on the fact that by fall more than 100 million people will experience either famine or severe hunger."

Every day we sit on the sidelines the situation continues to get worse. I am glad to see the House has finally taken this matter seriously after Canada's Conservatives requested today's debate. However, it is one thing to talk about this crisis and it is another thing to actually tackle it.

Approximately four-fifths of the world's population lives in a country that is a net importer of food. Canada is one of the few remaining agricultural exporting nations on earth. We are one of the only nations with the potential to feed the world, but in order to do this, we need a political and economic environment that enables us to do so.

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The reality is that Canada currently has a Liberal government that is working against Canadian agriculture. How can we produce more food when our own government is punishing farmers for doing so?

We are the only country in the G7 with a tariff on fertilizer. Canadian farmers are literally being financially punished by the carbon tax for producing and transporting food, and now the government is actually trying to discourage the purchase of Canadian ground beef with new labelling regulations. Does this sound like an environment that enables Canada to feed the world? Absolutely not. Instead of focusing on growing more food when the world needs it the most, the government is standing in the way.

As food insecurity continues to escalate because of Russia's unjustified war on Ukraine, countries are sounding the alarm. According to reports, there are currently 26 countries implementing severe restrictions on food exports. These restrictions cover 15% of the calories traded worldwide. It is no surprise that nearly 50% of the countries depend on Russia or Ukraine for more than 30% of their wheat imports.

This is not a problem that can be solved overnight. Growing food is a seasonal task. This means that the longer we wait, the greater the impact will be in the future.

I have always said that Canada should be an agricultural superpower. We should grow our processing capacity. We should increase our transportation efficiency. We should be a leader in biotechnology. There is no reason why Canada cannot be the world's most reliable, high-quality supplier of agricultural goods in the world.

The global food crisis will impact some nations more than others. However, no one will escape the pain. Less developed nations will lose access to food and developed nations will pay more to obtain food.

As fertilizer prices continue to reach record highs, farmers are paying the price. The price of food increases when the cost to produce it increases. The most significant increase in production costs is fertilizer. However, industrial fertilizer is one of the only reasons we can feed the world today. Without fertilizer, yields would not be able to keep up with the growing population.

Unfortunately, farmers across the world can no longer afford fertilizer and are now reducing their usage. As a result, food production will continue to decrease.

I hope the government understands that the more it restricts fertilizer, the more it restricts food production. The government needs to wake up to the reality before us.

Let me be frank. The world desperately needs more food. Canada can either sit by as the world starves, or step up and feed the world. The choice is ours.

● (2105)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Chair, I thank the member for his very interesting speech. I have a twofold question.

I found his approach to the taxation of fertilizer tariffs very interesting. Is he in favour of lifting the tariffs on purchases made before March 2 or even on those made after? That is my first question.

My second question is this: With the expected global food shortage, more and more countries are stopping food exports. That is the case with India with wheat and Indonesia with palm oil. What does my colleague think about this food protectionism?

[*English*]

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Madam Chair, I have always wanted to answer this question for the farmers in eastern Canada.

They are disproportionately being impacted by the fertilizer tariffs. Forty per cent of the fertilizer that comes into eastern Canada, and that is Quebec east, is imported, so they pay the most tariff out of all the farmers across Canada. The fertilizer trade is a global phenomenon. Forty per cent of the nitrogen that comes out of the world's production of fertilizer comes out of Russia or Russian-owned assets.

Putting a 35% tariff on Canadian farmers is fixing nothing. It is actually penalizing Canadian farmers. The Liberal government seems to be very good at that.

**Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Madam Chair, I reject the premise of the hon. member's speech. If the Liberals were so terrible for agriculture, then why are farm receipts up by 13.7% over last year? Why are crop receipts up over 9.2% over last year? Why are livestock receipts up by 13.4% from last year?

The member mentioned fertilizer and the 35% increase. I understand there is a worry about that, but I am more worried about the 100% increase of fertilizer. What about the farmers and the distributors who rearranged their supply chains and did not pay that 35% but paid a higher price? Should those farmers not be compensated?

● (2110)

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Madam Chair, this is a direct supply chain issue.

It is no secret grain prices have gone up by 100% to 150% in several commodities, increasing farmers' income. That is why the farm receipts are going up. It is simple math. They have not produced any more. There have been severe droughts. About half of my riding was droughted out last year. They did not produce more receipts, but the value of the grain went up by double. That is why the receipts are up.

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As for income tariffs and what is going on with fertilizer, not only is the world supply of fertilizer being shorted because of the Russian supply chain, but to add insult to injury to our Canadian farmers, the government has also added a tariff, which is making everything more expensive, and it is just in Canada. It is back to that “Justinflation” type of process that is going on here that we all experience in Canada.

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Madam Chair, my colleague has incredible experience in agriculture.

One of the other things we have been talking about today is the impact the carbon tax is having on Canadian farmers. The idea of that is to transition farmers into using a different fuel for grain drying and heating barns and buildings.

What other fuel source are the Liberals asking farmers to transition to? Does it actually exist?

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Madam Chair, ironically, no. On the fuel source, what are they going to reduce? It is the only option they really have at this point. There is no other choice. We have no choice to make.

We need energy to grow food. It does not matter where it comes from. We need diesel fuel and it comes from natural gas and it comes from fossil fuels. There is no other choice right now. Manitoba tried to eliminate the use of coal for heating homes and stuff like that, and it did not work. It just came back that we needed to heat our homes at the end of the day.

This is a made-in-Canada problem. The government can fix it, if it really decides to and starts working with farmers. I think that is the most important thing it could start doing right now.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Chair, we are in the House tonight talking about probably one of the most critical issues that we are going to be confronting in this Parliament. We are talking about a global food crisis and we need to talk about it more. We are talking about a global food crisis in which hundreds of millions of people's lives and well-being are at stake. We know already that 181 million people are expected to be at crisis or worse levels of hunger around the world. This is a massive challenge that we need to talk about more: the global food crisis. We need to be sounding the alarm on this and calling for stronger government action.

How do we address this challenge? I think we need to reflect on the need to focus more on food security and food aid as part of international development. We need to talk about the role the Russian aggression is playing in causing global hunger. We need to talk about how Canadian government policy is hurting the agricultural sector and reducing its ability to respond to this global crisis. All three of these are parts of the response we need to have.

When it comes to Canadian international development, I want to add my voice to those who are calling on the government to step up and do more to confront the global food crisis, to spend more specifically on issues of food security and emergency food support. I think, too often, the current Liberal government wants to focus on using international assistance to play wedge politics and divide Canadians. Additionally, we have seen money spent through foreign vehicles such as the Chinese state-controlled Asian Infrastruc-

ture Investment Bank, which is something the Conservatives oppose. Our international assistance should not be about wedge politics, it should not be about supporting authoritarian states, and it certainly should not be about currying political favour as part of some Security Council election. Our international development should be squarely focused on supporting the most vulnerable around the world and helping them meet vital needs such as access to food. We need to do more. We should do more, and these vital needs for the most vulnerable need to be our focus.

It is important for Canadians to understand that this escalating food crisis is one of the effects of the horrific invasion of Ukraine by the Putin regime. Ukrainian farmers play a critical role in exporting food to the world, and the critical supply line for that food is export through the Black Sea. The total invasion of Ukraine by Russia from three sides included an amphibious assault through the Black Sea, and the Putin regime is now blockading the export of food from Ukraine. Russia is also mining agricultural land, destroying equipment and otherwise making it very difficult for Russian farmers to do what they do best.

What is happening in Ukraine, and particularly in the Black Sea, is very insidious. It is a return to the Stalin-era policy of using mass starvation as a political tool. Stalin sought to erase Ukrainian identity and used mass starvation as a tool of genocide during the Holodomor. Vladimir Putin is also trying to erase Ukraine's existence, and is again using mass starvation as part of the violence that the House has already said constitutes genocide. Some have speculated that the Putin regime's strategy is to provoke mass starvation in African countries that depend on exports from Ukraine, and thus put pressure on Europe by using mass starvation to generate escalating migration. This underlines the limitless depravity of the Putin regime. It is spreading the impact of its violence by causing mass starvation for political purposes. Just as with the Holodomor, we are seeing the use of starvation by the Putin regime for political purposes. This already represents a widening of the conflict and, in effect, an attack by the Putin regime on these other countries that depend on Ukrainian food.

What do we do about this, recognizing the profound risks and harms that go far beyond Ukraine's borders? We need to lean in hard by giving Ukraine all the tools it needs to fight this invasion and to win, and to end the Black Sea blockade. We must urgently supply vitally needed heavy artillery to Ukraine. We must spare no expense and hold nothing back in massively upping Ukraine's access to the artillery and heavy equipment it needs to win this war. This has been the clear and repeated ask of the Ukrainian government and the Ukrainian people: It has been for more military equipment and the heavy artillery they need. We should support them in that.

We hear often, and rightly so, about how investments in international development can help global security. I agree. It is also true that making investments in security by supporting Ukraine and doing all we can to help Ukraine win the war will save lives not just in Ukraine, but in the many other countries that rely on food from Ukraine. We need to see the use of starvation as a weapon of war as a significant escalation. It is a broadening of the attack that requires urgent action. During the Holodomor, the world failed to respond. We must not repeat this mistake.

There is much more I could say about how we can support Canadian farmers, but I hope that more people will lean in to respond to this crisis and call for stronger action from the government.

• (2115)

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.):** Madam Chair, I think we all agree in the House about the illegal and egregious genocide that is happening against the Ukrainian people. Yevheniya Kravchuk is one of the MPs who was here from Ukraine this week. In her remarks, she said that Putin was relying on democracies thinking that democracies are weak because we are under pressure when our populations have inflation, increased food prices and increased fuel prices, and he thinks this is going to cause us to have pressure from our populations and therefore not be as resolute.

Could my colleague comment on the fact that the food prices, fuel prices and inflation happening around the world and here in Canada are very much because of what Putin is doing in Ukraine? What are his thoughts on that?

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Chair, it is a pleasure to work with my friend across the way. We agree on many issues. We disagree on some as well. I would say, respectfully, that I think inflation is caused by a number of factors. We had a significant issue of inflation prior to the invasion of Ukraine. A significant part of that is the government's approach to spending. We have run up more debt in the past seven years than the country had previously.

I will certainly agree with her in saying that we need to have firm resolve. We need to be prepared to do what is necessary to impose sanctions that are debilitating to the Russian economy. We need to up energy production to displace Europe's dependence on energy. We need to supply the heavy artillery that is required and we need to endure through these circumstances, because so much of what we believe in is at stake.

I believe that citizens in democracies believe in and benefit from the systems, and are prepared to endure. While we may disagree on some aspects of the inflation issue, I appreciate that we agree on the fundamental point about the strength of democracies.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Chair, I thank my colleague for his speech.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, or FAO, war and climate change are the main causes of global food insecurity.

For example, last summer, droughts in western Canada, the United States and Russia, as well as flooding in Germany, resulted in

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disastrous harvests. It was hoped that this year, stocks could be replenished. Now, with the war in Ukraine, that will not be possible.

What does my colleague think about that?

• (2120)

[English]

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Chair, unfortunately, I only had five minutes. I can speak for hours on almost any subject, but on this subject I had a lot more to say. The member raised some important points. I would say, at the same time, that some of the policies of the government that supposedly are about responding to climate change are also having a negative effect. Agriculture policies around limiting the use of fertilizer just make no sense. It is making it harder for Canadian farmers to supply more food to the world. We need to recognize all of these different issues and recognize that we need to address the security issue and the international development issues and also support Canadian agriculture as a key part of the response to this crisis.

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Madam Chair, I thank my colleague for his intervention. I appreciate him also raising the Holodomor as a serious issue. I wanted to ask him about some of the Canadian companies that continue to do business in Russia.

What should be done about their continued participation? In regard to Putin, how long should sanctions remain in place if we are able to see this resolved at any point in time? I would be interested to hear his perspective on that.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Chair, in terms of companies that are continuing to do business with Russia, there are two possible circumstances. We could speak about those that may be violating sanctions, and we could also speak about cases where the sanctions are not preventing them from doing that.

We need to continue to push for tougher sanctions, and we also need strengthened sanctions enforcement. The member has talked about how we respond to this food crisis. There are many different actions that are required, and part of it is ensuring that victory, supporting our farmers and supporting international development. A lot of work needs to be done, and I hope we are prepared to do that work and have the resolve.

On his second question about how long the sanctions should be in place, very clearly we need to be committed to sustaining these sanctions until the Putin regime withdraws from all of Ukraine's sovereign territory, as was recognized by the government of Russia in the Budapest Memorandum.

[Translation]

**Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Madam Chair, I would like to inform you that I will be sharing my time with the member for Kingston and the Islands, a very good colleague of mine.

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I am pleased to rise virtually and take part in this debate on global food insecurity. This is an issue that the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food has been working on for the past week. We have had the opportunity to hear from a number of witnesses, including the Ukrainian agricultural minister. We know how important a contributor Ukraine is to the world's grain supply.

Of course, the war caused by Vladimir Putin is illegal. I wish to express my solidarity with the Ukrainian people, who are still resisting and fighting every day to maintain sovereignty over their territory.

We have heard numerous stories over the past few weeks. What is concerning is that Ukraine typically exports about five to six million tonnes of grain per month. Last week, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization reported that Ukraine was able to export only one million tonnes of grain in May. Obviously, that is causing a ripple effect in the world market. It will cause massive famines in some African countries. This is not only worrying for the Ukrainian people, it is also worrying for developing countries that are not fortunate enough to have such a strong agriculture industry or to get the same yield from their land.

Canada plays a fairly important role in the world. More than 20 million tons of wheat are stuck in Ukraine right now. The Ukrainian port is under Russian blockade. I do not need to repeat everything my colleagues from all parties have said. We have seen the consequences of this war.

I want to reassure the House that our Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs are on the job. They have had several meetings with actors at the international level. G7 and G20 countries are on the job. They are taking action and looking for strategies. It is not easy. It is not just about whether people can farm the land safely. It is also about finding ways, if the land can be farmed and the harvests are good, to export all that grain without access to ports. There is the rub. It is extremely difficult.

Last week, the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food was told that Ukraine's rail network is not the same as in the rest of Europe. There can be wait times in excess of 27 days. Ukraine asked us to build temporary silos, which can store grain safely for four months while awaiting export. Will Ukraine be able to ship its grain around the world in four months?

We are working on all of these issues with several stakeholders. Unfortunately, it is hard to say very much in just five minutes, but I want to reassure my colleagues. The Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food has had several meetings with G7 countries. I know that we are working very closely with Ukraine to come up with solutions. Canadian logistics experts are saying that trucks might have to be used, because that is the only way to get the grain out. Canada will play an important role in this fight to ensure that the whole world has access to food.

Again, this is not a partisan issue. I want to thank all my colleagues who have participated in tonight's debate and those who will be speaking later on, too.

• (2125)

[English]

**Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC):** Madam Chair, I just want to know something. The tariff on fertilizer is disproportionately impacting eastern Canadian farmers, because they have to import. They are the only farmers in Canada who have to import fertilizer. Does my colleague know how much that is costing eastern Canada?

**Mr. Francis Drouin:** Madam Chair, I would encourage the member to move away from that 35%. That is not the only issue. I have suppliers who have rearranged their supply chain and paid a higher price, and I have asked that question of the particular member. An exemption of 35% would exclude the other farmers who may have paid a higher price because their distributors rearranged their supply chains.

Obviously, any solution I would advocate for would be a direct help toward farmers as opposed to the simple exemption to certain distributors who decided to continue to deal with Russia. Others rearranged their supply chains and may have paid a higher price, but those farmers also deserve a break, and that is the solution I would advocate for, as opposed to simply a blanket 35% exemption.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Chair, I am going to come back to the same issue again, because farmers in our ridings keep asking us about it.

The fertilizers were purchased and paid for before the war broke out. They are now paying a 35% tariff that was imposed when the war started. However, the farmers had already paid for their orders. Now they have to add a 35% tax, which goes to the government and does absolutely no harm to Russia.

I want to ask the parliamentary secretary, as a government representative, why has the government still not done anything about this?

**Mr. Francis Drouin:** Madam Chair, I want to thank my colleague for his question. The farmers who paid for fertilizer last year for this spring signed a contract. I do not think it is fair that they pay a 35% tariff. That risk should be on the distributor or company that did not buy or have the fertilizer arrive at the right time.

We are talking about the 35% tariff. However, what would have happened if a ship had sunk? Other risks could come into play as well.

Business relations fall to the provinces, and I know the member prefers it when jurisdictions are respected.

Other distributors have rearranged their supply chains. Do those farmers, who may have paid a higher price, deserve a lower price as well?

I, for one, would advocate for a lower price for all farmers instead of just offering something to farmers who used distributors that are paying the 35% tariff. In my opinion, it should go directly to the farmer.



• (2130)

[English]

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Chair, my colleague and I worked together very well on the ALS caucus, and I enjoyed working with him on that very much.

I want to talk about the aid levels Canada is contributing. I do not think anyone in this place will be surprised by that.

Under the present government, we are currently at 0.3%. Many people would think the Liberal government, especially with what we heard from the Prime Minister in 2015, would have contributed more, but in fact our highest overseas development assistance came under Joe Clark, when he was the foreign affairs minister, and the Conservative government. We did not get to our target, but we did get to 0.5%. I will say that the Conservative Party of Joe Clark is definitely not the Conservative Party we have now, which ran in 2019 with a massive cut to ODA.

When can we expect the Liberal government to live up to the very low standards the Conservative government has set with regard to development assistance?

**Mr. Francis Drouin:** Madam Chair, I do have the highest esteem for my colleague from Edmonton Strathcona. I think she is a great member of Parliament.

In the immediate term, when we are discussing global food security, I would certainly advocate for any programs that go toward increasing the amount toward the World Food Programme, because that is the only way we have. There are vehicles in place and there are systems in place already, and if we reinvent the wheel, we are not going to get the food in time to stop famine in certain countries.

Canada will be able to eat, but at what price? There are countries, unfortunately, in the southern hemisphere that will simply run out of food. Canada has already announced \$70 million for the World Food Programme, and I would certainly advocate for that to be increased, if it needs to be increased.

In the longer term—

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Unfortunately, we have to leave that for another opportunity.

Resuming debate, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Chair, it is an honour today to rise in the House to speak to this very important issue. I will say from the outset that I have certainly learned a lot from sitting here and listening to the debate over the last few hours about the realities of the situation and, indeed, I have learned a lot of information by listening to my colleagues in the NDP, the Conservatives and the Bloc and what they have had to contribute.

First of all, the thing that I find most alarming is the fact that almost one out of every 10 people in the world is currently facing a problem with respect to accessing enough food. That is extremely problematic, and I genuinely believe that Canada has a role to play in that.

### *Government Orders*

With respect to the line of questioning that the member for Edmonton Strathcona has been raising over the last few hours, I believe that role is most definitely going to have to increase, in particular as we move forward into the future. We do know that, by 2050, we will need to be producing globally about 70% more food than we currently are. Therefore, when we consider some of that information, notwithstanding the war that is going on in Ukraine, because that is a whole separate issue, there is certainly a role for Canada to play in ensuring that there is access to food throughout the globe.

It is not just from a humanitarian perspective, and I asked this in one of my questions earlier. The humanitarian perspective is extremely noble. It is extremely important for a country like Canada to play that role, and I believe that Canada feels an obligation from the humanitarian perspective, but more importantly, it comes back to what the Minister of International Development said in his opening speech on this earlier this evening, when he said that “international assistance is conflict prevention”. If we can make sure that we are playing a very active role in ensuring that people have access to food, we are going to help reduce the conflicts that are happening, which inevitably quite often spill into international conflicts.

Another member said, earlier this evening, that wars quite often start as a result of a lack of food, in one way or another, directly or indirectly. When we consider that and consider the real implications of that, it makes absolute sense. A basic human need for survival is the access to food, and when we get to a point where that is not the case, we are going to have conflict.

I will just talk, very quickly, about what is going on in Ukraine. When we consider the size of Ukraine, which is the fifth-largest supplier of wheat, we can very quickly see how in a global market this is going to affect different countries and different stakeholders very quickly. Specifically, Ukraine produces 50% of the wheat in Lebanon, 43% in Libya, 22% in Yemen and 21% in Bangladesh. Let us just imagine for a second what happens to the supply chains and the various individuals at the various parts of the production of food when they suddenly cannot access that food. It really makes me think of the insecurity that will exist throughout the world and the conflicts that might end up starting as a result of that.

I am looking forward to listening to the rest of what members have to contribute tonight. Certainly, from my perspective, one of the things that are front and centre and that I worry about the most is what that conflict will be like if Canada does not step in and increase our contributions quite a bit more over the years, as we see the demand for food growing throughout the globe.

• (2135)

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Madam Chair, I likewise have found this debate very valuable here this evening.

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There is a unique situation in Ukraine. There is a lot of grain and other agricultural commodities that are there but cannot get out. Some of the neighbouring countries to Ukraine still have a certain level of access to some of those commodities, but there has to be, I would suggest, a significant global effort to make sure that we can engage the global logistics supply chain to ensure that the wheat can get to market.

There are a huge number of other challenges, but specifically when it comes to the logistics to help get that wheat to market, I wonder if the parliamentary secretary has any suggestions as to how Canada can help in that process.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Chair, as I said, I am learning quite a bit about this tonight in this debate. I will be the first to admit that this is not my field of expertise, but I will say that I have heard both the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and I believe a Conservative member earlier speak to Canada's expertise as it relates to the logistics of moving wheat. Canada can play a huge role in that.

I do not personally know exactly what those solutions are, but again, if this is another way that Canada can be an exporter of our incredible understanding and capabilities when it comes to the logistics around this, then we should play a role in that, not just from a humanitarian perspective, but indeed from a global security perspective. Not only is it a problem that Ukraine cannot move the wheat right now, but now it is starting to talk about problems with respect to getting the seed in the ground for next year.

I would agree with the member for Battle River—Crowfoot that we need to work quickly to help address these problems with Ukraine so that this does not become a problem that will occur again next year.

• (2140)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ):** Madam Chair, what I am hearing is that there are huge needs and that Canada is making an effort to respond.

I am thinking about the future, however, because we also need to look ahead. Traditional or ancestral grains are often turned down on the global market because people prefer wheat, rye or barley.

Would diversity not be a good thing, and would it not be good to encourage diversity in areas struggling with food insecurity?

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Chair, now we are really getting out of my field of expertise. I certainly would not want to be weighing in on the appropriate grains that should be moving throughout the global market.

I am more than willing to accept that it is a valid question and that perhaps there is an opportunity for Canada to play a role and be a contributor to that. The member might have a very good point. I personally do not know the answer to it, but I would love to hear the answer to it.

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Madam Chair, the parliamentary secretary made a good point with regard to the vulnerability of other nation-states. Let us take Lebanon as one exam-

ple. We already know it is tested with regard to the political crisis that it faces. There have been humanitarian issues as well. We know there is going to be vulnerability for regular shipments, even if there is some normalization in the future.

What would the member suggest we can do for a state like Lebanon, which we have identified is extremely vulnerable right now? What is this country willing to do to increase its stability knowing that this is a real vulnerability to public safety, food security and the nation-state itself?

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Chair, this goes back a bit to the question from the member for Battle River—Crowfoot, which is if Canada has expertise with respect to assisting Ukraine with the logistical movement of wheat so it can get to countries such as Lebanon much more efficiently, quickly and reliably.

The reality is that when global markets are so interconnected, the slightest little changes can throw a huge wrench into the operation. For a country such as Ukraine, which is the fifth-largest producer of wheat in the global supply, that really becomes problematic in terms of when that starts to be disrupted.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC):** Madam Chair, I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from Battle River—Crowfoot.

I rise to participate in this take-note debate on global food security, which was sponsored by my friend and colleague, the member for Foothills. As a member of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, I have had the opportunity to hear from many stakeholders from around the world about the topic we are discussing this evening.

What stood out to me the most was that all of the witnesses projected the same unfortunate reality that the world is at risk of famine in the coming months. Some people may be wondering what Canada can do about this. Let us be clear. Canada should be a global leader in producing and exporting food and easing any global food shortages. However, our country is struggling to get many of its products out to the global market.

Whether because of failed trade agreements, lack of processing capacity or even the labour shortage, our country is behind where it should be. It should be one of the world's food production powerhouses. Today's debate seeks to shed light on the problem, which begins of course with the war in Ukraine, but also with many other global tragedies.

Let us be honest: The government is contributing to the failures we are seeing today. Many of the problems we are seeing have been amplified by the current government. I would like to begin by discussing one of the problems that, in my opinion, strongly affects farmers, in other words the tariffs that Canada has imposed on Russian fertilizer. This financial burden is being borne by farmers and, once again, no relief has been provided to them. Worse, Canada is the only G7 country to impose such a tariff on Russian fertilizer, and it is our Canadian farmers who are paying the price and being punished.

We have proposed solutions. We asked the Liberal government to grant an exemption from the surcharge for fertilizer purchased before March 2, before Russia invaded Ukraine. The Liberals said no. We then asked them if they would compensate the farmers who have had to pay an exorbitant price for these tariffs. Again, the Liberals said no.

At a time when the world is facing an imminent threat of food insecurity, we are asking Canadian farmers to produce more. However, they are dealing with other policies that could limit their production, such as reducing fertilizer use and gas taxes.

The cost of inputs, such as crop protection products and fertilizers, recently increased dramatically, further reducing our farmers' already razor-thin margins. Ultimately, farmers are price takers and cannot recoup additional costs, unlike many other businesses. These crop inputs are some of the highest expenses for grain growers. They are used as efficiently as possible, but their use should not be limited by a government policy.

Canada can be part of the solution, but crops do not grow overnight. We therefore need to ensure that our farmers have the means to increase yields and production to help meet global food shortages.

The Conservatives have also proposed other solutions, such as Bill C-234. The problem could be fixed by exempting fuel for farms, lifting tariffs on fertilizer, cutting red tape, and ensuring reliable and accessible shipping and access to labour.

Many things are beyond our control, whether it is the weather or the geopolitical ramifications, but there is much the government can do and must do immediately to ensure that our farmers are equipped to help feed the world.

In conclusion, through the Chair, I would like to address the NDP-Liberal government and say that Canada must do better. We need a plan, a concrete plan, that will provide solutions for the short, medium and long terms to help not only feed the world, but to feed us Canadians.

• (2145)

Tough times lie ahead, and we need a leader who will bring Canadians together, finally cut through the red tape and make the decisions necessary for our country to prosper.

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Madam Chair, I sometimes have the pleasure of working with my hon. colleague from Beauce, and I thank him for his comments. Once again, we agree on the broad strokes, with several nuances. Protecting our agriculture without harming it is what matters most. Above all, we must protect the sectors that are working well.

I will repeat my question from earlier, and I expect a positive answer. Does my colleague believe that our supply management system, which works extremely well but has been undermined by the latest trade agreements, should be protected in the future?

**Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC):** Madam Chair, members will know that I will always agree with protecting supply management because the pandemic proved how important this system is. I believe that all my Conservative Party colleagues also support the supply management system.

### Government Orders

[English]

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Madam Chair, what is really concerning is that we are dealing with an unprecedented situation where hunger and famine are being used as tools of war. It is really important for Parliament to be looking beyond our own backyard and how we might benefit.

I have lots of farmers in my region who could help, but we are dealing with a much larger international crisis, with Russian disinformation and war crimes. I am asking my colleagues about their willingness to put a larger frame on this. How are we going to deal with this in an age of destabilization, with the failure of globalization and the fact that the modern norms we have trusted in the international community are not helping us deal with a war criminal like Putin?

We need to have a broader, bigger picture. I am asking my colleague if can he articulate where he sees this going in an age of growing instability.

• (2150)

[Translation]

**Mr. Richard Lehoux:** Madam Chair, I think that with what is happening to us right now and what is happening around the world, we all need to brainstorm together. That is why, in my conclusion, I asked for a plan for the short, medium and long terms for the development of our agriculture. I think that our country has to be self-sufficient in terms of feeding ourselves. I also think that if Canada is capable of producing more, then it is capable of sharing with the entire world and the people who need it the most, while helping them adopt these same farming practices.

[English]

**Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC):** Madam Chair, I want to echo the comments of my Bloc colleague. I too enjoy working with the member for Beauce and I want to acknowledge that his mastery of the English language is surpassing my mastery of his mother tongue.

This past week, a number of us met with representatives from the Atlantic Grains Council, Quebec grain growers and Ontario grain growers. They supplied us with a lot of information. Some of that information basically acknowledges that grain markets for corn, wheat and soybeans are up over 200%.

*Government Orders*

Given the cost of inputs, which we have talked about today, particularly fertilizer, I am going to cite a few statistics. Anhydrous ammonia is up 504%. Those of us who use it know what it means. These quotes are since June 1, 2000. UAN 28% is up 439%. Diammonium phosphate, DAP for short, is up 304%. Urea is up 297%. These are costs of fertilizer inputs, on top of the carbon tax on our fuel being up and crop protection products being up. This inflation in the cost of food is driving farm input costs. Our futures markets for grain, which are predicting the future cost of food, are also up.

Is this not one of the driving forces that many parts of the world are experiencing in their food insecurity as the cost of food rises?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Richard Lehoux:** Madam Chair, I really appreciate the work that my colleague does with me at the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

Indeed, we have been hearing for weeks that prices have skyrocketed internationally. Canada should at least be able to avoid being outmatched by overtaxing itself.

I think it is deplorable that Canada is currently the only G7 country imposing this surcharge on fertilizers. We know that the Americans are buying fertilizer elsewhere and have little concern for this surcharge.

[*English*]

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Madam Chair, as always, it is an honour to be able to enter into debate in this place, and it takes particular relevance as we address such significant issues as global food insecurity and the role that Canada can play in solving some of these world problems.

I would like to start by sharing a few very startling facts for those who might be watching this debate. There are 181 million people globally who are at a crisis point, in terms of being food-insecure. These are people who are going hungry.

In 2021, we learned that food insecurity increased globally by 20%. In 2021, there was a 20% increase.

People are dying from food insecurity at a rate of more than one person every minute. That certainly is a number that should shock everyone who sees this.

Further to that, there are effects of this at home, in terms of the fact that Canadians are going hungry. There are some recent reports out that suggest that a growing number, up to a quarter of Canadians, cannot afford to buy food and are facing a level of food insecurity here at home.

In a very short period of time, I hope to be able to address a number of the challenges and aspects of what needs to be done. I would start by first acknowledging, as I have asked a number of questions, that food security and energy security are very tightly linked. It is absolutely essential. I know that there are some who would suggest that we can simply have this magical transition away from things like traditional oil and gas. The reality is that if we are not very careful, that will increase food insecurity at what could be an exponential rate. A very clear example, for all of the farmers who I represent

and for me, being a fifth-generation farmer on our family farm, is granular fertilizer. It is made from natural gas. Energy and food security both are so tightly linked, and that has to be acknowledged in this debate.

My second point is this: we have to allow Canadians to lead, to innovate and to be able to afford to lead the world in solutions that can address issues such as increasing yields here at home and ensuring that our technology, our strategies and our practices can be exported around the world.

I would note, as my third point, the diversion of food commodities into energy. There is a troubling trend there. There is the reality that foodstuffs like wheat, corn and canola are being diverted into things like biofuels and ethanol. We have to be very aware that this could lead to individuals going hungry.

Number four concerns global supply chains. We have to acknowledge the reality of global supply chains, and the role that Canada can and should play in ensuring that we have strong global supply chains. That includes things such as having strong trading relationships, protecting supply chains, such as in the Black Sea, for example, and being able to get Ukrainian goods to market. There is wheat in Ukraine, as I have mentioned before, but it has to be able to get to market.

Five, we have to address the geopolitical reality that exists in the world and stand up to Putin and the Russian regime and the aggression that they have taken, and also address the fact that there are a whole host of geopolitical realities we are facing that are contributing to concerns surrounding global food security.

I would note that there are some issues that can be very clearly addressed. A Liberal member recently introduced a bill to ban glyphosate. It is absurd. I certainly look forward to talking more extensively about that.

We have heard members of my party talk about the carbon tax, fertilizer reduction mandates, the cost of fertilizer and the tariffs on pre-March 2 purchases, and costs in general.

My father told me here today that he filled up our Peterbilt, which is a B-train. It cost more than \$1,500 after a day of work.

• (2155)

The fact is that we have solutions to many of the challenges that we face in terms of a higher-yield, drought-resistant crop, including incredible science in the sense of gene editing—

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** We will have to continue with questions and comments, beginning with questions and comments from the hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Madam Chair, I thank my colleague for his speech. I generally appreciate substantive ideas. That is more or less the case every time with my Conservative colleagues.

I would like my colleague to tell us about the rational use of pesticides or fertilizers because he gave a specific example.

I believe that we should not go overboard, but should use the right product at the right time, in the right place and especially at the right rate. We must use them in a measured way.

No doubt I got the wrong impression from his speech, but it sometimes seems like there is a lack of nuance. I would really like my colleague to clarify his ideas on that subject. I think that I have a good understanding of the four Rs.

[*English*]

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Madam Chair, I am happy to address that. Let us trust those professionals who understand the products, the techniques and the practices that allow Canadians and Canadian farmers to produce the best-quality products in the world.

When it comes to things like glyphosate, let us not get into what it replaced. For so many of the challenges when it comes to some of the very misleading headlines about glyphosate in some food products, the solution is really simple, and it is best practices. We do not need the heavy hand of government, especially when it comes from uninformed activists, telling farmers what they should or should not do when they are already the best in the world at growing the crops that the world needs more of right now.

● (2200)

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Chair, the member is from Alberta, as I am. Of course, we have an enormous population of Ukrainians who settled in the prairies and helped build our province. I think we are all very thankful for, and proud of, the contributions that Ukrainian Canadians have made to our country, and I wonder if the member is hearing from his Ukrainian constituents about how we should be providing more support to Ukraine and whether we are doing enough.

I just heard from the Ukrainian Canadian Congress that Canada is 17th in contributions to Ukraine at a time when we know that there are more Ukrainians in Canada than anywhere else in the world outside of Ukraine. I wonder what the member has heard from his constituents. I wonder if he would like to see us contribute more, and if he believes that a larger proportion of ODA spent on humanitarian aid would be useful for Ukraine at this time.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Madam Chair, I am proud to represent many individuals, families and communities of Ukrainian descent, and I have been absolutely proud to attend things like fundraisers and whatnot to assist with the effort, whether it is resettling refugees or supporting, in every way possible, the people of Ukraine.

There is a lot that needs to be done, such as food aid; ensuring that Ukraine has the required military support; ensuring that there is energy security; ensuring logistical support so that the crop that was harvested last year, much of which still remains in Ukraine today,

can actually get to market; ensuring that we are working with partners in the region, like Romania, to get the crop out of the Constanța port; ensuring that we do everything we can in the Black Sea and other areas to get their products to market; and as well ensuring that we are there to give support when it comes to the challenges of what will be, according to the information we are getting, a very challenging year, with many crops not having the chance to be seeded.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Chair, I totally agree that the climate crisis and the food crisis are connected, but not in the way that I think my friend believes.

The more we ignore the urgency of the climate crisis and the more we perpetuate some role in our future for the use of fossil fuels, the more we exacerbate a growing climate crisis that drives increasing drought. It means that the U.S. prairies and Canadian prairies will face drought. South Saharan Africa will face drought. This drives more food insecurity and drives more geopolitical instability, which drives more migration.

We have to find solutions that work for all the crises we face and drive for solutions that work for them all at once. We cannot pick one over the other.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Madam Chair, I am proud that Canadian agriculture will be part of the solution, including to the many environmental challenges we face. I am proud to be involved in a family farm in a region of the world called the Palliser Triangle. It was about a hundred years ago that they said it was not deemed fit for human habitation, yet many farmers are able to successfully farm there today and have productive farms.

I would simply conclude by saying that I think my dad is watching, so I wish him a happy Father's Day.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.):** Madam Chair, I will be sharing my time with the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

It is an honour to rise in this House on this subject. Many people might be asking why a member of Parliament from Vancouver is speaking about an issue that in many cases is focused on farming and on challenges facing many of our farmers, as we think about global food security and insecurity. It is because food security is not an issue just for rural Canada, but it is for all Canadians.

I want to begin by thanking the member for Battle River—Crowfoot and his family for the work they do in ensuring Canadians have food on their tables. It is an important part of making sure we all appreciate and recognize the efforts that families are making.

In my riding of Vancouver Granville, there are companies like Terramera that are doing innovative work and making it possible for us to do better at using technology to increase agricultural supply and to improve the way in which we grow in an environmentally sustainable way. It is important for us to remember that innovation is a big part of how we are going to be able to get through this together.

### *Government Orders*

However, the reality we face today is that, thanks to Vladimir Putin's illegal war in Ukraine, one of the world's greatest grain suppliers is in crisis. The world is looking to Canada, as we have heard, to step up, and we will.

Our world-class agriculture and agri-food industry is a major driver of food security in over 200 countries around the world. Last year, despite the challenges of the pandemic, our agri-food exports topped \$82 billion in 204 countries and territories. We are committed to ensuring farmers have the tools and the supports they need to keep their businesses strong, so they can feed Canadians and the world.

Right now, we all know Canadian farmers are facing higher costs and shortages for their inputs. Whether it is fertilizer or fuel, due to the disruption of supply chains caused by the conflict in Ukraine, farmers are hurting. We know that fertilizer is vital to Canadian farmers to grow their crops and help feed the world. We are working with government and industry partners to ensure that farmers have access to fertilizer for Canada to do its part during this time of global food insecurity.

For starters, we changed the advance payments program, allowing producers to receive 100% of their cash advances immediately when they apply rather than in two instalments. This program will offer farmers low-interest loans to help cover their seeding costs in the spring. We have also extended the deadline for the AgriStability program to help more farmers manage the severe challenges they are facing. This program will help farmers cover significant drops in farm income.

As well as being a leading food producer, Canada is also the world's largest producer and exporter of potash fertilizer. On Monday, our government announced significant support for the new sustainable potash mine to be developed by BHP in Jansen, Saskatchewan. Our support of this innovative project is a long-term investment in global food security and environmental sustainability. We are glad to support these efforts to minimize the carbon footprint of the potash mine and to implement technology to further reduce emissions from mine operations, because this will be the world's greenest potash mine.

Our investment will help to ensure Canada's position as a leading exporter of potash is maintained and will help strengthen food security. The demand for potash will continue to grow due to a need to increase crop yields to feed a growing global population.

To ensure the long-term viability of our agriculture sector, we will keep making record investments to help Canadian farmers build on the great work they are already doing for all of us. We will do whatever it takes to ensure Canadian farmers have access to the resources and tools they need to ensure a stable food supply for Canadians and for the rest of the world.

Throughout the pandemic, we introduced a number of measures to help ensure the supply chain worked as effectively as possible, including support for farmers and food processors to invest in safety protocols to keep their farms and plants running. The COVID-19 crisis reinforced Canada's reputation as a reliable supplier of high-quality agriculture and food products around the world. As a nation

that exports much more food than we import, we showed how vital we are in helping our trading partners feed their populations.

To maximize our trade opportunities, we have been working hard to diversify our trade through agreements with key trading partners, including the EU, North America and the countries of the trans-Pacific, with 15 trade agreements covering 51 countries giving Canadian farmers a competitive edge in over 60% of the global economy.

We are going to keep advocating for farmers and advocating free trade that is open and based on rules. We are going to continue to work with the WTO and our G20 partners as well as our North American colleagues to maximize our opportunities under the existing agreement while exploring new alliances.

The best way to strengthen global food security is to support the hard-working men and women who produce our food, and that is exactly what we are going to do.

• (2205)

**Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Madam Chair, I want to ask my colleague about the potash mine in Saskatchewan. It is an international company that has already committed \$7.5 billion to build, but suddenly there is a \$100-million little sweetener at the last minute from the federal government. This is for something that should be progressing along those lines anyway. It is a new way of doing business, according to the Minister of Innovation.

Could the member comment on that? Is that not just a bond for the company that the government will not change the rules and the company find it had wasted \$7.5 billion going forward?

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** Madam Chair, one of the things that it is important for us to do, as a government, is to ensure that we are making investments with partners to ensure that the work that is being done on mines like this one is done in a way that protects the environment and natural resources, and ensures that we are leading when it comes to ensuring that our food security and food stability, and the production of potash, is done in a way that is environmentally sustainable and protects our planet.

That is the way of the future. We cannot do the things we have done in the past. We need to use innovation. We need to make those investments to ensure that companies such as BHP do the work that is required to do things in a sustainable manner to protect our environment and our environmental infrastructure.

*Government Orders*

• (2210)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ):** Madam Chair, there are already concerns about the number of countries living with food insecurity or even famine. There are 44 countries at risk, which is 20% of all the countries in the world. That is what is going on right now.

I always wonder why grain is part of the marketplace. I would think it should be a right, but that is all I will say, since I do not want to get scolded by my economist friends on the way out of the House.

We need to be thinking ahead to next year. Farmers who cannot sow this year will not be able to grow grain next year. If there is no grain this year, there will be even less next year, since there will be none at all. This means that next year, more than 20% of the countries in the world might need help. It could be 40%. How do we respond to that?

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** My colleague is right, Madam Chair. This is a problem, not only for today, but also for tomorrow and next year. We will have to work with our international partners to fix this problem.

We must continue to support Ukraine in this war. We must also continue to work together to help Canadian farmers produce the essential foods that our country and the world need.

[*English*]

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Madam Chair, I am really concerned that we are not looking at the larger issues here, the fact that we are dealing with war crimes being pushed by Putin. We are dealing with destabilization.

What is the plan to actually put in a new world order, a new understanding of the world in an age of destabilization? Where are we going, given the crimes that we are watching in Ukraine, the destabilization, the break-up of supply chains and the climate change? Canada needs to have a whole new vision.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** Madam Chair, I agree with the hon. member. It is important for us to recognize what we are facing with the invasion of Ukraine. What we have seen in other parts of the world is an increase in the rise of what I would call authoritarianism and a move away from the world order where we respect human rights and where we respect pluralism. We have really turned away from the values that have made this world work in the way that it has in the past.

The opportunity for Canada is to lean into what we do best, which is to export our values of pluralism, of inclusivity, of working together, of innovation, of respecting diversity and respecting one another to solve problems. The way that we battle misinformation and disinformation is by coming out with reasons for people to feel good about things and by actually showing that there is strength in solving problems together. It is not a zero-sum game. We can all do better.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Chair, I want to start by thanking the hon. member for Vancouver Granville for sharing his time with me.

I recognize that we stand on the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

This debate has been encouraging in that we recognize that there is a looming food crisis and food instability globally, but also dispiriting in that we seem to think we can bite off little chunks of it as an incremental set of issues within one silo called “food”. We are, in fact, facing multiple crises that influence each other and must be dealt with together.

I just pulled some clippings I have. I remember when the pandemic was first getting up and running and I flipped this article I found in *The Guardian* to the person who was then our Minister of International Development. She was also on it, saying she was getting to the World Food Programme. The article is from *The Guardian*, April 2020, and the headline is “Coronavirus pandemic ‘will cause famine of biblical proportions’”. It quoted at length from David Beasley of the World Food Programme. That is where we started from: the pandemic causing huge risk of global food insecurity.

Then, of course, the climate crisis made all those issues worse, as it has from the beginning. I mean, the Arab Spring was caused by the geopolitical instability that created the wars in Syria and Libya. That came from prolonged drought, which meant that there were food breakdowns. There was a food insecurity crisis, and it created war. Now we have climate change galloping and galloping, and persistent droughts. Just this last season, we saw droughts in sub-Saharan Africa, droughts through the U.S. prairies, droughts through the Canadian prairies, and now we have an overlay of war.

I want to stop for a moment and say something about David Beasley, because I think it is really interesting. I got to know him through the U.S. presidential prayer breakfast. He is a Republican. He is a former Republican governor from the state of South Carolina. He lost his seat as governor of the state of South Carolina when he changed his position on the question of whether the Confederate flag should fly above the capitol. When he took down the Confederate flag, he lost his seat. As I may have mentioned, as a very dedicated Christian, he has put his talents where they are of most use, that being as the head of the UN World Food Programme. He knows what he is doing.

It is urgent that we save lives, and we do not save lives through dribs and drabs. Canada must commit at least the \$600 billion that the World Food Programme says we need.

However, I will turn to another source right now. The question is, how do we, as humanity or as politicians, deal with more than one scary thing at a time? Are we capable of doing it? The word I want to use is “polycrisis”. It comes from Professor Thomas Homer-Dixon, who now runs a program called Cascade Institute in collaboration with scientists around the world. I just want to read something from the Cascade Institute website, because I think it helps us:

### *Government Orders*

Humanity faces an array of grave, long-term challenges, now often labeled “global systemic risks.” They include climate change, biodiversity loss, pandemics, widening economic inequalities, financial system instability, ideological extremism, pernicious social impacts of digitalization [such as cyber-attacks], mounting social and political unrest, large-scale forced migrations, and an escalating danger of nuclear war. Compared to humanity’s situation even two decades ago, most of these risks appear to be increasing in severity and at a faster rate...

With one minute left, how do we address polycrises? I suggest that we do not address them as if it is normal business. It is not status quo. This requires that when the G7 meets later this month, when NATO meets, or whenever world governments meet together, they stop thinking that we are going to get out of this with incremental in-the-box thinking. We have to get way out of our boxes. We have to treat the global food insecurity crisis as an emergency and try to save tens of millions of lives while we can. We have to address it as part of the attack on Ukraine and defend Ukraine, but also ask Ukraine to take the mines out of the harbour in Odessa and tell Russia to take away its blockades because grain must move across borders.

We have to treat this as a geopolitical emergency and as a crisis of the human family. We can only do it all together.

• (2215)

**Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC):** Madam Chair, when it comes to food production, what should be addressed first, global carbon emissions or global water quality and quantity, to increase food production in the world?

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Madam Chair, I often find that my friend from Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa is more aware of what happens on the land in the place where he is rooted than on that of other members. We cannot separate them. The global warming crisis, the climate emergency, drives the water crisis. They are inextricably linked.

We have to set a date and start moving away from fossil fuels. It will be hard. It was hard for Quebec to shut down the asbestos industry, but if we do not plan to shut down the fossil fuel industry in the near term, we will not be able to protect our water, we will not be able to preserve the possibility that farmers can plant crops that have a chance of surviving and we will create mega-droughts.

• (2220)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Chair, I thank my friend from Saanich—Gulf Islands for her speech. As I have already told the House, I think it is deplorable that some members do not have as much speaking time as others just because they represent a party with fewer than 12 seats in the House. After all, the voice of the people they represent is just as legitimate and important.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations notes that war and climate change are the main causes of food insecurity around the world. I would like my colleague to tell us more about climate change as a cause of food insecurity.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Madam Chair, my dear friend from Joliette is right. The food crisis and the climate change crisis go hand in hand. The climate change crisis is urgent. It amplifies other threats, such as war and agricultural production problems. We are in the

midst of a full-blown global crisis. We have to deal with it, and it is not easy.

[*English*]

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.):** Madam Chair, I want to thank my friend from Saanich—Gulf Islands for making the incredibly crucial link that all of this is interconnected, whether it is climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic or the conflicts around the world, not just what is happening in Ukraine. The fact is that all of these things are creating a perfect storm that is leading not just to this incredible food crisis, but to a crisis in democracy and a crisis that is having an unbelievable impact on the people of the world. I wonder if she could elaborate on that.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Madam Chair, I really appreciate the question from my hon. friend from Ottawa West—Nepean.

These are not separate crises. If we look at the role Putin has played in undermining our own democracy, the Russian government has been using disinformation websites for quite some time to undermine democracies by provoking a whole series of false narratives. Donald Trump was a puppet of Vladimir Putin, disrupting democracies in the western world, increasing incivility in the way we deal with each other and increasing the risk of white supremacy, which is an example of something that threatens our democracy.

We cannot take these things as separate and siloed. We need to defend democracy and attack autocracies and fascist states. In doing that, we need to be conscious of the fact, to be biblical like David Beasley might want me to be, that we cannot serve God and Mammon at the same time. We have to identify the enemy, and the enemy is multinational corporations that seek to profit from every one of these crises.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Madam Chair, I would like to continue along the same lines. The food crisis is directly linked to the climate crisis. It began before the COVID-19 pandemic, although that amplified it. It also began before the war. As a country, it is imperative that we set meaningful targets and find ways to begin a real energy transition. That means Canada has to stop approving projects like Bay du Nord, which made absolutely no sense.

Let us think of the droughts in western Canada last year, or the flooding and the fires they had in British Columbia. These were all major disasters. Things do not appear to be as bad this year, but we certainly have had excess water in Quebec. We have had far too much rainfall, an abnormal amount, I would say. Farmers cannot even dry their hay, because sooner or later a cloud comes along and it rains for 15 minutes. That is enough to spoil the whole process. The climate is unstable.



*Government Orders*

A while ago, we had very high winds. The Lanaudière farmers' union actually told me it is asking the Government of Quebec for a support program for maple syrup plantations. The damage was extremely severe, and there is concern for the safety of the landowners, who will be cleaning up all those precariously fallen trees themselves. Maple syrup plantations take more than just a couple of years to turn a profit. It is more like 20, 30 or 40 years. That is the reality. It has begun. The longer we wait to take real action, the worse it will get.

Food insecurity is happening here because of COVID-19, the housing crisis, and rising interest rates, with inflation playing a role. People who paid too much for their homes are up to their eyeballs in debt. Some unpleasant stories will play out in the months to come. A crisis response team was put together in my riding in anticipation of the housing crisis this coming July 1, because housing is too expensive. When people pay a greater portion of their income for housing, where else can they cut spending but on groceries? People eat noodles more often, and they eat less. I hear people talk about this every week.

Just this morning, someone told me that they receive old age security and that this government is stubbornly refusing to increase it. I will digress here because I talk about this subject every chance I get. This creates food insecurity. We need to be vigilant.

I want to appeal to all members to recognize the importance of maintaining our social safety net. That is why the Bloc Québécois rises so often to protect our jurisdictions. People can say what they want, but the social safety net in Quebec is more effective than elsewhere. This means that we need our health transfers as well as an increase in old age security and the guaranteed income supplement. We have proposed easy solutions. We must ensure that we redistribute wealth equitably.

Let us now talk about the global food crisis and the war in Ukraine. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, or FAO, 44 countries will need aid this year, and 53 countries will face food insecurity in one form or another. Those are big numbers. This appalling war is being carried out in such a way as to create food insecurity. It becomes clearer the more we analyze it. We are working on this issue at the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, which received Ukrainian elected officials. I have to confess that I found this extremely difficult. I would like to tip my hat to these people, who are standing guard and are showing exemplary courage.

In this war, Russia is targeting infrastructure and deliberately blocking ports. The Ukrainians are unable to export last year's crops. This year's crops are growing, but there is nowhere to store them. It is a serious problem. We absolutely need to create a safe corridor to ensure the export of grain out of Ukraine, not just for us, but for the entire world.

• (2225)

We have to think about food insecurity. As long as there is hunger, there will be no peace. There have already been several coups in African countries recently. This will create a lot of political instability.

I hope I am wrong, but the implications of the war in Ukraine are much greater than currently projected. At some point, someone is going to have to make a move. Exporting this grain is of capital importance.

I think that Canada is capable of helping with respect to temporary storage infrastructure, obviously located outside the combat zones so that it too is not targeted. To save the crops, they need to be moved.

Canada can also increase its contribution to the UN World Food Programme, as was mentioned earlier. It is important. The Oxfam representatives who testified at committee told us that Canada's international food aid contribution right now is half of what it was a few years ago. That is due to inflation, and we need to adjust it. We can afford to do that, and we have no right to refuse. That is something meaningful we can do.

We need to provide constructive international aid. A few weeks ago, I was in Ghana. I visited the main FAO offices for Africa, which are located in Accra. People were telling me that only 8% of international aid goes to improving agriculture because most international aid is geared to generate specific demands. A somewhat exaggerated example is that a tractor may be provided, but there is a requirement that the parts be purchased from the supplier. We need to invest in the long term, in infrastructure, while respecting local cultures. We could develop food autonomy.

I am sure it will come as no surprise when I say I am going to talk about supply management again. It is another option, something we could do that works well here. It needs to be protected, and we must stop selling it out bit by bit in the international agreements we sign. We should export the model. African countries are being flooded with cheap food surpluses from developed countries, hindering the development of local production. We should organize local farmers. In many African countries, women do the farming, but they have no bargaining power or market organization. This kind of thing costs nothing. We have the know-how, so I think we have a duty to go there.

I now want to talk about what needs to be done in this country. We must ensure that we are self-sufficient when it comes to food. I was happy to hear a lot of speeches about how we need to make life easier for our farmers. Charity begins at home. We need to give to others, but we must first ensure that we are protected. We must protect supply management.

We must not implement unnecessary restrictions, such as labelling trans fats on ground beef. It makes absolutely no sense. Ground beef is a whole food; people know what they are buying.

Taxing pollution is a good thing, but there is no point taxing grain drying, because there is no alternative and it only ends up increasing the cost of food.

*Government Orders*

We need to stay focused and be smart about what we are doing. We need to support our agricultural producers' environmental innovations. When they do something to protect the environment, that is worth money. We pay them money; we ensure that the money is at their disposal for the next innovation. We need to trust our farmers. They will not disappoint us.

We need to listen to our people. This morning I shared with the minister a letter from the UPA dated May 18, asking for emergency support because of the skyrocketing increase in input production costs. Costs have gone up by 50% compared to the consumer price index, which is around 5%. Farmers need meaningful help. Farm debt is extremely high. These farmers are currently burning through all of their cash. In a few months, we are going to start seeing businesses close down and disappear. Is that what we want? Obviously the answer is no, so we need to do something about it.

● (2230)

**Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC):** Madam Chair, I congratulate my colleague on his excellent speech. He talked about support for getting grain out of Ukraine at this time. If we want to see short-term results, we have to look at that. Does my colleague have a sense of what the government has done?

Last week, when Ukraine's agriculture minister was with us, she said she needs urgent help clearing mines from fields. The fields were seeded this spring, but there will be no harvest this fall because farmers are too afraid of setting off mines to go into their fields. Has my colleague heard anything from the government about plans to do anything about that? Everybody is desperate.

● (2235)

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Madam Chair, I thank my esteemed colleague from Beauce.

Like him, I hear good intentions and lip service. It is all well and good to establish principles of action in the early days, but at some point we need to take action.

I think we are in a position to provide demining equipment, for example. We can do that and we must do it quickly. We can also do it with drones, I believe, without putting human life at risk. That is very important.

When Ukrainian farmers return to the fields, we want them to be harvesting crops, not bombs.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Chair, I am sorry, but it is hard for me to speak in French because it is so late.

[*English*]

I really enjoyed it when my colleague talked about what good development principles are. We know that we have the principles of sustainable development effectiveness. He talked about what we can do with the FAO and with other organizations to deal with the global food crisis in a holistic manner or how to deal with it in an unsiloed manner, as my colleague from the Green Party has mentioned.

The sustainable development goals are something that the government has signed onto, and the 17 goals work together to build a

more sustainable, more prosperous future. I wonder if the member could comment on the sustainable development goals and how multilateral institutions such as the FAO and the United Nations could contribute to these global solutions we will require.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Madam Chair, I sincerely thank my colleague for her very interesting question.

That was indeed the basis of my speech. We cannot talk about the food crisis without talking about the environmental crisis. They are both intertwined, and any development needs to be done with sustainability in mind.

The thing that gets me down the most in life is the pace at which politicians move. I was taught about sustainable development at university in the 1990s. It is still not being done. The government is still approving worthless things like Bay du Nord. It is mind-boggling. Everything we do counts.

When my colleague talks about multilateralism, we also need to set an example internationally, because there are other countries that do not want to budge and are entrenched in a dynamic of oil production or other polluting things.

On the international stage, one needs to have credibility in order to have influence. That is the challenge. Unfortunately, I am not so sure that Canada has a lot of credibility in this area right now.

[*English*]

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.):** Madam Chair, I want to compliment my hon. colleague for talking about the demining that is needed in Ukraine. I wonder if he is aware that Canada has provided over \$450 million in the last two decades to demining. I also wonder if he is aware of the importance of the assistance we are also providing to Ukraine and the fact that, through DND, we have tremendous expertise in this regard.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Madam Chair, that is precisely why my colleague from Beauce and I were talking about this. We know we can do it. That is why we are saying we need to make an extra effort and get going on this. We need to do it intelligently and in consultation with other countries, of course, but we have to be at the table.

Canada does not have the military power to decide tomorrow morning to open the grain export corridor. It will have to be done jointly, with the UN. However, we can carry out this other kind of operation ourselves. I think we need to focus on humanitarian aid and charter flights. The Bloc Québécois spent endless weeks calling for charter flights to get Ukrainian refugees out. We finally got three, but it took a very long time. Can more be arranged?

People are still waiting, and this could take some pressure off people who are undernourished. We have to think about the refugees. Those who can cross a border, for example into Poland, are relatively better off because they are in some way registered. However, Ukrainians were telling us about refugees inside Ukraine, and it is like they are stuck in a land that does not exist. They are desperate. Many are women and children who have to trust strangers. I leave it to my colleagues to guess what this kind of situation can lead to. There is a huge amount of work to be done.

• (2240)

**Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Madam Chair, last year, we spoke with the German ambassador and were told that an energy crisis in Europe was imminent. It has arrived.

Now we are seeing that the global south, in particular, will experience a food crisis. What will we do? Does Canada have a solution to improve the situation we will be facing next year?

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Madam Chair, I thank my colleague for his question and for asking it in French. He made a good effort, and I congratulate him.

I understand the question. He is telling me that there is a food crisis, that there will be an energy crisis and that we must do something. We have a certain level of production at present, but we are not going to build pipelines to fix things in 10 years' time. It is happening now.

The food crisis is linked to the climate crisis, and droughts and floods are occurring right now. We must act now. I am not saying that we must shut down everything today, but we must start the transition.

Massive amounts of money are being invested, including in the Bay du Nord project. However, I believe we should invest this money in the energy transition, because there are other sources of energy. We must be forward-thinking and innovative.

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ):** Madam Chair, before he started his speech I told my colleague that he would be the cherry on top of the sundae. He said that he might just be the sundae. He is both the cherry and the sundae. The teacher in me is irrationally happy to hear him talk about passing on knowledge and about sharing Canada's success stories, especially when it comes to supply management. At the same time, he also reminds us not to re-

peat the mistakes of the past, and the historian part of me loves that as well.

I would like to hear my colleague talk about the mistakes we should not repeat and the success stories from Quebec and Canada that deserve to be better known.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Madam Chair, the “sundae with the cherry on top” would love to answer that question. I will not address the other things my colleague said because it could become a bit of a slippery slope.

She asked me to talk about our success stories. Every chance I get, I talk about supply management. A great example is the COVID-19 crisis. Some milk was thrown away at first, but that was a very temporary situation. Farmers adjusted very quickly. They had much less difficulty than other producers, overall, because the quantity and the price are controlled. That is how you control quality.

However, in order to succeed and continue to manage this system, we have to continue to control imports. If too many foreign products start coming into the country, if our local farmers decide to reduce the quantity they produce, if products continue to come in by the truckload from abroad, the system will no longer work.

As for not repeating the mistakes of the past, we should never again give away a single share of the supply management market. We should promote it abroad, especially in African countries, where I think it would work really well. We should protect it with the Bill C-282, a fine bill. Do not forget the number, it is going to make an impact.

[*English*]

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** It being 10:44 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 53.1, the committee will rise and I will leave the chair.

(Government Business No. 18 reported)

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 10:45 p.m.)



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