



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

House of Commons Debates

Official Report
(Hansard)

Volume 151 No. 104
Wednesday, September 28, 2022

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, September 28, 2022

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, the hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay will lead us in the singing of the national anthem.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

HURRICANE FIONA

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, as we know, our friends, our colleagues and, as in my case, being a Cape Bretoner, our families are recovering from hurricane Fiona.

We know that five Canadian provinces were walloped with one storm. Now that is a record. We also know that as we show, speak to and, in an emergency debate, declare our solidarity with the people of Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Quebec that we do so with a commitment that this is not just a story of the moment. As what happened to my colleagues and friends in interior B.C. from Lytton to Spences Bridge into Vancouver and Abbotsford, we must not turn the page when the story is over. We must stay with them until their lives are restored.

May hurricane Fiona confirm our commitment to resilience in communities and to fighting against the climate crisis.

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BRITISH HOME CHILD DAY

Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the fifth British Home Child Day in Canada.

From 1869 to 1948, over 100,000 British children were sent to Canada from Great Britain. Some of the children were orphans, but most were from destitute families or from families who had fallen on very difficult times due to sickness or death. Some of the children were even sent to Canada without their parents' consent.

The children sent to Canada often found themselves in indentured servitude on farms or as domestic labourers. Many home children were very poorly treated and many faced cruel abuse. Many home children would go on to make significant contributions to Canada, including serving in our armed forces and fighting for freedom around the world.

Today, it is thought that more than 10% of the Canadian population may be descended from British home children. That would mean that about four million Canadians today are descendants of the British home children. Today, I hope that we reflect on and commemorate the British home children, what they lived through and endured, and the contributions that they and their descendants have made to Canada.

* * *

CONSTITUTION OF SLOVAKIA

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 30 years ago the Constitution of the Slovak Republic was adopted.

In three short decades Slovakia has emerged from the shadow of forced communism as a vibrant, thriving democracy with a strong economy and a very bright future. Slovakia also borders Ukraine and has recently provided tremendous support for refugees and taken a strong stand against tyranny and oppression.

For these reasons and because of the vibrant Slovak diaspora community in Canada, it is vitally important for Canada to have strong ties between our nations. I acknowledge and support the government's recent announcement of expansion to a full embassy in Slovakia.

As a Canadian with Slovak heritage and the chair of the Canada-Slovakia Friendship Group, I want to extend warm congratulations on this remarkable 30-year anniversary of Constitution Day in Slovakia and celebrate the strengthened ties between our nations.

Na zdravie.

*Statements by Members***HURRICANE FIONA**

Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, most Canadians have been watching the impact of a changing destructive climate, but many Atlantic Canadians are not because they do not have access to basic infrastructure.

P.E.I. was hit with the most destructive hurricane I have ever seen. In my riding of Egmont, the impact has been devastating, including the Évangéline school, farm buildings and crops, small craft harbours, fishers' gear and much more. Many Islanders are struggling right now, and it is our job to lighten that burden as quickly as possible.

Our community has been resilient in the face of this tragedy, and I am proud to say that the community has come together to face these challenges together. I would like to recognize the efforts of municipalities and not-for-profit organizations, which have worked tirelessly to support their neighbours with basic necessities, and the tireless work of our first responders and utility workers, as well as hydro crews from across Canada.

Together we are stronger, and together we will get through this.

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[*Translation*]

BRITISH HOME CHILD DAY

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, September 28 is British Home Child Day. This day is dedicated to the memory of the more than 100,000 British children brought to Canada as indentured labourers between 1869 and 1932. The British home children, as they would come to be known, were under the age of 17. Most were between the ages of seven and 14, but some were just toddlers.

These young children were sent to Canada, most of them without their parents' consent. As soon as they arrived in Canada, the British home children were sent to foster homes. Unfortunately, some of those children were abused and mistreated. Various heart-breaking stories have come to light.

Most of the children were sent to Ontario, but others went to Manitoba, the Maritimes, British Columbia and Quebec. It is estimated that there are over four million descendants of these children living in Canada today. My great-grandfather John James Rowley was one of them.

On this September 28, let us honour their memory.

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● (1410)

TERESA DELLAR PALLIATIVE CARE RESIDENCE

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Teresa Dellar Palliative Care Residence, named in honour of its founder, is a leader in providing high quality end-of-life care.

The residence, funded by the generosity of donors and supported by dedicated volunteers, occupies a unique place on the West Island of Montreal.

Teresa left a priceless and inspiring legacy. She left us far too soon, but her memory and spirit inspire us to pursue her vision of a more caring society where people's dignity is respected in their final days.

The residence's annual "run for compassion" took place last Saturday, under a beautiful blue sky, raising \$195,000 and breaking all previous fundraising records.

I want to congratulate all the participants and over 100 volunteers who gave their time, as well as Deb Elvidge, who initiated this event six years ago in memory of her father.

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[*English*]

U.S.-CANADA BORDER

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in April 2021, I asked the Liberal government what procedures were in place to ensure all Canadians, including those without Internet or phone access, have the necessary information to cross the U.S.-Canada border, request quarantine exemptions for compassionate reasons and more.

I specifically asked on behalf of constituents who are from Amish and Mennonite communities who are dual citizens and constitutionally protected to enter both countries. I would remind the government that the Amish do not have cars, telephones or computers or use the Internet, nor do they use the Canadian universal health care or education systems. However, they do pay property, education and income taxes. They do not vote during public elections.

In February, I asked the government how they were notifying all Canadians about the constantly changing and often confusing travel restrictions or requirements. The written response outlines how changes were shared on the Internet, but it does not answer how this was shared with those Canadians without Internet or television. Members of the Amish community in my riding now face over \$250,000 in fines as a community for failure to comply with these Liberal government requirements.

Do the members of the government think this is fair? If not, what are they going to do to rectify the situation?

* * *

JOHN A. YOUNG

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour the life and legacy of John A. Young, a legendary Haligonian lawyer, community builder and long-serving honorary colonel in the Halifax Rifles.

Statements by Members

John's legacy of service to our region lives on all around us, as does the memory of his prodigious intellect and sharp wit. John was among the first partners and managing partner of BoyneClarke LLP, where he helped to grow the small law firm into the fourth-largest in Atlantic Canada.

John was also a savvy political player whose passion for politics brought him here to Parliament Hill as executive assistant to the deputy prime minister, Nova Scotia's own Allan J. MacEachen. Later, he would serve as president of the Nova Scotia Liberal Party.

Over his life, John tirelessly served his country and his community on countless boards and commissions, but he and his wife Carol always held a special place in their hearts for children's camp Brigadoon Village.

John was one of my earliest supporters in political life, someone whose wise counsel I called upon often. He was a giant among us and we will miss him tremendously. I extend my deepest condolences to Carol and to all who loved him.

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100TH ANNIVERSARY OF EASTER SEALS

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Easter Seals is celebrating its centennial anniversary this year, representing 100 years of advocacy, support and service for hundreds of thousands of Canadians living with disabilities in our country.

With its head office in Don Valley West, Easter Seals is Canada's largest local provider of programs and services for the disability community. Easter Seals provides summer camps, scholarships, employment programs, accessibility services and so much more to over 46,000 Canadians each year.

Celebrations have been held coast to coast to coast marking this momentous occasion. This year, the Easter Seals executive, some of the amazing youth ambassadors and the board of directors are in Ottawa for a national 100th anniversary celebration.

I want to thank the board, the ambassadors, the staff and volunteers from all over our great country for their advocacy and for their work. I congratulate them on this significant milestone. We look forward to the next 100 years.

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CANADIAN FARMERS

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent my community of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, which is a rural farming community. Like my family, many of my constituents, friends and neighbours are farmers who work hard each and every day to feed Canada and the world. They often work on tight timelines, working against Mother Nature to bring in the harvest.

With Thanksgiving upon us, I would like to remind everyone that the food we will all be enjoying on our tables comes from the hard work of our farming families, not just from the grocery store. If we want to secure local, healthy food to eat, we need to support Canadian farm families, growers and producers. After all, "No Farms, No Food".

That is why today and every day we should all be thankful for our farmers and give them the support they need. This Thanksgiving, I urge members to take time to thank a farmer and learn from them how we can support food sovereignty in Canada.

Happy Thanksgiving to everyone in Lambton—Kent—Middlesex and beyond. I thank farmers for all they do to feed us.

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● (1415)

INTERNATIONAL SAFE ABORTION DAY

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I address this House on behalf of the Canadian Association of Parliamentarians for Population and Development.

Today, on International Safe Abortion Day, I want to recognize the tireless efforts of health care providers and community groups across Canada and globally who work to support the full spectrum of sexual and reproductive health and human rights.

Globally, 45% of abortions are unsafe. Unsafe abortion is a leading cause of maternal death and hospitalizes millions of individuals every year. Therefore, we welcome the 2022 World Health Organization's Abortion care guideline, which recommends full decriminalization and universal access to abortion and self-management options for birth control.

Canada must continue the life-saving work of increasing access to abortion care in our own country and championing the issue globally. Let us all commit to ending preventable deaths and illness from unsafe abortion worldwide.

* * *

COST OF LIVING

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our new Conservative leader will put the people first: their paycheques, their savings, their homes and their country.

People feel like they are losing control of their pocketbooks and of their lives, as the government has doubled the national debt and is driving up the cost of everything. With prices on gas, groceries and other essentials skyrocketing, many people are struggling to get by. In fact, families are now downgrading their diets, seniors are watching their life savings evaporate with inflation, and many 30-year-olds are now trapped in their parents' basements because of housing costs.

Statements by Members

These are fellow Canadian citizens. These are the people we have been sent here to serve, and they deserve much better. It is time this government got its inflationary spending under control, committed to no new taxes and gave struggling Canadians some much-needed hope.

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BRITISH HOME CHILD DAY

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, from 1896 to 1948 the British Home Child program saw over 100,000 boys and girls shipped from the United Kingdom to Canada to serve mainly as cheap labour for the families they were placed with here. While some of these children were treated well, many others were seen as no more than indentured servants and suffered horrible abuse at the hands of those who were supposed to care for them.

In spite of this, many British home children would go on to serve Canada with distinction in the Canadian Forces throughout the 20th century. It is estimated that four million Canadians are descendants of British home children, including me. My great-grandfather, Sheriff Atcheson Thompson, came to this country as a British home child in 1915, at the young age of 12.

I would like to thank people like my grandma, Carol Bateman, who continue to keep the stories of British home children alive and who continue to call upon the government to apologize for the program these children suffered under. Today, on British Home Child Day, let us pause to remember them and their legacy to our country.

* * *

JOHN YOUNG

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I rise, Nova Scotia is remembering and honouring a wonderful human being: Dartmouth's John Young.

From an early age, John understood the importance of getting involved in politics, that the power of politics was about doing good and taking care of others. After graduating law school, he spent four years working alongside Liberal cabinet minister Allan MacEachen and had what he called a "fascinating education". It was here in Ottawa that John met the love of his life, Carol. Together, this dynamic political duo helped shape politics back home in Nova Scotia for decades.

One would be hard pressed to find a current or former Liberal politician back home who has not received brilliant and caring advice from the Youngs. John had an incredible legal career, helping BoyneClarke grow from a modest little firm on Queen Street in Dartmouth into one of the largest law firms in Atlantic Canada.

John always gave more than he took, and I can tell members that John's absence is already being felt deeply in our community, and especially by Liberals across Nova Scotia. I ask all members of this House to join me in honouring John Young.

• (1420)

OVARIAN CANCER

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, gender inequality costs lives.

Tomorrow, survivors and researchers from Ovarian Cancer Canada will be on Parliament Hill as part of their awareness month. I raise my hands to their work. Ovarian cancer has historically been under-researched due to gender bias, but with strong ongoing advocacy, awareness has been raised and new research is under way, which is also unlocking insights into this highly fatal disease.

Canada has an important challenge ahead to increase survival rates; we are not keeping pace with other countries on improving outcomes. Sadly, only 44% of people diagnosed with this cancer live more than five years. The journey with ovarian cancer is difficult, and the side effects of treatment interfere significantly with quality of life.

I want everyone living with or going through ovarian cancer to know that I see them and I see how strong they are.

* * *

[*Translation*]

JOYCE ECHAQUAN

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it was two years ago today.

It has been two years since the heartbreaking death of Joyce Echaquan; two years since her shocking, yet preventable death; two years since she recorded and streamed racism in its most tragic manifestation.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I want to tell Joyce Echaquan's husband, Carol Dubé, her seven children and her loved ones that we stand with them as they gather to honour her memory in Manawan.

I want to tell all members of the Atikamekw community that we are with them, that we remember her, that we are with them in the fight against racism; against racism in all its forms, including within our institutions, as evidenced by so many accounts by first nations people.

Justice for Joyce, but also justice for all indigenous people in Quebec.

Let us continue to work together to ensure respect, dignity, security and empathy for everyone, whether Quebecker or Atikamekw, in society as well as in their relationship with the state.

* * *

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our new Conservative leader will put people first: their paycheques, their savings, their home and their country.

Trevor Neiman, director of digital economy and legal adviser of the Business Council of Canada, stated, “Immigrants often have the training, experience and qualifications to work in booming industries where Canada truly, desperately needs help, but newcomers are being denied a chance to contribute because of restrictive admission rules to these professions.” These are our doctors, nurses and engineers.

A combination of factors, such as the cost of living and recognizing core credentials and experience, is leading new immigrants to consider leaving Canada after resettling for only two years. Under our new Conservative leader, we will team up with the provinces to guarantee that within 60 days, an immigrant applying to work in their profession will get a yes or no based on their tested abilities, not based on where they came from.

Let us take action for all Canadians and remove these restrictions.

* * *

OVARIAN CANCER

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to raise awareness today of a devastating disease.

Ovarian cancer is a difficult beast, yet I have met so many inspiring Teal Sisters who have faced it. This is the most fatal cancer disease for women in Canada. It is difficult to detect and uniquely agile, with variations, mutations and migrations that can complicate treatment. While 3,100 Canadians are diagnosed each year, outcomes for patients have not improved for decades, which is why supporting research and fundraising is critical.

In 2020, my provincial government invested \$1 million in ovarian cancer research, building on our federal government's first-ever \$10-million investment in 2019. Earlier this month, I heard firsthand how that funding is supporting pioneering research at Dalhousie University.

I encourage colleagues to register for Ovarian Cancer Canada's Fall Symposium in November and learn more about the disease until we find a cure.

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1425)

[*Translation*]

TAXATION

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the cost of government is driving up the cost of living. The \$500-billion inflationary deficit has doubled our national debt. The Parliamentary Budget Officer said yesterday that Canadians will have to pay twice as much in interest on our national debt. They will end up paying \$46 billion, which is more than the cost of the Canadian military.

The Liberals' solution is to increase taxes on seniors and workers. Will the government cap spending so that it can cancel its inflationary deficits and taxes that Canadians are paying for?

Oral Questions

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as usual, the Conservatives are not bothering to even acquaint themselves with the facts. The facts show that the federal government is currently running a surplus of \$6.3 billion. The IMF forecasts that Canada will have the lowest deficit in the G7 this year.

We have the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7 and our AAA credit rating was reaffirmed this year.

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in fact, the Prime Minister has added more debt than all previous Canadian prime ministers combined and doubled the national debt. Those inflationary deficits have bid up the cost of the goods we buy and the interest we pay. Now, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, we will have to pay twice as much for interest on that national debt, \$46 billion, which is more than the cost of the entire Canadian military. What is the Liberal solution? It is higher taxes on paycheques, gas, groceries and other expenses.

Why will the government not cap spending and cut waste so that it can cancel its inflationary deficits and taxes?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as usual, the Conservatives are not bothering to even acquaint themselves with the facts. Had they bothered to read the latest fiscal monitor, they would know that so far this fiscal year, the federal government is actually running a surplus of \$6.3 billion. The IMF forecasts that Canada will have the lowest deficit in the G7 this year. We have the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7 this year, and our AAA credit rating was reaffirmed earlier this year.

We believe in fiscal responsibility, and that is why we are doing this.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they are doubling what Canadians must spend on national debt interest, and they are tripling the carbon tax, tripling that tax on gas, heat, groceries and basically every good that has to be transported from one place to another. Now, at a time with 40-year highs in inflation, Liberals want to raise those taxes even further. Our young people who are going to school are living in homeless shelters because they cannot afford the cost of living.

Will the government cancel this heartless tax increase?

Oral Questions

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, actually, for middle-class Canadians we have cut taxes and made them better off. Today, a single parent in Ontario with two kids under six and earning \$60,000 a year pays nearly \$5,600 less in taxes than she did under the Conservatives. She will receive nearly \$8,900 more from reduced child care fees and the dental benefit. She will be more than \$14,400 better off than she was under the Conservatives.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals will tell Canadians they have never had it so good. They have never had it so good. Listen, the government is out of touch and Canadians are out of money. Here are the facts: “Food bank use triples, hits record almost every month: Daily Bread Food Bank”, “GTA food banks say they are facing the highest demand in their history”, “Inflation is driving Ottawa food bank use to record highs, with no end in sight”, and students are literally living in homeless shelters while they go to school.

The Liberals think that now is the time to raise their energy costs by tripling the carbon tax. Will they cancel this heartless tax hike now?

• (1430)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, do colleagues know who is out of touch? A Conservative leader who thinks that now is a good time to slash pension savings. The reckless Conservative scheme would cost \$3.8 billion a year, so that means the Conservatives are planning to either increase our deficit by \$3.8 billion or slash the retirement income of our seniors.

They need to come clean. Do they plan to slash pensions and increase the deficit, or did they just not bother to think that far ahead?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the answer is neither, just like when we were in government. We froze CPP taxes and protected the CPP, increasing its benefits to seniors every single year we were in office.

Now the government wants to raise taxes on those very same seniors. According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, in every single province where the carbon tax applies, Canadians pay more in costs than they get back in rebates, and it is especially high in provinces like Quebec, where there is no rebate whatsoever and people will have to pay the increased costs the government is imposing.

Will the government cancel this heartless tax hike today?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about a centrepiece of the Conservative economic agenda. Recently, the member for Kingston and the Islands asked the Conservative leader directly if he was finally ready to flip-flop on cryptocurrency and Bitcoin. In response, the Conservative leader could not even bring himself to utter the words “crypto” or “Bitcoin”. Maybe that is because since he offered his reckless advice, Bitcoin has fallen by 56%.

It is time for the Conservative leader to apologize to those Canadians who made the mistake of listening to him.

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I borrowed some lemons from the Governor General and have \$150 worth of lemons in my glass.

More seriously, what is more humane: Welcoming tens of thousands of desperate asylum seekers knowing that most risk being deported after they have had time to make a life for themselves in Quebec, or investing an astronomical half a billion dollars in competent staff at the immigration department and sending claimants to a regular crossing and reducing processing times?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we believe in the strength of our asylum and immigration systems. We are working closely with stakeholders on the border situation. We will always work closely with all of our partners to respect our national and international obligations towards asylum seekers.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the hope of receiving a more substantive answer, I will ask the minister a more direct question.

What is cheaper: Using existing infrastructure that is adequate for processing refugee claimants or spending between \$500 million and \$1 billion and hiding how much of this money is going to Liberal Party donors? Once a Liberal, always a Liberal.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the Canadian and Quebec economies need are workers.

There is a labour shortage right now, particularly in Quebec. We need to work together for our economy and welcome immigrants. We need to be a society that welcomes immigrants. That is what our government is going to do, and I hope that we can work closely with all the members of the House and all the members from Quebec.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are experiencing the highest increase in food prices in 41 years. That means families are having a very difficult time buying groceries and putting food on the table. Do members know what else has gone up? It is CEO bonuses. Neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives are willing to call out greedflation, but we are.

Will the government support our demand to investigate food prices?

• (1435)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that our government is absolutely committed to ensuring that everyone in our amazing country pays their fair share. In fact, we are raising permanently the corporate income tax on the largest, most profitable banks and insurance companies by 1.5%, and we have put in place a 15% recovery dividend on the excess profits of these institutions during COVID. We have also implemented a 10% luxury tax on luxury cars, planes and yachts.

[Translation]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the cost of pasta has increased by over 32%, which means it is getting harder for families to buy groceries.

However, it is not getting harder for the CEOs of major grocery store chains. They have earned record profits and big bonuses. Clearly, CEO greed is contributing to inflation.

Will the government support our demand to investigate food prices?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been and remain committed to ensuring that everyone pays their fair share of taxes. That is why we are permanently raising the corporate income tax rate by 1.5% on Canada's largest, most profitable banks and insurance companies. We have also introduced a recovery dividend of 15% on excess profits at these institutions during the COVID pandemic.

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[English]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 40-year highs of “Justinflation” is where we are at. Payroll taxes have gone from \$3,400 to \$4,100 under the government, a \$700 increase, and the planned EI premium hike is yet another increase on paycheques. When Canadians are struggling with paying their bills, the government's next move, on January 1, is to raise EI premiums on their paycheques.

When will they finally give Canadians a break and cancel the planned EI tax hike?

The Speaker: Before going to the minister, I want to remind hon. members they cannot do indirectly what they cannot do directly. If they are saying something, maybe they can insert the pause where it is supposed to be to avoid any kind of mockery of our system.

The hon. minister has the floor.

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the facts are very clear. EI premiums are lower today than when the opposition leader oversaw them. In fact, EI premiums are actually the lowest they have been in decades. Come next January, even though the premium will be increased, it will still be 25¢ lower than

Oral Questions

in 2015 under the opposition leader. EI benefits are also way more generous than they were under the Conservatives 10 years ago.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister knows she is collecting more in EI premiums than she will pay to workers, and the finance minister ought to know that the EI surplus goes to their coffers to feed their out-of-control inflationary spending. The government cannot simultaneously say it understands the pain of Canadians and raise taxes on them.

I will ask this again. Will the government cancel the January 1 tax hikes?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me repeat that EI premiums are the lowest they have been in decades, and that is a direct result of our government's investment in programs for workers. Special benefits are more generous. The maximum for insurable earnings is more generous. Workers get more now and pay less.

* * *

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the employment insurance tax hike means Canadians will have to give up another \$2.5 billion from their paycheques. That will not help the unemployed; it will only pad government coffers.

That money should stay in Canadians' pockets to help pay for gas, groceries, heating, and everything else that costs more because of this government's unjust inflationary policies. We can no longer afford this unjust inflation.

Canadians have done their part since 2015. Will the government cancel its plan to raise taxes?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians certainly understand that CPP and EI contributions are how we save for retirement and create a safety net for all Canadians.

In this time of global economic uncertainty, it is completely irresponsible of the Conservatives to suggest that our country should stop setting money aside for Canadians' retirement and a rainy day.

Oral Questions

• (1440)

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is coming from the finance minister who has run up the biggest deficit in Canadian history, more than all previous prime ministers combined. She wants to lecture us on that. She has no credibility with Canadians.

The cost of groceries is at its highest level in 40 years. It has risen more than 10%. What is even worse is that now, the Liberals want to take even more from workers' paycheques as of January 1, 2023.

Rather than hurting everyone, will the Liberals end “Justinflation”, yes or no?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the Conservatives had bothered to read the latest financial monitor, they would know that so far this fiscal year, the federal government is running a \$6.3-billion surplus. We have the lowest deficit in the G7. We have a AAA credit rating.

What Canadians should be worried about is the fact that the Conservatives want to slash pensions.

[*English*]

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, \$2.29 is the price of gas in Surrey. Families and workers in B.C. are struggling to make ends meet because of the “just inflation” cost-of-living crisis, but the Prime Minister and the NDP say they are not paying enough. They are forcing the people of my province to pay triple in carbon taxes and take gas close to three dollars a litre.

Will the Prime Minister allow British Columbians to fill their tanks and put food on the table, and cancel his unaffordable carbon tax hike?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is certainly taking action to address affordability by, for example, doubling the GST tax credit.

With regard to the price on pollution, the hon. member knows where the federal system is in place, and I would tell her that it is not in place in British Columbia. Rebates are issued quarterly, and most Canadian families get a direct rebate and will continue to get a direct rebate that is more than what they pay.

Let us be very clear. If we want to ensure affordability on an ongoing basis with respect to climate change, we need to ensure that we have a robust climate plan to ensure that we are dealing with the cost of the future. That is something that, for over six months, the Leader of the Opposition has refused to talk about. Where is his climate plan?

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are not talking about today. We are talking about April 1, when triple the carbon tax will be imposed on British Columbians.

The Liberals believe that made-in-B.C. solutions do not work, so they are forcing families, workers and businesses to pay three times more in carbon taxes. The Conservatives will give control back to

British Columbians over their paycheques, their savings and their lives.

Tomorrow, gas goes to \$2.50 a litre in Vancouver. It is shattering all North American records, but that is not enough for the Prime Minister and the NDP. Cancel the tax.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a bit of history, British Columbia was the proud implementer of the first carbon price in Canada. It was implemented by a Conservative premier in British Columbia. British Columbia continues to have its own approach to carbon pricing because it knows it is the most efficient way to address pricing going forward.

I would note it is pretty perplexing that every member of the opposition—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I am going to ask the minister to start over so the hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock can hear the answer she asked for.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, I note that this is a bit perplexing given that every member of the opposition sitting in the House campaigned on a platform in their last campaign, less than a year ago, on the basis of implementing a price on pollution. Were they telling the truth to citizens then or are they telling the truth now?

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[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday it was clear that the Minister of Public Safety did not know the difference between an asylum seeker and a human smuggler. Let me explain it to him.

Asylum seekers are families who migrate to Canada to claim refugee status. Human smugglers are people who exploit these families and take all their money in exchange for getting them across Roxham Road. Human smugglers are criminals. Making the crossing at Roxham Road permanent makes their crime profitable.

Now that the minister understands who is who in this story, will he stand up for asylum seekers instead of human smugglers?

• (1445)

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the work our government has done to protect the rights of refugees who contribute so much, in such a positive way, to our economies in Quebec and across Canada. That is why we must continue to make investments at the border and give more resources to the Canada Border Services Agency. That is why we must work in close collaboration with the Government of Quebec to protect the rights of refugees and the integrity of our system.

Oral Questions

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we do not understand. We do not understand how the minister thinks that the situation at Roxham Road is normal. His government is letting thugs fleece disadvantaged families out of all the money they have managed to take out of their country. Thanks to his government's actions, human trafficking has become the primary way of claiming asylum in Canada in 2022. Refugees are being brought to Canada by thugs. They are welcomed into Canada by police.

What is normal about that?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize that the situation at Roxham Road poses challenges. That is why we are investing more than \$40 million in a strategy to address the problem associated with human trafficking. That is why we continue to add resources at our borders to protect the rights of refugees and to bring to justice those who abuse the system. We will continue that work.

* * *

[English]

DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Mr. Speaker, charitable organizations are playing a key role in delivering the disaster relief needed as a result of hurricane Fiona. The Prime Minister has committed to matching dollar for dollar any donations made to the Red Cross that go to the relief effort in western Newfoundland and the Maritimes. The Salvation Army is equally as important in providing relief.

Will the Prime Minister commit to also matching monetary donations to the Salvation Army and ending this double standard?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to convey my sympathies with the member in what his constituents are facing in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Everyone is playing a very important role in providing care and services to members of communities who are affected by the storm. We have a long-standing relationship with Red Cross. It has a demonstrated ability to provide services at a large scale, as we are seeing right now, to help people as quickly as possible. We will continue to work with local organizations to provide those essential services.

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FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are well aware of the understanding the government has with the Red Cross, and that is great, but sources have confirmed that, due to storm surges from Fiona, fish harvesters on the southwest coast of Newfoundland have lost over \$2.5 million worth of fishing gear and property. Their insurance policies do not have storm surge riders. Next year's fishing season is not far away.

Will the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard show she cares as much about fishermen as she does about dead lobsters, and compensate them in a timely manner so they can prepare for the coming season?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I also want to express my concern for the member's community and the fish harvesters. I have had a chance to hear from and discuss this with provincial premiers, fish harvesters and their representatives, and members of Parliament, and it is a very distressing situation. We are going to work collectively and in partnership with them to do everything we can to support our fish harvesters going forward.

* * *

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to hear that the minister has finally used a phone to call fish harvesters. It was certainly not on cell service because the cell service in Nova Scotia is substandard for a wealthy country.

Cell towers are now running on generator power. Even Liberals have recognized the essential nature of this critical infrastructure for individuals and small businesses. My premiers called for action. The minister responsible committed to fixing and maintaining this critical infrastructure three years ago.

When will Canadians see some action and not more platitudes?

● (1450)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with Premier Houston that the situation with cell service is entirely unacceptable. Later today, along with the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, I will be meeting with the CEOs of Canada's telecommunication providers, and I will be insisting on better service for the people of Atlantic Canada and for Quebeckers, and for a plan to ensure this never happens again.

* * *

DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I trust that the Minister of Finance will meet with Premier Houston, and not Premier Rankin.

Five days, almost 120 hours, have passed since many Nova Scotians lost power due to hurricane Fiona. Trees are still on the power lines and blocking roads, and 20% of customers are without power. The military has been requested by Premier Houston and its presence is desperately needed.

When will the Prime Minister get more troops on the ground to clear the debris and get the lights back on in Nova Scotia?

Oral Questions

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to confirm for our colleague what the Minister of National Defence said early this morning, and that is that every request from the Government of Nova Scotia for military assistance has been responded to positively. We have said yes to all of the requests from provincial authorities for military assistance. The good news for my colleague is that we will continue to do exactly that over and over against until this problem is solved.

* * *

HOUSING

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are struggling to find places they can afford to call home. The Liberal government is siding with wealthy investors to hurt families by treating housing as a stock market. It is letting corporate landlords kick tenants out so they can jack up their rent to turn a bigger profit. The financialization of housing is also pricing young people out of the market, shattering their dreams of home ownership. This is wrong.

Will the Liberals put a stop to the financialization of housing and put people before corporate greed?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that speculative investments in the real estate sector are contributing to pushing home prices higher. That is why we have legislated an annual 1% tax on vacant, non-residential, non-Canadian owned properties, as well as a two-year ban on foreign ownership of Canadian residential real estate.

We have also committed to reviewing the tax treatment of real estate investment trusts and are launching a federal review of housing as an asset class. This is what federal leadership on the financialization of housing looks like.

* * *

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister did not answer the question. We are saying to stop financialization and to start putting people before corporate greed.

As the devastation unfolded from hurricane Fiona and people tried desperately to call 911 or contact loved ones, big telecom companies abandoned, leaving them without cellphone service, and the Liberals are letting those irresponsible companies off the hook. Nova Scotia is demanding that the government ensure telecom companies never abandon people in emergencies. Will the Liberals enforce these regulations on telecom companies now?

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have heard from the Deputy Prime Minister, telecom providers must ensure their services are working to the greatest extent possible after hurricane Fiona.

This evening I will be joining the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry and the Deputy Prime Minister to discuss with the telco providers the experience of Atlantic Canadians losing con-

nectivity, to review the fragilities of this vital infrastructure, and to determine how the expectations of Canadians on reliability and transparency going forward can be met.

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[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on the mental and physical health of public servants and many Canadians. Public servants have nevertheless faithfully served Canadians throughout the pandemic and continue to do so.

How is the government working with the unions to strengthen health care supports for public servants?

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from Vaughan—Woodbridge for his hard work and for his excellent French.

I have good news: We have approved a new public service health care plan that will improve support for members without any additional cost to taxpayers.

Some significant changes will help improve support to the 2SLGBTQI+ community. In addition, mental health care support will double to \$5,000 a year.

We know that we can achieve great things together and we worked with the unions and pensioners to come to this agreement.

* * *

● (1455)

[English]

TAXATION

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the average Canadian now spends more on taxes than on food, clothing and shelter combined. An individual recently came into my office in the riding and said that she had moved into her car because she could not make rent. Another couple told me that they live out of their RV because they could not make their mortgage payment due to just inflation.

These stories are far too common from coast to coast in this country, so I am asking the government if it will finally demonstrate some compassion and stop its increases in taxes with respect to gas, groceries and home heating today.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here is what the Conservatives want to do: slash pensions, slash EI and ignore climate change.

Oral Questions

We have a better plan. I think in their heart of hearts the Conservatives recognize that, which is why they have done a flip-flop on the GST tax credit, so let me invite them today to concede defeat and support the rest of our plan to help Canadians.

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no, what we want to do is stop the government's tax increases.

The cost of living is at an all-time high, and interest rates are skyrocketing because of Liberal money-printing inflation. Before this Liberal disaster, a third of Canadians were within \$200 of not making ends meet. What was the Liberal response? To raise taxes, both payroll taxes and the carbon tax, because taking more money from Canadians is really going to solve the affordability crisis.

Will the government start helping, stop hurting Canadians and stop these tax increases?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is time for these Conservatives to come clean with Canadians. Their CPP proposal is an irresponsible scheme to eviscerate the pensions that all Canadians rely on.

As personal finance writer Rob Carrick wrote this week, “Canada Pension Plan premiums are not a tax.” The CPP is the bedrock of the Canadian retirement plan. The Conservatives want to recklessly undermine the pensions all Canadians depend on, but we will not let them.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if EI is not in fact a tax, maybe the minister wants to update the government website.

More taxes mean Canadians have less money to pay their bills. The carbon tax has already increased the price of gas and groceries, which have just driven up inflation. Soon people will have to take home less pay while trying to cover these higher costs.

The Liberals try to sell that as taking care of people, yet the finance minister had to admit that higher payroll tax gives the government another \$2.5 billion from workers' paycheques. It is time to quit the excuses.

Will the government end its planned tax hikes on Canadian paycheques?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear on the record. When we brought forward the Canada child benefit, who voted against it? The Conservatives did.

When we brought in the tax decrease on middle-income Canadians, who voted against it? The Conservatives did.

When we are bringing forward dental benefits, the GST rebate and housing benefits, who is planning on voting against them? The Conservatives are.

Let us be clear on who is supporting Canadians and who is voting against them.

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, “Justinflation” is really hurting the residents of Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte—

The Speaker: I am going to interrupt that one, and maybe ask the member to start over. We are having a little discrepancy on what can be used. If I could have everyone calm down.

There is some play on words here that is really doing indirectly what cannot be done directly. I am going to ask the hon. member to start over and correct his error.

• (1500)

Mr. Doug Shipley: Mr. Speaker, it is just inflation.

Just this week, the executive director of Barrie Food Bank stated, “Everything we...buy is more expensive” She also noted that people who have historically donated to the Barrie Food Bank are now using it to feed their families. The number of households who have accessed the food bank in August was up 60% compared to last year.

Would the Prime Minister please acknowledge that we have a serious affordability crisis and commit to cancelling the proposed EI and carbon tax increases, which would only cause more pain for hard-working Canadians?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us put some numbers on the table, such as the 450,000 children who have been lifted out of poverty since we brought forward the Canada child benefit.

Instead of sending cheques to millionaires, we are sending benefits to hard-working Canadian families who need that help. We understand the high cost of living. We understand the high cost of raising a family. That is why we have put more money in the pockets of Canadians than Conservatives have.

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[*Translation*]

BORDER SECURITY

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the federal government has turned Roxham Road into a permanent border crossing. That is according to the RCMP, not us.

In 2020, the RCMP reached an agreement for “nursing services at the Roxham border crossing”. That is how the RCMP put it.

Even the RCMP is treating Roxham Road like a legitimate border crossing. It is not a border crossing though; it is a way to avoid going through customs. Instead of creating a pseudo-border crossing run by the police, why not just suspend the safe third country agreement so that families have to go through the real border crossings?

Oral Questions

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the agreement with the United States is to protect asylum seekers' rights with a process that is transparent and fair and sets out legal consequences should the system be abused.

We are updating our agreement with the United States to strengthen our asylum system. That is the best way to proceed.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what the government is calling irregular entries are supposed to be irregular.

In Quebec, 98% of the asylum seekers who crossed a land border went through Roxham Road. There is nothing confusing about it. No one is coming through regular border crossings anymore. Looking at all the provinces and all the entries via land, sea and air, Roxham Road is the route used by 64% of asylum seekers in Canada.

Does the minister find it normal that, under his watch, irregular entry at Roxham Road has become the official and internationally recognized way to claim asylum in Canada?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our system for asylum seekers must be robust and humane. There really is no magic solution. Calling for the closure of Roxham Road or the suspension of the agreement would likely have the opposite effect.

As we have repeatedly stated, this agreement needs to be modernized. That is what we are doing by working with the United States on a lasting solution.

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[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government may dismiss it as just inflation, but these are very difficult times for Canadians, which the Liberals keep dismissing. People in B.C. are struggling to feed their families and have to make tough choices between paying for food, gas, Telus, Hydro and Fortis. Countless people can barely pay their rent, never mind thinking of saving for a down payment for a home. Now this government is looking to make those hard-earned dollars stretch even less, especially for low-income workers.

My question today is very simple for this government: Will it stop its planned tax hike on Canadian paycheques?

• (1505)

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are providing real help to Canadian renters through the Canada housing benefit, which is already providing, on average, \$2,500 to many vulnerable renters across the country. In recent legislation, we have introduced a top-up to that Canada housing benefit with a one-time payment of \$500.

If the member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon cared about Canadian renters, he would speak to his colleague from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan who played procedural games in this chamber to delay the passage of that real help, which is going towards vulnerable renters in Canada.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are getting walloped by not just inflation. Even after paying more for everything because of Liberal inflation, Canadians are spending more on taxes than food, clothing and shelter combined. Here come the Liberals with another tax hike come January. There is no way for the Liberals to spin these tax hikes.

Come January, Canadians will have less money in their pockets and smaller paycheques. Will the government commit to cancelling these damaging paycheques?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us talk a little about EI.

The EI contribution rate today is \$1.58. Next year, it is going to be \$1.63. Guess what. Both of those rates are lower than every single year when Stephen Harper was prime minister.

Let us be clear about the Conservatives' schemes. They are proposing to slash our pensions. They are proposing to undermine the EI system. They are even disagreeing with things they actually did when they were—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us talk facts.

Hard-working families in my riding are already struggling to fill their tanks, put food on their tables and keep a roof over their heads, all because of this government's overspending. The Liberal government has tripled down on the carbon tax.

The reality is that Canadians, on January 1, will wake up to smaller paycheques. The last thing my constituents need is another federal assault on their hard-earned paycheques.

Canadians are at a breaking point. The cupboards are bare and this government just does not get it. I am asking the Liberals to show some compassion and cancel their planned raid on Canadian paycheques. Will they do that?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are absolutely compassionate when it comes to families in this country. In fact, I was in British Columbia on Friday making a really important child care announcement. British Columbian families are going to save up to \$6,600 a year on the cost of child care by the end of this year.

We are there for Canadians, but what the Conservatives are talking about will hurt Canadians further, hard-working Canadians who have saved for their pensions and who need that employment insurance in tough times.

We are going to be there for Canadians. I hope the Conservatives would too.

[Translation]

SPORT

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Concussion Awareness Week is being marked across the country this week.

It is estimated that 46,000 children and youth were officially diagnosed with a concussion by hospital emergency departments in 2018-19 after suffering an injury while being active.

Could the Minister of Sport please tell us what our government is doing to reduce the number of accidents as much as possible?

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Sport and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question and for the work she does on behalf of her constituents.

Our government is supporting national sport organizations so they can improve the rules of their sport, training protocols and behaviours with a view to reduce the risk of concussions.

Our government has invested \$46.1 million, with more funding on the way, in research and initiatives to improve the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of traumatic brain injuries, including concussions.

* * *

[English]

JUSTICE

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week in the justice minister's hometown, there was a shooting outside the Bell Centre, and yesterday a man was shot near the riding of the public safety minister. In fact, violent crime in Canada has increased 32% since the Liberals took office, but instead of reducing crime, Liberals are reducing the number of violent criminals going to jail, thanks to their soft-on-crime Bill C-5. We do not need fewer criminals in jail; we need fewer victims of crime.

On this side of the house, Conservatives will always put the safety of Canadians first. Will the Prime Minister finally withdraw the soft-on-crime Bill C-5?

• (1510)

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the security of Canadians is our absolute priority and serious crimes will always carry with them serious consequences.

I reject the premise of the hon. member's question. What we are doing with Bill C-5 is putting an end to policies from the Harper government that have failed. They have failed to make Canadians safer and they have wasted valuable police and judicial resources on infractions that are better treated, not incarcerated.

What we are doing with Bill C-5 is being able to put more resources into serious crime, as Justice Michael Moldaver has recently said we ought to be doing.

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since the Liberals formed government, serious violent crime has

Oral Questions

substantially increased. Homicides alone are up 30%. This is a direct result of the government's soft-on-crime agenda and lack of empathy toward victims. Now, thanks to Bill C-5, weapons trafficking, robbery with a firearm, drive-by shootings, fentanyl trafficking and kidnapping will no longer be punishable by mandatory sentences.

Why does the government continue to advocate for criminals while recklessly neglecting the rights of victims?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the security of Canadians is our absolute priority. What we are doing with Bill C-5 is allowing for more resources to be spent on the very serious crimes that the hon. member is referring to. Those serious crimes will always carry with them serious consequences.

However, all that the failed Conservative tough-on-crime policies left us with was not greater public security but increased overrepresentation of indigenous and Black people in our criminal justice system. We are reversing that by putting the resources on the serious crime, where they ought to be.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is a growing trend in Montreal called "scoring", which consists of scoring points by shooting at innocent victims chosen at random. According to police sources, this trend may be the reason for an attack in the Rivière-des-Prairies neighbourhood, where an innocent 25-year-old woman was hit in the legs when shots were fired.

In response to this violent incident in Montreal, the Prime Minister wants to abolish minimum sentences for crimes like illegal importation of guns, intentional discharge of a gun and armed robbery.

Will the Prime Minister finally admit that he got it wrong with Bill C-5 and put it through the shredder?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, public safety is our number one priority. With Bill C-5, we are eliminating failed policies from the Harper era that have created a backlog in the justice system and have filled our prisons and justice system with people who committed minor offences. We must use these resources for serious offences and serious crimes. Those who commit serious crimes will always receive serious sentences.

Oral Questions

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, part of reconciliation means continuing to support indigenous communities across Canada. Last week, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Public Safety announced a historic agreement with the Siksika Nation in Alberta for self-administered policing services.

Can the Minister of Public Safety please speak to how indigenous policing agreements are advancing the government's commitment to reconciliation?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his advocacy. Last week, I was very honoured and pleased to announce, for the first time in 14 years, a new self-governing agreement that will bring back the Siksika police service.

This is the product of the work of many of my colleagues in government, and I do want to take a moment to thank Chief Ouray. I want to take a moment to thank Alberta officials who have collaborated with us on this.

This is a way in which we can ensure the advancement of the principles of reconciliation by empowering indigenous communities to lead policing initiatives so that they can protect their communities as does every other non-indigenous community across the country.

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DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the decisions being made right now on issues like the climate crisis and housing affordability have a tremendous bearing on the lives of young people and they deserve a say. In 2005, the current government House leader rose in this place and said, "I think that reducing the voting age to 16 represents an incredible opportunity."

I agree, and he is in luck because in a few minutes he has a chance to vote yes and send Bill C-210, the right to vote at 16 act, off to committee.

Will he and will his government support this important bill?

● (1515)

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hope it does not surprise the member that I am happy to speak for the government House leader on this issue.

As members know, our government and the Prime Minister, in particular, have made very significant efforts to encourage young people to be involved in our parliamentary democracy. Our government has constantly taken steps to ensure that our democracy is open and inclusive for all people, particularly young people.

I would note that Elections Canada has also done very important work in this area.

I had a very good conversation with my colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley and we look forward to working with him on this important issue in the months ahead.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, according to Restaurants Canada, over the last 12 months, 43% more restaurants have closed than opened. In my riding, restaurants are paying as much as three times more for food and materials. Prepandemic, vegetable oil was only \$16 for 16 litres. Today, it is \$53.

With businesses fighting to survive and with few tourists brave enough to visit a Canadian airport, what is the government's latest answer to curbing rampant inflation and soaring food prices, beyond reannouncing programs that may or may not come into existence in this decade?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, small businesses, particularly restaurants across the country, have seen enormous support from the people in their communities throughout this pandemic, and I thank them for ordering online and for supporting them throughout a very tough time. We have been with them and we have had their backs throughout this pandemic. I want to assure this member and owners of all small businesses and all those restaurants, just like the one I grew up in and worked in, that we have their backs and we will continue to help them through this difficult time.

* * *

[Translation]

THREATS, INTIMIDATION AND HATEFUL COMMENTS

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among the parties and I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That the House strongly condemn threats, intimidation and hateful comments against parliamentarians and their families, and offer its full support to those who are victims.

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

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

(Motion agreed to)

Business of Supply

[English]

NATIONAL RECOVERY AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should designate the month of September, every year, as National Recovery Awareness Month to recognize and support Canadians recovering from addiction and to demonstrate that recovery from addiction is possible, attainable and sustainable.

The Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member'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)

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COST OF LIVING RELIEF ACT, NO. 1

(Bill C-30. On the Order: Government Orders:)

September 26, 2022—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance—second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Finance of Bill C-30, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (temporary enhancement to the Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax credit).

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and I believe if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order, special order or usual practice of the House, the motion for second reading of Bill C-30, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (temporary enhancement to the Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax credit) be deemed adopted on division, and the bill be deemed read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Finance.

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, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

The Speaker: Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Finance.

● (1520)

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the motion proposed by my colleague in the Bloc Québécois. In light of that, and in relation to the motion we just adopted and the fact that all parliamentarians are committed to dealing with threats and intimidation, there have been discussion among the House leaders, and I hope I will receive unanimous consent for the following motion: That the House condemn the threatening remarks of Dale Smith, a member of the parliamentary press gallery, who responded through a tweet to a question proposed in the House by the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, stating, “When horses are this lame, you shoot them.”

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

Mr. Mike Morrice: Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among the parties, and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion: That, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House, the motion for second reading of Bill C-22, an act to reduce poverty and to support the financial security of persons with disabilities by establishing the Canada disability benefit and making a consequential amendment to the Income Tax Act, be deemed adopted on division, deemed read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

Mr. Jake Stewart: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

A March 2022 report by the Parliamentary Budget Officer shows the carbon tax will be a net cost to Canadian families. I am seeking unanimous consent to table this report, because today in question period the official opposition cited this. I am sure everybody will support it. The tax is a net cost to Canadians.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: It is pretty obvious there was no consent on that one.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—CARBON TAX

The House resumed from September 27 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3:24 p.m., pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, the House will now proceed to the deferred recorded division on the motion of the Leader of the Opposition relating to the business of supply.

[English]

Call in the members.

● (1535)

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

(Division No. 176)

YEAS

Members

Aboultair
Albas
Arnold
Barlow

Aitchison
Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett

Business of Supply

Benzen	Bergen	Bradford	Brière
Berthold	Bezan	Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Block	Bragdon	Carr	Casey
Brassard	Brock	Chabot	Chagger
Calkins	Caputo	Chahal	Chatel
Carrie	Chong	Chen	Chiang
Cooper	Dalton	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Dancho	Davidson	Cormier	Coteau
Deltell	d'Entremont	Dabrusin	Damoff
Doherty	Dowdall	Davies	DeBellefeuille
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Desbiens	Desilets
Ellis	Epp	Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)	Dhillon	Diab
Fast	Ferri	Dong	Drouin
Findlay	Gallant	Dubourg	Duclos
Généreux	Genius	Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Gladu	Godin	Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
Goodridge	Gray	El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Hallan	Hoback	Fergus	Fillmore
Jeneroux	Kelly	Fisher	Fonseca
Kitchen	Kmiec	Fortier	Fortin
Kram	Kurek	Fragiskatos	Fraser
Kusie	Lake	Freeland	Fry
Lantsman	Lawrence	Gaheer	Garneau
Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)	Garon	Garrison
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert	Gaudreau	Gazan
Lloyd	Lobb	Gerretsen	Gill
MacKenzie	Maguire	Gould	Green
Martel	Mazier	Guilbeault	Hajdu
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean	Hanley	Hardie
Melillo	Moore	Hepfner	Holland
Morrison	Motz	Housefather	Hughes
Muys	Nater	Hussen	Hutchings
O'Toole	Patzer	Iacono	Idlout
Paul-Hus	Perkins	Ien	Jaczek
Poillievre	Rayes	Johns	Joly
Redekopp	Reid	Jones	Jowhari
Rempel Garner	Richards	Julian	Kayabaga
Roberts	Rood	Kelloway	Khalid
Ruff	Scheer	Khera	Koutrakis
Schmale	Seeback	Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Shields	Shipleay	Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Small	Soroka	Lametti	Lamoureux
Steinley	Stewart	Lapointe	Larouche
Strahl	Stubbs	Lattanzio	Lauzon
Thomas	Tochor	LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Tolmie	Uppal	Lemire	Lightbound
Van Popta	Vecchio	Long	Longfield
Vidal	Vien	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
Viersen	Vis	MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
Vuong	Wagantall	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Warkentin	Waugh	Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Webber	Williams	Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
Williamson	Zimmer — 116	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McDonald (Avalon)
		McGuinty	McKay
		McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod
		McPherson	Mendès
		Mencicino	Miao
		Michaud	Miller
		Morrice	Morrissey
		Murray	Naqvi
		Ng	Noormohamed
		Normandin	O'Connell
		Oliphant	O'Regan
		Pauzé	Perron
		Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
		Powlowski	Qualtrough
		Robillard	Rogers
		Romanado	Sahota
		Sajjan	Saks
		Sarai	Savard-Tremblay
		Scarpaleggia	Schieffe
		Serré	Sgro

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bergeron
Bérubé	Bittle
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Blois	Boulerice

Private Members' Business

Shanahan
 Sidhu (Brampton East)
 Simard
 Singh
 Ste-Marie
 Suds
 Taylor Roy
 Therrien
 Trudeau
 Turnbull
 Van Bynen
 Vandal
 Vignola
 Virani
 Wilkinson
 Zahid
 Zuberi— 209

Sheehan
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Sinclair-Desgagné
 Sorbara
 St-Onge
 Tassi
 Thériault
 Thompson
 Trudel
 Valdez
 van Koeverden
 Vandenbeld
 Villemure
 Weiler
 Yip
 Zarrillo

Atwin
 Badawey
 Baker
 Barlow
 Barron
 Battiste
 Beech
 Bennett
 Bergen
 Berthold
 Bezan
 Blair
 Blanchette-Joneas
 Block
 Boulerice
 Bragdon
 Brière
 Brunelle-Duceppe
 Cannings
 Carr
 Casey
 Chagger
 Chatel
 Chiang
 Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
 Cooper
 Coteau
 Dalton
 Dancho
 Davies
 Deltell
 Desbiens
 Desjarlais
 Dhillon
 Doherty
 Dowdall
 Drouin
 Duclos
 Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
 Dzerowicz
 El-Khoury
 Epp
 Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
 Fast
 Ferreri
 Findlay
 Fonseca
 Fortin
 Fraser
 Gaheer
 Garneau
 Garrison
 Gazan
 Genuis
 Gill
 Godin
 Gould
 Green
 Hajdu
 Hanley
 Hepfner
 Holland
 Hughes
 Hutchings
 Idlout
 Jacek
 Johns
 Jones
 Julian
 Kelloway
 Khalid
 Kitchen
 Koutrakis

Bachrach
 Bains
 Baldinelli
 Barrett
 Barsalou-Duval
 Beaulieu
 Bendayan
 Benzen
 Bergeron
 Bérubé
 Bittle
 Blanchet
 Blaney
 Blois
 Bradford
 Brassard
 Brock
 Calkins
 Caputo
 Carrie
 Chabot
 Chahal
 Chen
 Chong
 Collins (Victoria)
 Cormier
 Dabrusin
 Damoff
 Davidson
 DeBellefeuille
 d'Entremont
 Desilets
 Dhaliwal
 Diab
 Dong
 Dreeshen
 Dubourg
 Duguid
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Ehsassi
 Ellis
 Erskine-Smith
 Falk (Provencher)
 Fergus
 Fillmore
 Fisher
 Fortier
 Fragiskatos
 Fry
 Gallant
 Garon
 Gaudreau
 Généreux
 Gerretsen
 Gladu
 Goodridge
 Gray
 Guilbeault
 Hallan
 Hardie
 Hoback
 Housefather
 Hussen
 Iacono
 Ien
 Jeneroux
 Joly
 Jowhari
 Kayabaga
 Kelly
 Khera
 Kmiec
 Kram

PAIRED

Members

Bibeau
 Chambers
 Gourde

Boissonnault
 Champoux
 Rodriguez— 6

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from September 21 consideration of the motion that Bill S-206, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (disclosure of information by jurors), be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill S-206 under Private Members' Business.

• (1550)

[*English*]

Before the Clerk announced the results of the vote:

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, I apologize for interfering. The member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley is here. He rose in his seat, but it is not noted on the dashboard. I was just going to bring that to your attention. Hopefully we could get that fixed so his vote is included.

The Speaker: The diligent folks at the table have already caught that and have it all under control.

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

(*Division No. 177*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
 Albas
 Alghabra
 Allison
 Anandasangaree
 Arnold
 Arya

Aitchison
 Aldag
 Ali
 Anand
 Angus
 Arseneault
 Ashton

Private Members' Business

Kurek	Kusie
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lake	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lantsman
Lapointe	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon
Lawrence	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lehoux
Lemire	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lightbound	Lloyd
Lobb	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	MacKenzie
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire
Maloney	Martel
Martinez Ferrada	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	May (Saarich—Gulf Islands)
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLean	McLeod
McPherson	Melillo
Mendès	Medicino
Miao	Michaud
Miller	Moore
Morrice	Morrison
Morrissey	Motz
Murray	Muys
Naqvi	Nater
Ng	Noormohamed
Normandin	O'Connell
Oilphant	O'Regan
O'Toole	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Perkins	Perron
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Poilievre	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Robillard
Rogers	Romanado
Rood	Ruff
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Sarai
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Scheer	Schieffe
Schmale	Seeback
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Shields	Shiplely
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Singh	Small
Sorbara	Soroka
Steinley	Ste-Marie
Stewart	St-Onge
Strahl	Stubbs
Sudds	Tassi
Taylor Roy	Thériault
Therrien	Thomas
Thompson	Tochor
Tolmie	Trudeau
Trudel	Turnbull
Uppal	Valdez
Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Van Popta	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vecchio
Vidal	Vien
Viersen	Vignola

Villemure	Virani
Vis	Vuong
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Weiler	Wilkinson
Williams	Williamson
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zimmer
Zuberi— 323	

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Members

Bibeau	Boissonnault
Chambers	Champoux
Gourde	Rodriguez— 6

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

* * *

HINDU HERITAGE MONTH

The House resumed from September 22 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: Pursuant to an order made on Thursday, June 23, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 42 under Private Members' Business in the name of the member for Nepean.

● (1600)

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

(Division No. 178)

YEAS

Members

Aboultarif	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Alghabra	Ali
Allison	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Benzen
Bergen	Bergeron
Berthold	Bérubé
Bezan	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Block
Blois	Boulerice
Bradford	Bragdon
Brassard	Brière
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Cannings
Caputo	Carr
Carrie	Casey

Private Members' Business

Chabot	Chagger	McCauley (Edmonton West)	McDonald (Avalon)
Chahal	Chatel	McGuity	McKay
Chen	Chiang	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLean
Chong	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	McLeod	McPherson
Collins (Victoria)	Cooper	Melillo	Mendès
Cormier	Coteau	Mendicino	Miao
Dabrusin	Dalton	Michaud	Miller
Damoff	Dancho	Moore	Morrice
Davidson	Davies	Morrison	Morrissey
DeBellefeuille	Deltell	Motz	Murray
d'Entremont	Desbiens	Muys	Naqvi
Desilets	Desjarlais	Nater	Ng
Dhaliwal	Dhillon	Noormohamed	Normandin
Diab	Doherty	O'Connell	Oliphant
Dong	Dowdall	O'Regan	O'Toole
Dreeshen	Drouin	Patzner	Paul-Hus
Dubourg	Duclos	Paupé	Perkins
Duguid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz	Plamondon	Poilievre
Ehsassi	El-Khoury	Powlowski	Qualtrough
Ellis	Epp	Rayes	Redekopp
Erskine-Smith	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Reid	Rempel Garner
Falk (Provencher)	Fast	Richards	Roberts
Fergus	Ferreri	Robillard	Rogers
Fillmore	Findlay	Romanado	Rood
Fisher	Fonseca	Ruff	Sahota
Fortier	Fortin	Sajjan	Saks
Fragiskatos	Fraser	Sarai	Savard-Tremblay
Freeland	Fry	Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Gaheer	Gallant	Schiefke	Schmale
Garneau	Garon	Seeback	Serré
Garrison	Gaudreau	Sgro	Shanahan
Gazan	Généreux	Sheehan	Shields
Genuis	Gerretsen	Shipley	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Gill	Gladu	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Godin	Goodridge	Sinclair-Desgagné	Singh
Gould	Gray	Small	Sorbara
Green	Guilbeault	Soroka	Steinley
Hajdu	Hallan	Ste-Marie	Stewart
Hanley	Hardie	St-Onge	Strahl
Hepfner	Hoback	Stubbs	Sudds
Holland	Housefather	Tassi	Taylor Roy
Hughes	Hussen	Thériault	Therrien
Hutchings	Iacono	Thomas	Thompson
Idlout	Ien	Tochor	Tolmie
Jaczek	Jeneroux	Trudeau	Trudel
Johns	Joly	Turnbull	Uppal
Jones	Jowhari	Valdez	Van Bynen
Julian	Kayabaga	van Koeverden	Van Popta
Kelloway	Kelly	Vandal	Vandenbeld
Khalid	Khera	Vecchio	Vidal
Kitchen	Kmiec	Vien	Viersen
Koutrakis	Kram	Vignola	Villemure
Kurek	Kusie	Virani	Vis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan	Vuong	Wagantall
Lake	Lalonde	Warkentin	Waugh
Lambropoulos	Lametti	Webber	Weiler
Lamoureux	Lantsman	Wilkinson	Williams
Lapointe	Larouche	Williamson	Yip
Lattanzio	Lauzon	Zahid	Zarrillo
Lawrence	LeBlanc	Zimmer	Zuberi— 324
Lehoux	Lemire		
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)		
Liepert	Lightbound	Nil	NAYS
Lloyd	Lobb		
Long	Longfield		PAIRED
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)		Members
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor		
MacKenzie	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Bibeau	Boissonnault
Maguire	Maloney	Chambers	Champoux
Martel	Martinez Ferrada	Gourde	Rodriguez— 6
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)		
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Mazier		

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Private Members' Business

● (1605)

RIGHT TO VOTE AT 16 ACT

The House resumed from September 23 consideration of the motion that Bill C-210, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act (voting age), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-210, under Private Members' Business.

Before the Clerk announced the results of the vote:

● (1615)

Ms. Valerie Bradford: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I believe I missed my vote.

The Speaker: We will need unanimous consent to allow the hon. member for Kitchener South—Hespeler to vote. Do we have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

(Division No. 179)

YEAS

Members

Angus	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Bergeron
Bérubé	Blaikie
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Blois
Boulerice	Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings	Chabot
Chahal	Chatel
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Drouin	Erskine-Smith
Fortin	Garneau
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gill	Green
Hanley	Hughes
Idlout	Johns
Julian	Kayabaga
Kwan	Larouche
Lemire	Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacGregor
Mathysen	May (Saenich—Gulf Islands)
McPherson	Miao
Michaud	Morrice
Normandin	Pauzé
Perron	Plamondon
Romanado	Savard-Tremblay
Schiefke	Simard
Sinclair-Desgagné	Singh
Ste-Marie	Thériault
Therrien	Trudel
van Koeverden	Vignola
Villemure	Weiler
Zarrillo — 77	

NAYS

Members

Aboultatif	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Alghabra	Ali
Allison	Anand
Anandasangaree	Arnold
Arseneault	Arya
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Battiste	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Benzen	Bergen
Berthold	Bezan
Bittle	Blair
Block	Bradford
Bragdon	Brassard
Brière	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Carr	Carrie
Casey	Chagger
Chen	Chiang
Chong	Cooper
Cormier	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
Deltell	d'Entremont
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Doherty
Dong	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Fergus
Ferreri	Fillmore
Findlay	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Gallant
Généreux	Genuis
Gerretsen	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gould	Gray
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hallan	Hardie
Hepfner	Hoback
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Ien
Jaczek	Jeneroux
Jones	Jowhari
Kelloway	Kelly
Khalid	Khera
Kitchen	Kmiec
Koutrakis	Kram
Kurek	Kusie
Kusmierczyk	Lake
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lantsman	Lapointe
Lattanzio	Lauzon
Lawrence	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lighthbound
Lloyd	Lobb
Longfield	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacKenzie

Private Members' Business

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-238 under Private Members' Business.

• (1630)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 180*)

YEAS

Members

Angus	Ashton
Bachrach	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergeron	Bérubé
Blaikie	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Boulerice	Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings	Chabot
Collins (Victoria)	DeBellefeuille
Desbiens	Desilets
Desjarlais	Fortin
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gill	Hughes
Idlout	Johns
Julian	Kwan
Larouche	Lemire
MacGregor	Masse
Mathysen	May (Saaneich—Gulf Islands)
McPherson	Michaud
Normandin	Pauzé
Perron	Plamondon
Rayes	Savard-Tremblay
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Singh	Ste-Marie
Thériault	Therrien
Trudel	Vignola
Villemure	Zarrillo— 56

NAYS

Members

Aboutaif	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Alghabra	Ali
Allison	Anand
Anandasangaree	Arnold
Arseneault	Arya
Atwin	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Bittle
Blair	Block
Blois	Bradford
Bragdon	Brassard
Brière	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Carr	Carrie
Casey	Chagger
Chahal	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Chong	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cooper	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin

MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire
Maloney	Martel
Martinez Ferrada	May (Cambridge)
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLean	McLeod
Melillo	Mendès
Mendicino	Miller
Moore	Morrison
Morrissey	Motz
Murray	Muys
Naqvi	Nater
Ng	Noormohamed
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	O'Toole
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Perkins	Petitpas Taylor
Poilievre	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Robillard
Rogers	Rood
Ruff	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Scheer	Schmale
Seeback	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Shields
Shipley	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Small
Sorbara	Soroka
Steinley	Stewart
St-Onge	Strahl
Stubbs	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Thomas	Thompson
Tochor	Tolmie
Trudeau	Turnbull
Uppal	Valdez
Van Bynen	Van Popta
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Virani	Vis
Vuong	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Wilkinson
Williams	Williamson
Yip	Zahid
Zimmer	Zuberi— 246

PAIRED

Members

Bibeau	Boissonnault
Chambers	Champoux
Gourde	Rodriguez— 6

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

* * *

• (1620)

AN ACT RESPECTING THE FRENCH LANGUAGE

The House resumed from September 26 consideration of the motion that Bill C-238, An Act respecting the French language, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Private Members' Business

Dalton
 Dancho
 Deltell
 Dhaliwal
 Diab
 Dong
 Dreeshen
 Dubourg
 Duguid
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Ehsassi
 Ellis
 Erskine-Smith
 Falk (Provencher)
 Fergus
 Fillmore
 Fisher
 Fortier
 Fraser
 Fry
 Gallant
 Gagné
 Gerretsen
 Godin
 Gould
 Guilbeault
 Hallan
 Hardie
 Hoback
 Housefather
 Hutchings
 Ien
 Jeneroux
 Jones
 Kayabaga
 Kelly
 Khera
 Kmiec
 Kram
 Kusie
 Lake
 Lambropoulos
 Lamoureux
 Lapointe
 Lauzon
 LeBlanc
 Lehoux
 Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
 Lightbound
 Lobb
 Longfield
 MacAulay (Cardigan)
 MacKenzie
 Maguire
 Martel
 May (Cambridge)
 McCauley (Edmonton West)
 McGuinty
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 McLeod
 Mendès
 Miao
 Moore
 Morrison
 Motz
 Muys
 Nater
 Noormohamed
 Oliphant
 O'Toole
 Paul-Hus
 Petitpas Taylor
 Powlowski

Damoff
 Davidson
 d'Entremont
 Dhillon
 Doherty
 Dowdall
 Drouin
 Duclos
 Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
 Dzerowicz
 El-Khoury
 Epp
 Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
 Fast
 Ferreri
 Findlay
 Fonseca
 Fragiskatos
 Freeland
 Gaheer
 Garneau
 Genuis
 Gladu
 Goodridge
 Gray
 Hajdu
 Hanley
 Hepfner
 Holland
 Hussien
 Iacono
 Jaczek
 Joly
 Jowhari
 Kelloway
 Khalid
 Kitchen
 Koutrakis
 Kurek
 Kusmierczyk
 Lalonde
 Lametti
 Lantsman
 Lattanzio
 Lawrence
 Lebouthillier
 Lewis (Essex)
 Liepert
 Lloyd
 Long
 Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
 MacDonald (Malpeque)
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Maloney
 Martinez Ferrada
 Mazier
 McDonald (Avalon)
 McKay
 McLean
 Melillo
 Mendicino
 Miller
 Morrice
 Morrissey
 Murray
 Naqvi
 Ng
 O'Connell
 O'Regan
 Patzer
 Perkins
 Poilievre
 Qualtrough

Redekopp
 Rempel Garner
 Roberts
 Rogers
 Rood
 Sahota
 Saks
 Scarpaleggia
 Schiefke
 Seeback
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Shipley
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Sorbara
 Steinley
 St-Onge
 Stubbs
 Tassi
 Thomas
 Tochor
 Trudeau
 Uppal
 Van Bynen
 Van Popta
 Vandenbeld
 Vidal
 Viersen
 Vis
 Wagantall
 Waugh
 Weiler
 Williams
 Yip
 Zimmer

Reid
 Richards
 Robillard
 Romanado
 Ruff
 Sajjan
 Sarai
 Scheer
 Schmale
 Serré
 Shanahan
 Shields
 Sidhu (Brampton East)
 Small
 Soroka
 Stewart
 Strahl
 Sudds
 Taylor Roy
 Thompson
 Tolmie
 Turnbull
 Valdez
 van Koeverden
 Vandal
 Vecchio
 Vien
 Virani
 Vuong
 Warkentin
 Webber
 Wilkinson
 Williamson
 Zahid
 Zuberi— 268

PAIRED

Members

Bibeau
 Chambers
 Gourde
 Boissonnault
 Champoux
 Rodriguez— 6

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

* * *

[English]

CHILD HEALTH PROTECTION ACT

The House resumed from September 27 consideration of the motion that Bill C-252, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (prohibition of food and beverage marketing directed at children), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-252 under Private Members' Business.

Before the Clerk announced the results of the vote:

● (1640)

The Speaker: The member for North Island—Powell River is rising. Was there a technical problem?

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, we have two members who are not on the dashboard who are in the room who voted, so I am wondering if the Table could review that to make sure the numbers are correct.

The Speaker: I thank the member.

Private Members' Business

● (1645)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 181)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bergeron	Bérubé
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Blois	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Chahal	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Fergus	Fillmore
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Garneau
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lemire	Lightbound
Long	Longfield

Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
May (Saamich—Gulf Islands)	McDonald (Avalon)
McGuinty	McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod
McPherson	Mendès
Mendicino	Miao
Michaud	Miller
Morrice	Morrissey
Murray	Naqvi
Ng	Noormohamed
Normandin	O'Connell
Oliphant	O'Regan
Paupé	Perron
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Powlowski	Qualtrough
Rayes	Robillard
Rogers	Romanado
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Sarai
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Sinclair-Desgagné	Singh
Sorbara	Ste-Marie
St-Onge	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Thériault	Therrien
Thompson	Trudeau
Trudel	Turnbull
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vignola
Villemure	Virani
Vuong	Weiler
Wilkinson	Yip
Zahid	Zarrillo
Zuberi — 209	

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Benzen	Bergen
Berthold	Bezan
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chong
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
Deltell	d'Entremont
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Gallant
Généreux	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gray	Hallan
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kurek	Kusie

Privilege

Lake	Lantsman
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	MacKenzie
Maguire	Martel
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Moore	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	O'Toole
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Perkins	Poilievre
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ruff	Scheer
Schmale	Seeback
Shields	Shiplay
Small	Soroka
Steinley	Stewart
Strahl	Stubbs
Thomas	Tochor
Tolmie	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Vien
Viersen	Vis
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Williams	Williamson
Zimmer— 113	

PAIRED

Members

Bibeau	Boissonnault
Chambers	Champoux
Gourde	Rodriguez— 6

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Health.

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

* * *

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED INTIMIDATION OF A COMMITTEE WITNESS BY A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege, for which I gave notice earlier this same day, regarding the conduct of the member for St. Catharines, who attempted to intimidate Scott Benzie, a witness appearing before a committee of the Senate studying Bill C-11, an act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other acts, as reported yesterday by the Globe and Mail.

While I appreciate that this attempt to intimidate relates to proceedings of a Senate committee currently studying Bill C-11, the culprit in this case is a member of the House, and that same witness appeared before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage during its deliberations on Bill C-11, an appearance where Mr. Benzie, no doubt, first established himself as an undesirable witness for the government on the merits of Bill C-11.

Normally, it is members who bring to the attention of a committee of the House the matter of outside actors intimidating witnesses before committee, but this case is unique in that it is a member of the House of Commons doing the intimidating in another jurisdiction, the Senate. In addition, it relates to a bill, for which I have responsibility for as the shadow minister of Canadian heritage, that originated in the House of Commons and is now before the Senate. While this type of offence may not fall within one of the specifically defined categories of privilege, the category of contempt allows the House to deal with the unorthodox nature of this case.

On pages 81 to 82 of Bosc and Gagnon, they state:

Throughout the Commonwealth most procedural authorities hold that contempts, as opposed to privileges, cannot be enumerated or categorized. Speaker Sauvé explained in a 1980 ruling: "...while our privileges are defined, contempt of the House has no limits. When new ways are found to interfere with our proceedings, so too will the House, in appropriate cases, be able to find that a contempt of the House has occurred".

Another perspective of parliamentary privilege is the notion that the behaviour of members falls within the exclusive jurisdiction of this House. At pages 181 to 183 of Maingot's *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, it clearly states that the House of Commons' jurisdiction over its members is absolute and exclusive, whereby the House has the power to enforce discipline on members of the House of Commons. Page 76 of Bosc and Gagnon refers to one of the rights of the House recognized by the Supreme Court, which is disciplinary authority over its members.

The next question is why the House would exercise its disciplinary authority over a member in this case. Simply put, what is good for the goose is good for the gander. Attempts by anyone to intimidate a witness before a committee is considered a contempt. It is particularly offensive that it is a member of the House who is attempting to interfere with the work of a committee in a manner that would be considered a contempt, had it been attempted by a member of the public.

The Globe and Mail story I referred to earlier reports:

A Liberal MP has asked the lobbying commissioner to investigate an outspoken critic of the federal government's online-streaming bill for failing to immediately disclose funding from YouTube and TikTok.

The Heritage Minister's Parliamentary secretary...asked Lobbying Commissioner Nancy Bélanger to launch an investigation into Digital First Canada, an organization that advocates for YouTubers and people posting videos on platforms.

The article continues:

[Executive director] Mr. Benzie questioned the motivation of the minister's parliamentary secretary in referring him to the lobbying commissioner. He said the MP had not asked for a probe into organizations receiving outside funding, both public and private that had given evidence in favour of Bill C-11....

Mr. Benzie said that he was speaking out about the bill because no other group was representing the views of individuals posting videos on YouTube — including "creators making \$16 a month" — and he was concerned about the impact of the legislation on their livelihoods.

A similar situation occurred on December 4, 1992. The then member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell rose in the House to bring to the attention of the Speaker the intimidation of a witness appearing before a committee of the House for remarks she made during testimony at that committee. The CBC threatened a lawsuit against the witness because of evidence she presented at the committee. The Speaker ruled the matter to be a *prima facie* question of privilege. Also noteworthy in that case is that the Speaker came to this conclusion without a report from a committee. In this case, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage is threatening an investigation against a witness because of evidence he presented to a committee.

Page 267 of the 24th edition of Erskine May states, “Any conduct calculated to deter prospective witnesses from giving evidence before either House or a committee is a contempt.” Similar statements are made at page 82 of Bosc and Gagnon, which explains that witnesses are protected from threats or intimidation.

• (1650)

Paragraph 15.23 of Erskine May, 25th edition, states, “Both Houses will treat the bringing of legal proceedings against any person on account of any evidence which they may have given in the course of any proceedings in the House or before one of its committees as a contempt.”

On April 13, 2000, the Senate Standing Committee on Privileges, Standing Rules and Orders presented its fifth report dealing with allegations about reprisals against a witness. The report stated, in part, as follows:

The Senate, and all senators, view with great seriousness any allegations of possible intimidation or harassment of a witness or potential witness before a Senate committee. In order for the Senate to discharge its functions and duties properly, it must be able to call and hear from witnesses without their being threatened or fearing any repercussions. Any interference with a person who has given evidence before a Senate committee, or who is planning to, is an interference with the Senate itself, and cannot be tolerated.

Our privileges are necessary to allow us to perform our duties and to defend against threats against the authority of this Parliament. The fact that this threat came from within this place is particularly distressing.

Mr. Speaker, even if you have some doubts about this case involving a Senate committee and the conduct of a member of the House of Commons, I urge you to give this case the benefit of the doubt.

I refer the House to Maingot, second edition, *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, page 227, which I will quote for everyone's benefit. It states:

In the final analysis, in areas of doubt, the Speaker asks simply: Does the act complained of appear at first sight to be a breach of privilege...or to put it shortly, has the Member an arguable point? If the Speaker feels any doubt on the question, he should...leave it to the House.

In a ruling on October 24, 1966, at page 9005 of the Debates, the Speaker said:

In considering this matter, I ask myself, what is the duty of the Speaker in cases of doubt? If we take into consideration that at the moment the Speaker is not asked to render a decision as to whether or not the article complained of constitutes a breach of privilege...and considering also that the Speaker is the guardian of the rules, rights and privileges of the house and of its members and that he cannot deprive them of such privileges when there is uncertainty in his mind...I think, at this

Routine Proceedings

preliminary stage of the proceedings the doubt which I have in my mind should be interpreted to the benefit of the member.

Further, on March 27, 1969, page 7182, the Debates states the following:

[The member] has, perhaps, a grievance against the government in that capacity rather than in his capacity as a member of parliament. On the other hand, hon. members know that the house has always exercised great care in attempting to protect the rights and privileges of all its members. Since there is some doubt about the interpretation of the precedents in this situation, I would be inclined to resolve that doubt in favour of the hon. member.

Mr. Speaker, there are ample precedents to allow you to put this matter to the House and to have it decide on the best course of action and what it might be. If you do give this matter the benefit of the doubt and find a *prima facie* question of privilege, I am of course prepared to move the appropriate motion.

• (1655)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, we have had an opportunity to hear this question of privilege and would like to get back to you with some comments. If you would be so kind as to give us a couple of days to do that, it would be greatly appreciated.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for bringing this to our attention and the NDP reserves the right to reply.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we have duly noted my colleague's comments and we reserve the right to reply or respond at a later date.

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: I thank everyone for their interventions. We will take this under advisement and come back to the House as soon as possible.

It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, Health; the hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton, Foreign Affairs; the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, Persons with Disabilities.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

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 sixth report of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology entitled “How Can Canada Remain a Leader in the Global Quantum Marathon?”.

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

Routine Proceedings

● (1700)

**STRENGTHENING ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
FOR A HEALTHIER CANADA ACT**

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.) moved that Bill S-5, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, to make related amendments to the Food and Drugs Act and to repeal the Perfluorooctane Sulfonate Virtual Elimination Act, be read the first time.

(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

* * *

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, presented on Monday, June 20, be modified to append the dissenting opinion of the Bloc Québécois.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member'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)

* * *

[Translation]

PETITIONS

BRAIN STEM GLIOMA

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I want to talk about brain stem glioma. This incurable disease is the leading cause of brain tumour death in children.

Together with my colleagues, the member for Toronto—Danforth, the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, the member for Sault Ste. Marie and the member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, I am presenting a petition signed by more than 13,000 people.

The petitioners are calling on us to designate May 17 of each year as national brain stem glioma awareness day in order to raise awareness about this disease, give hope to Canadian families, ensure that there is enough research funding and save young lives.

On behalf of Isabelle and the little warrior, Florence, let us unite for the young children who suffer from this rare disease.

[English]

FERTILIZERS

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I proudly rise today to present petition e-3940, which

has been signed by over 800 Canadians who are calling on the Liberal government to cancel the planned fertilizer reduction policy.

Canadians understand limiting fertilizer would decrease food production and, therefore, further increase the cost of food at a time of record inflation. They also know limiting fertilizer would increase the costs to farmers and hinder economic growth. This also comes at a time when Canadians are using food banks at record rates.

Canadians want their government to stand up for Canadian farmers and cancel the fertilizer reduction plan. I wholeheartedly support them.

AQUACULTURE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise and present a petition on a burning issue for my constituents, which is the plight of Pacific salmon. It is a species on the brink.

Petitioners call on the Government of Canada to remove the conflict of interest found within the Fisheries Act, which calls on the Department of Fisheries and Oceans as a promoter of salmon aquaculture and also a regulator of salmon aquaculture.

They call for the mandate of DFO to be specifically the promotion of sustainable fisheries and protecting the habitat of salmon. Petitioners call on the government to implement all the recommendations of the commission on salmon of Mr. Justice Cohen and also to ensure the government lives up to the Liberal election promise to get these toxic fish factories out of the water.

FIREARMS

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition today on behalf of a number of my constituents in Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

Specifically, they are identifying that, on April 29 of this year, the Liberal government introduced an order to provide further restrictions on licensed firearms owners, specifically via a shadow registry. They point out that the previous gun registry cost taxpayers over a billion dollars, and they point out that this unfairly targets Canadian firearms owners who possess legitimate possession and acquisition licences and restricted possession and acquisition licences. They are already the most vetted and daily-screened Canadians, and it is proven statistically that they are much less likely to commit a crime than non-PAL or RPAL holders.

They, therefore, call upon the government to immediately repeal the order that was passed on April 29, 2022.

* * *

● (1705)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand at this time.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand at this time.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[*Translation*]

POINTS OF ORDER

REQUIREMENT OF ROYAL RECOMMENDATION FOR BILL C-290

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, recently the Chair sought the members' views on whether my bill about public sector integrity, Bill C-290, might require a royal recommendation. The Chair did not specify which part of the bill warranted its intervention, but I surmise that two sections merit analysis.

There is clause 5, which states that the chief executive must provide support to the public servant making a disclosure.

There is also subclause 3(3), which gives contract employees the same protection offered to public servants who disclose wrongdoing in the public sector.

In my view, these provisions do not generate any expenditures that would not be covered by an existing royal recommendation, and that is what I intend to argue today.

I would like to begin by saying a word about Bill C-290. It amends the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act to make it more effective. That legislation, as members will remember, was passed in the wake of the sponsorship scandal and was intended to provide protection to public servants who disclose wrongdoing in the public sector.

In many cases, only one person within the machinery of government becomes aware of wrongdoing, illegal acts, abuse of power or political interference in decisions that should be up to the non-partisan public service. The purpose of the act is to protect public servants who blow the whistle from reprisal and to create an institution responsible for enforcing the act, the Office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner, that public servants can go to for help.

Even though the act was passed more than 15 years ago, it has not produced the expected results. In fact, the federal government has one of the worst whistleblower protection regimes in the world, according to the International Bar Association.

Add up the numerous flaws throughout the act, and it is basically useless. For example, because the definition of wrongdoing is too narrow, many disclosures are not protected by the act. If a public servant makes an unprotected disclosure, their complaint will be rejected, the act will not protect them from reprisal, and their

Points of Order

anonymity cannot be guaranteed either. Furthermore, if the whistleblower's complaint is admitted and an investigation is launched, the act does not clearly protect witnesses.

In the case of an internal investigation conducted by a person in a position of authority, this is understandably problematic. It is these flaws that my public sector integrity bill aims to correct.

This brings me to clause 5, which specifies that the chief executive must provide support to a public servant who makes a disclosure. Although the bill does not specify the nature of the support, it is quite clear that it is not financial support. The bill provides for no new financial support, period. The support referenced in clause 5 would involve, rather, things like information, referrals, guidance or advice, all of which are part of the normal duties and functions of executives. In short, we need to ensure that when public servants see wrongdoing, they know their rights, they know where to go, and they are not left to fend for themselves.

This brings me to subclause 3(3) of my bill. It amends the definition of "public servant", adding "every person retained under contract to perform services for the public sector". Subclause 3(5) adds that the government cannot terminate a contract as a result of a disclosure. This provision does not generate any expenditure that is not already foreseen, and here is why.

First, the current act already contains provisions about contracts. Under section 42.2, the government may not "withhold any payment that is due and payable in respect of any...contract". It may not "terminate any contract...by reason only that the other party to the contract or any of that other party's employees has...provided information concerning an alleged wrongdoing".

Furthermore, a disclosure is not considered a reasonable ground for refusing to enter into a new contract. The problem is that the definition of contract is restrictive. According to the act, contract "does not include an agreement by a public servant, or by a person appointed by the Governor in Council or by a minister of the Crown, to perform the duties to which their employment or appointment relates".

A construction company that reports wrongdoing at a federal government work site is protected, yet a person hired under contract to provide a service to the government on a temporary basis may not be covered. Because that person meets the definition of a casual worker under the Public Service Employment Act, I gather that they are excluded because they carry out the duties of a public servant but do not enjoy the other protections that public servants have because they are a casual worker.

● (1710)

One example is someone who is offered a three-month contract with the Canada Revenue Agency during income tax season. Because they have no job security, people with precarious status are precisely the ones who need protection the most.

Government Orders

It should be noted that they are not completely unprotected at this time. They are afforded some protection through their contract, which is binding on the Crown. That is how it works right now. Under contract law, which is governed by the Civil Code or by common law, the government cannot unilaterally modify or terminate a contract in an arbitrary manner. This is already the case.

The government's financial commitments are those set out in the contract, whether or not Bill C-290 is passed, but the remedy for contractors who experience retaliation is a civil suit. Bill C-290 simply changes the administrative process following a complaint.

If Bill C-290 passes, contractors will be able to file complaints with the commissioner and they will remain anonymous. The complaint will go through the process and the contractor can expect to see an investigation that will result in an end to the wrongdoing. In the event of reprisals in the form of termination of contract, the contractor can seek assistance from the commissioner, who will then reach out to the government, if appropriate, saving contractors from having to sue in court to enforce the provisions of their contracts. This does not, however, change the terms of the contract or the financial obligations thereof.

In short, Bill C-290 in no way alters any of the government's contractual obligations. These obligations are already binding in civil court and must be met under part III of the Financial Administration Act. Bill C-290 in no way changes those obligations. It will not generate any expenditure beyond what is already set out in the existing legal framework. It changes neither the amount of the expenditure, nor its terms or any associated conditions. In conclusion, I do not feel that it requires royal recommendation and I am confident that the Chair will come to the same conclusion.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Mirabel for his speech on this point of order.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR RECONCILIATION ACT

The House resumed from September 21 consideration of the motion that Bill C-29, An Act to provide for the establishment of a national council for reconciliation, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform that House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 81 minutes.

The hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am really honoured to rise again in this place to discuss Bill C-29, a bill that intends to establish the national body for reconciliation. It is one that I think has been called for for a long time.

I really want to adjust folks' imagination about what reconciliation should be. When we imagine what reconciliation is in our country, we should imagine a country where indigenous people, first nation, Métis and Inuit truly have an opportunity to be themselves and excel in their own domains. What we are seeing, howev-

er, is a government that is insistent on going as slowly as possible in ensuring that these basic dignities and rights are truly recognized.

When we think about how little we have done in the last seven years with this government, it is astonishing to survivors who are at the point in their life where they have now told their story. They thought that after telling the truth of their own experiences with residential schools, the sixties scoop and the current CFS system, things would truly change.

It is unfortunate that this is the reality facing indigenous people today. There are more children in care now than were taken during the residential school period. There are more children continuously living in poverty, without food and in many cases without even shelter and water. These are the conditions of indigenous people in my communities, which are Métis, and in Inuit communities and first nations communities right across the country.

Best estimates put the government at 13 completed calls to action out of the 94. For seven years the government has had an opportunity to address these systemic problems, and Indigenous people are begging the question: Does the government truly care?

Let us back up seven years. The Prime Minister said that the most important relationship to the government would be with indigenous people. What is happening to our relatives is truly a shame. It is an abomination given that these survivors have given so much. The reciprocity that is needed now needs to move mountains, not pebbles, which is currently on display by the Liberal government.

Indigenous people deserve so much more. My hope is that we can reach deep into the understanding of this country to find lessons deep within. I am not the first indigenous member of Parliament to be in this place talking about these things. Louis Riel, at the time when he was elected, was unable to even stand in this place to talk about justice for our people.

Now we have struggled and climbed in this place in order to deliver what we hope is a message to the government that it is not going fast enough and that people are dying, our relatives, day after day while we wait. At the top of the government's agenda is to finally establish the national body for reconciliation, but this is after seven years. It is unacceptable.

The New Democrats will support this bill, but rest assured, indigenous people will not stop until there is truly justice that accounts for the lost resources. From coast to coast to coast, Canadians have to realize and every member of Parliament must realize that they stand on indigenous land, with thousands of years of history. It is a matter of dignity and respect for where we truly are.

Government Orders

When we are a guest in someone's house, we do not go in, steal everything and wreck the place. However, what we are seeing with massive pollution, whether it is in Fort McMurray tailings ponds or the ring of fire, and with indigenous children is that indigenous people are continually pushed to the fringes of what should be a time for true justice.

Survivors have put their stories forward and have shed tears, bringing out the pins and needles stuck deep within their heart to share with Canadians a true fact: that this country has harmed indigenous people even though it was not all that long ago, just a few generations, that we made a great treaty with one another. Where I am from is known as Treaty 6. To be betrayed so greatly and have no potential for justice for residential school survivors, as some of the perpetrators of that violence are still at large, is a real pain that indigenous communities have. They know that the people who hurt them in those schools are still walking the streets.

• (1715)

The Canada I want to be a part of and the Canada I think everyone deserves, particularly indigenous people, must recognize the basic human rights of indigenous people. It must recognize that indigenous people are the stewards and landowners of this place. This is Turtle Island, and I hope all members can find deep within themselves that truth, which is that when they come here to this place, North America, Turtle Island, they should come with dignity and respect for the original landowners. That means having true reciprocity. The things people get from being in this place are the things we must give back. It is a matter of dignity for indigenous people. This is where we are in Canada.

I am pleased to see this bill finally be presented, but I am so disheartened at the rate at which we are moving. This is not fast enough, and I challenge the government to move quicker.

• (1720)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's comments. I do not necessarily agree with his synopsis of what the government has or has not done. I will hopefully be able to expand on that.

Is there any specific call to action? If the member were to cite a specific one he believes the Government of Canada needs to be working harder on, could he indicate to the chamber which specific call to action that would be? That would be helpful.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Mr. Speaker, of course we are going to disagree on the rate of this. If his community was suffering this, I would bet the member would be rising every single day, saying the same thing. The reality is that is not the case.

Call to action number 66, for example, calls on the government to develop a plan for indigenous youth. It is something that the government actually committed to and something that relatives in my community have participated in. My relative, Gabrielle Fayant, was the minister's special adviser for call to action number 66. She was just at a Senate hearing to talk about how the government used indigenous youth to produce a report that it has not moved on. It has been almost two years. Indigenous youth cannot wait, and the government needs to do its homework.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the speech the member gave. One of the things he talked about was blocked resources. He made some points about Fort McMurray and the energy systems that we have, and also the ring of fire.

Indigenous businesses have tried to promote the businesses that he indicated are causing the problems at this point in time. That is part of the discussion that he should have with everybody who is there, not simply those who are taking a position similar to that of the NDP, which is to try and minimize the activities that we have for our indigenous people.

I was on the aboriginal affairs and northern development committee prior to the truth and reconciliation report. It was handed over to the Liberals, and the Liberals indicated that they were going to do some things.

Can the member talk about his impressions of how quickly those things have been done?

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Mr. Speaker, I want to describe the narrative that Conservatives often use when it comes to indigenous people. We do not have to look too far to find it.

When it comes to resource projects, it seems as though the Conservatives are right there when a company has an interest in a development. If there is a proposal that puts an indigenous group in favour of that project, they are there. However, when an indigenous community wants to protect its water, the Conservatives are nowhere to be seen.

The member knows very well that there are people whose lives depend on that clean water and whose livelihood depends on that culture, from fishing to hunting to so many more traditional activities. It is unfair that the member would assume that because indigenous people have a different perspective, some of them do not care about their land or environment. It is important that when we talk about resource projects, we talk about the people who have been stewarding that land for thousands of years and what is at risk.

When it comes time to understand that these impacts will be on children and future generations, indigenous people know what is important. I come from a community that knows that as well. My community has been ravaged by the oil sector. There are still, to date, a huge amount, billions of dollars' worth, of outstanding, uncleaned orphan wells. That is in Alberta. What is happening right now is those indigenous communities are being asked to just leave them or clean them up themselves, while the Conservatives will not even mention the fact that it is the companies that they purport to support that are drilling these sites and polluting our environment without a penny going to reclamation.

I would be glad to talk about this subject all day.

Government Orders

The Deputy Speaker: I will now make my daily request to hon. members, which is that when they ask questions, they should keep them short. They should also keep the answers short, so that everyone can participate. I am seeing three people standing and wanting to ask questions, but we do not have any time left.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country.

• (1725)

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to acknowledge that Canada's Parliament is located on the ancestral and unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

I also want to mention that I will be sharing my time with the member for Winnipeg North.

As my hon. colleague has just mentioned, Canadians are committed to taking the necessary steps to ensure that we make progress toward true and respectful reconciliation. As Canada increasingly comes to grips with the unspeakable harms committed at residential schools, we are working with communities across the country on the heart-wrenching but necessary work to locate and commemorate missing children.

Many indigenous residents and their families in my riding, such as the Lilwat, were forced to attend the Kamloops Indian Residential School, where the tragedy of unmarked graves first came to light nationally. The shishálh are also currently researching and searching for missing children at the site of the former day school, with ground-penetrating radar.

As they are forced to relive the trauma of residential schools, we know it is not just the survivors and descendants who were impacted. It has led to terrible and sometimes permanent impacts on indigenous cultures and languages throughout the country.

We are supporting education and awareness initiatives through the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and the second annual National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, taking place this Friday, September 30. I invite all members of the House, and indeed all Canadians, to take the time this Friday to learn and understand the painful history and ongoing trauma that residential schools have inflicted upon indigenous peoples.

Walking the path of reconciliation will require consistent action and an earnest desire to forge a new relationship based on mutual respect, trust and nation-to-nation recognition, to which indigenous peoples are entitled. This work is vital, complex and long-term, and it will have to take place under our government and any governments that follow. For that reason, it is crucial that we have systems to measure the progress we are making as a country as we work toward reconciliation, and that we hold the government accountable to its obligations towards indigenous peoples.

In this regard, we are guided by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action. In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was chaired by the Hon. Murray Sinclair, investigated the history and legacy of residential schools and released its final report.

It was the culmination of six years of hearings and testimonies from more than 6,000 residential school survivors and their loved ones. The report included 94 calls to action to redress the legacy of residential schools and achieve true reconciliation based on the experience and recommendations of survivors.

The Government of Canada is committed to implementing each and every one of these calls to action. One of the many key steps forward, made just last year, was the passing into law of legislation to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into Canadian Law.

We know progress has been made, but everyone in this place would agree that there is a lot of work to do.

That is why I stand before the House today, to ask that we pass Bill C-29 without delay so that Canada can be held accountable for our progress and our promises on reconciliation.

To ensure accountability, Bill C-29 will create a national council for reconciliation, with a mandate to monitor Canada's progress toward reconciliation and to develop a multi-year national action plan to advance reconciliation. It will conduct research into promising new practices in Canada and around the world that will advance our efforts toward reconciliation, and it will have the power to make recommendations to the government on advancing reconciliation in all aspects of Canadian society.

It will also work to educate the public about indigenous people's realities and histories and to advocate for reconciliation across the country. These measures are a vital part of keeping the government accountable on its obligations toward indigenous people and ensuring that all governments in Canada are conscious of their duty to walk the path of reconciliation.

Passing Bill C-29 and establishing a national council for reconciliation will help us make significant strides toward implementing all of the calls to action and making concrete progress on reconciliation across the country.

In fact, establishing the council was something that the commission specifically called for in calls to action 53 to 56. Advancing Bill C-29 will ensure that we are well on our way to implementing these four calls to action.

As previously mentioned, the bill will enable the creation of the national council for reconciliation, which will immediately fulfill call to action 53.

Budget 2019 already allocated funding, totalling \$126.5 million, to support the establishment of the national council for reconciliation, including \$1.5 million for its first year of operations and a \$125-million endowment for its ongoing operating capital. If established, this funding can be immediately transferred to the council, meeting the first stage of funding obligations under call to action 54.

Government Orders

● (1730)

If the council is created, Bill C-29 will also lay the foundation to address calls to action 55 and 56. Call to action 55 asked that Canada provide key information to the council to support it in its work. Bill C-29 would ensure there are open lines of communication between the council and Canada's governments and institutions, so that information can flow easily and efficiently. This would be established through an information-sharing protocol between the responsible minister and the council. This kind of transparency is vital to rebuilding trust and strengthening our relationships with indigenous peoples and all Canadians.

Finally, call to action 56 states that the government must respond to the council's annual reports. Bill C-29 would also commit the federal government to publishing an annual report on the state of indigenous peoples. This report would outline the Government of Canada's plans to advance reconciliation, year by year, so that all Canadians can clearly see how the government is taking action.

As we look forward to the day when the council is established, these last two critical commitments, about information sharing and reporting back, would ensure that the Government of Canada remains accountable to the council and in turn accountable to Canadians.

Establishing the national council for reconciliation would do more than fulfill the four calls to action I just mentioned. A key part of the council's mandate would be to evaluate and report on the implementation of all the calls to action. This is a vital milestone on our path toward reconciliation.

We often talk about which calls to action we have fulfilled or which ones are on their way, and there is often much debate on how quickly we are advancing. Federal, provincial, municipal and indigenous governments, along with other institutions and parts of society, have not always worked together in a harmonized way. This has made it difficult to get an accurate picture of our progress on reconciliation as a whole across the country. That is what the national council for reconciliation would help us accomplish. The council would take stock of our progress as a nation and provide us with advice and direction on how to accelerate the implementation of all calls to action, not just the 76 that are under federal or shared responsibility.

There is a dire need to make progress on reconciliation, not only on the calls to action, but on who we are as a country. Seeing the big picture is critical to achieving tangible progress toward greater reconciliation in this country, and that is exactly what Bill C-29 would do. It would allow us to establish, support and maintain a national council for reconciliation, fulfilling calls to action 53 to 56. Beyond this, we would be setting the foundation to evaluate and report on the implementation of all the TRC's calls to action.

While I think this is a vital step, I want to highlight that I believe there is room for improvement in this bill. We must ensure that the council's board of directors is more representative of the diversity of the 634 indigenous communities right across the country. Whether they be historical or modern treaty nations, have no treaty, are living on or off reserve or are self-governing, it is vital that their voices be a part of the process and serve to guide us forward toward

reconciliation, but in order to do that we must pass this bill now, so that it can be studied, debated and improved at committee.

Passing this bill would demonstrate to Canadians that we are serious about implementing the calls to action and being accountable for our actions and commitments. Just as we showed by passing the net-zero emissions accountability act that we are serious about meeting our emissions reductions targets, we must pass this bill to show we are serious about keeping our promises to indigenous peoples and we are serious about reconciliation.

With that, *?ul nu msh chalap*.

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Madam Speaker, I agree with much of what my colleague from the Liberal Party had to say, and I appreciate his sentiment.

I have a question around the timing of this. Of course, the government has said that no relationship is more important to it than its relationship with indigenous peoples. It has said a lot of the right words around reconciliation, but the final report of the interim board for the national council for reconciliation was completed in June 2018. I wonder if the member can provide any insight as to why it took the government so long to bring this forward and why we could not have had this debate many years before.

● (1735)

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Madam Speaker, I believe we need to continue to move quicker on reconciliation. We have the 94 calls to action. We have the playbook for what we need to do. Our position is that 80% of the calls to action are completed or under way. I know that there is a lot of debate around that.

We have had some amazing accomplishments just in the last year. I mentioned the passing of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and changing the oath of citizenship. We have a lot more to do, but I really appreciate hearing the question from the member opposite, because I believe if we can fast-track this and have agreement among members of the House, we can move through it much quicker than we have seen to date. That must be a priority for all of us.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to build on the question that my colleague just asked.

I have been listening to this debate from the beginning and I am curious. There seems to be consensus in the House that we need to create a national council for reconciliation, so why did it take the government seven years to propose creating this council?

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Madam Speaker, I thank my Bloc colleague for his question.

Government Orders

There has been an interim council since 2018, and we know that this work needs to be completed, which is why we are here today. I have been a member of Parliament since 2019, and I know that we have worked very hard to make progress on reconciliation in that time. We must still work more quickly, however. I hope that the member and the Bloc Québécois will support this bill so that we can fulfill this call to action.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, as we discuss this bill, survivors of St. Anne's residential school are going to the Supreme Court over the fact that the government has spent close to \$4 million fighting against their rights, and over the fact that for some of the most horrific child abuse, rape and torture cases in Canadian history, the evidence was suppressed by the justice department of Canada and officials lied in the hearings.

How can the Liberal government claim that reconciliation is possible when the survivors of St. Anne's residential school have to go to the Supreme Court to get basic legal rights over the fact that their testimonies were not properly adjudicated because the government suppressed evidence to protect predator priests, nuns and brothers at that horrific institution?

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Madam Speaker, personally, I do not know all the facts of the case that the member brought to light in his question. However, I do know, and have been able to listen to and understand, some of the horrific things that happened in the day schools in my riding, including the abuse that happened, the rape and the sexual abuse.

Some of the positions the Government of Canada has taken in the past have been, in my mind, quite disgusting. We need to have a change in paradigm about how we deal with these court cases. We need to come from a path of understanding and compassion, and there is a lot of work to do within the positions that our counsel are taking.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what a pleasure it is to rise today to speak to such an important piece of legislation.

Back in 2015, after we formed government, the Prime Minister indicated to all Canadians the importance of our relationship with indigenous people and the need to ensure that this relationship is supported in very real and tangible ways. The way we are doing that is through reconciliation, among many other things.

I look at the issue of reconciliation from a bit of a different perspective, having been a parliamentarian for over 30 years, the first 20 years of them as a member of the Manitoba legislature. If we take a look at the Manitoba legislature and where I lived in Tyndall Park, I literally drove down Burrows Avenue, went to Salter and Isabel and then to the Manitoba legislature. I stopped on many occasions at all sorts of different events. I have an understanding of the harms that have taken place within indigenous communities.

I have advocated, whether in the government benches or the opposition benches, for how important it is that we respect, honour and enable indigenous people and their leadership, work through

consultation, allow indigenous leadership to provide us the way and continue to consult. I have been so very impressed and pleased with the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations from the moment he stood a number of years ago and gave an S. O. 31 in the Cree language. It was the first time I had witnessed something of that nature in 30 years as a parliamentarian.

The initiatives that have been taken monetarily, policy-wise, budget-wise and legislative-wise have been significant over the last seven years, and we are committed to doing more.

We can take a look at the 94 calls to action under truth and reconciliation. Members make reference to a dozen or 13. There are some that come to my mind and I made note of them, such as call to action 4 and the child welfare legislation. I go back to my days at the Manitoba legislature when the child advocate said that Manitoba was in a crisis situation with our children.

Take a look at the numbers. A member made reference to call to action 66. I understand what 66 is proposing to do, but I would suggest to members that when we think in terms of the calls to action, not every call to action is the sole responsibility of Ottawa. Others need to be engaged also.

To recognize call to action 66 means investing in young people, indigenous young people in particular, with both finances and other resources, and having trust and faith. We do that by supporting and allocating a significant amount of financial resources to education. We have seen the creation of educational opportunities that were not there in the past, even in the city of Winnipeg, that are there today because of call to action 66.

I would love to say we can turn a page and that call to action 66 is complete, but like many of the calls to action, it is not going to be resolved overnight. This is going to take time. We have to be patient, and we have to listen to what indigenous people are saying, allow for leadership and support it.

I look at an organization like Ma Mawi in Winnipeg's north end. It has done phenomenal work in terms of the education and support of young people and single parents, providing opportunities that many would never have had if it were not for Ma Mawi being a place that gives support in a very real and tangible way. When ministers talk to me about coming to Winnipeg, I often suggest that Ma Mawi is an excellent example of leadership because of how effective it has been in transforming and changing lives in a very real and tangible way, including in education.

• (1740)

There are 94 calls to action and in just over 70 of them, the federal government is directly involved. Members should not necessarily quote me, as Hansard will do that for them, but at the end of day about 80% of the ones the government is responsible for, at least in whole or in part, have seen significant action. Many of them have come to fruition.

Government Orders

Friday is a very significant day, a day that Canadians from coast to coast to coast will appreciate. It is a statutory holiday created on the floor of the House of Commons because all members recognized the importance of truth and reconciliation. Would it not be wonderful to pass this legislation today, legislation that would create a national council for reconciliation? Not only would it create the council, but the supports would be there for the council, which deals with several calls to action.

When I look at child welfare, I see a positive step forward. We have seen that taking place. We also have call to action 43, the UN declaration. More than one political party in the House pushed for that and it was ultimately passed.

There is the oath of citizenship. Every year, hundreds of thousands of people come to Canada, and thank goodness, as we are very dependent on them and need that. Many get their citizenship shortly thereafter, and now part of that citizenship is recognizing the importance of reconciliation.

These calls to action are tangible things the federal government can do. This is about taking the proper actions, such as the consultations that are necessary, even during a pandemic that has lasted two years. We are still not quite out of it, but there are still consultations and work being done because the Prime Minister made a commitment to a renewed relationship with first nations and indigenous people.

I look at individuals like David Chartrand, who has accomplished so much through the Manitoba Métis Federation. We as a government have been there to support them in a very real and tangible way, not just providing financial support but being there and listening to what the federation has to say, whether it is the national federation or the one in Manitoba.

As much as possible, I try to keep in touch with individuals who mean a great deal to me and who have influenced me, like Sharon Redsky and Cindy Woodhouse, individuals I have made reference to in the past. One does not have to be of indigenous background to be understanding and sympathetic, and to want and demand action on the calls to action. However, I do believe that as a government, we would be challenged to find any other prior government that has been able to achieve as much as we have achieved in the last six or seven years. If we were honest with ourselves, I believe everyone would agree with that. Sure, there is room for improvement and, yes, we could be doing more. However, we are doing the best job we can, and those calls to action will continue to be a high priority for this government and, I suggest, for the entire House.

• (1745)

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member for Winnipeg North is definitely not shy to rise in this place and share his thoughts with the chamber.

My question is regarding a recent PBO report that showed the increase the government has had in expenditures through ICS since 2015 has not measured up to the government meeting its targets of improving lives in indigenous communities. It is unfortunate that we see, time and time again, that more spending from the government is not leading to better results. I am wondering if the member has any reflections on some of the structural challenges within the

department and its bureaucracy, which are getting in the way of these funds actually getting to where they need to go.

• (1750)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I believe we need to be patient as we continue to work with indigenous people in advancing a wide variety of projects. It was just a number of months ago the Hudson's Bay building in downtown Winnipeg, a historic building of thousands of square feet, became owned and operated by the Southern Chiefs' Organization.

Hudson's Bay, which has good reason to want to have reconciliation with indigenous people, gifted the building to the organization. It was so wonderful to see the Prime Minister, Premier Heather Stefanson, a Conservative; Brian Bolman, the mayor of Winnipeg; and the indigenous leaders who led the proposal.

There is a significant cost factor to this, and I suspect not every dollar will be optimized, but I would suggest that the investments we are making today will pay great dividends into the future. At the end of the day, we are prepared to invest in reconciliation in all ways.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, it has been well said that the government did some work on call to action 66. However, the reality one can see from the Senate hearings, or even the House of Commons hearings, is that the government's own special representative to that report said it had failed to administer the funding in an appropriate way. There has been no response to that special adviser.

My question is framed around some key figures. Indigenous people are more likely to be living in a dwelling in need of major repair, at a rate of 16.4% compared with the Canadian average of 5.7%. Indigenous people are living in overcrowded homes, at a rate of 17.1% compared to the average of 9.4%. Almost one in five indigenous people lives in a low-income household. These numbers are getting worse.

The words the hon. member shares about how great things are in Winnipeg are definitely not the case in Saskatchewan and Alberta. Why will the government not take action on the issues that matter most and truly make sure there is more effort to get these numbers down? People really need help.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would not want to give the member the wrong impression. The severity of the problems and the issues the member makes reference to are very much in Winnipeg. That is why I used the example of my drive from my home in Tyndall Park to the Manitoba legislature when I was in the Manitoba legislature for almost 20 years.

Government Orders

There are hardships. We have many individuals who are sleeping in bus shacks. They are homeless, and they are of all different ethnicities and backgrounds. If one takes a look at the correlation, one needs to be concerned. It is one of the reasons we have the national housing strategy. It is one of the reasons we have a minister prepared to do what is necessary and to work with people to try to increase housing. The Hudson's Bay building is a good example of that.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees in principle. However, our concerns remain. Last spring, we unanimously passed a motion to ensure that indigenous communities have all the resources they need to lift the veil on the true history of residential schools. The funding needs to be ongoing and predictable to promote healing.

Can my colleague assure the House that this funding will be predictable and that these communities can be certain of getting the resources they need in the medium term to allow them to heal?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, there absolutely is. The Prime Minister and the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations have made it very clear that the funds would be there.

It is a number of calls for action within the report. It is very much an active file. I suspect that if any indigenous communities feel there is a lack of funding for dealing with this particular issue, they should approach the minister.

I do not believe that is the case. The money is there and—

• (1755)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We will resume debate.

The hon. member for Peterborough—Kawartha.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

As always, it is an honour and privilege to stand in the House of Commons to represent the constituents of Peterborough—Kawartha. Today, I rise to speak to Bill C-29, an act to provide for the establishment of a national council for reconciliation. With Truth and Reconciliation Day just two days away, this coming Friday, September 30, this is an important bill, and I take very seriously how delicate this conversation is for many people.

After six and a half years, this bill is the government's attempt to address the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action 53 through 56. These four calls to action include: call to action 53, to “establish a National Council for Reconciliation”; call to action 54, to “provide multi-year funding for the National Council for Reconciliation to ensure that it has the financial, human and technical resources required to conduct its work”; call to action 55, to provide annual reports to show progress on reconciliation; and call to action 56, to issue “an annual 'State of Aboriginal Peoples' report [to] outline the government's plans for advancing reconciliation.”

As I mentioned, this bill is long overdue, and although we will support a lot of what this bill is, there are serious amendments, serious discussion and serious overhaul that need to be considered. I will address that today in my speech.

If we are going to work toward meaningful reconciliation with indigenous people, a robust and inclusive response to calls to action 53 to 56 is needed. Unfortunately, this bill would not meet the target. We continue to have the same problems over and over, and that is that there is too much government in the way.

We often hear this saying, and I will be talking about it today in my speech. It is “FIBI”, or “for indigenous, by indigenous”. We need to trust indigenous and allow them to do what they are able to do because they know how to make the best decisions for them, not the government.

Section 8 of the bill has the creation of a not-for-profit corporation that would monitor and report the government's progress in its efforts for reconciliation with indigenous people. The council would not be an agent of His Majesty in the right of Canada, nor would it be governed by the Financial Administration Act. It portrays itself to be an independent body.

Here lies the first major concern we have with Bill C-29. How independent would this council be if the minister of crown-indigenous relations picked the board members. The bill stipulates that the first board of directors would be selected by the minister in collaboration with the transitional committee. This would mean that the minister of the day and their hand-picked transitional team would determine the council's future, which is expected to hold that same minister to account for its own failed record on reconciliation. This does not sound like meaningful reconciliation.

Call to action 54 calls on the government to provide multi-year funding for the national council. The government did this in budget 2019 by allocating \$126.5 million, yet the act would not require any accountability for the expenditure of this money and not one financial report would need to be filed by the council.

This is a major problem. Accountability and transparency are seriously lacking in the government. That is the issue we have at the core here. There is no trust between indigenous peoples and the government. The idea that zero accountability and financial reporting on such an important file is just more of the same of what we expect from the Liberals.

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We need to see where dollars are going so they are being best used on those who need it most and not on more red tape and a bloated bureaucracy that does nothing to help those across our country who need it most.

I see this often in the file of indigenous tourism, for example. We need to see that the dollars are going directly to the organization that needs the dollars, not through another organization, because then they are going to lose money. It makes no sense, and it is not a good, efficient use of the money when it has been targeted to help the people who need it most.

The most glaring issue with Bill C-29 is the lack of representation on the national council for reconciliation. The bill sets aside three seats for Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Métis National Council.

● (1800)

These are the three national organizations the Liberal government almost solely deals with regarding indigenous issues. However, this does not even scratch the surface concerning who needs to be at the table of a national council for reconciliation. We need advocates for women and girls, children, aboriginal business associations and native development offices. They all play an important role in reconciliation and deserve a seat at the table.

What about a voice for urban indigenous people? Just yesterday, I was having a conversation with Jaimee Gaunce, the director of policy at Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services, about urban indigenous individuals falling through the cracks when it comes to housing and so many benefits because they do not fit within the bureaucratic boxes when it comes to accessing funding that, as an indigenous person, they should have every right to. Someone who is indigenous is not suddenly non-indigenous when they choose to live off reserve, so why do they lose the support they should have every right to access just because they left the reserve? It is not right. This only perpetuates the goals of colonization that we are collectively trying to undo through truth and reconciliation.

If I did not take this opportunity to mention that this Friday is National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, I would not be doing justice standing here in the House. This day honours the children who never returned home and the survivors of residential schools as well as their families and communities. The reality is that we know now through science and data that trauma lasts seven generations. The last residential school was in 1997, I believe, which is in my time. My children come home from school and educate me more about what happened in our Canadian history than I was taught in my own school.

The reality is that we cannot have reconciliation without truth, and the truth is just starting to surface. These are challenging but critically essential conversations, and I urge everyone to read the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 calls to action, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, and the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Every child matters. We will remember the children, their families and their communities, but it is time to stop talking and show solidarity through showing up and starting to have action. Bill C-29

needs more concrete amendments to ensure that the proper action is taken toward truth and reconciliation. It is long overdue to put a council in place with the right representation at the table. We need a plan that is by indigenous, for indigenous.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her intervention today, and I appreciate her encouraging all people to read those 94 calls to action.

I wonder if the member could provide a comment on how many of those 94 recommendations the government has acted on, how many are actually the responsibility of the federal government, how many are ongoing and how many are outstanding.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, I think it is really important to focus on what Bill C-29 is here to do, and that is to respond to calls to action 53 through 56.

This national council has to be done properly, and it has to have the right representation at the table to ensure it meets and delivers what it is meant to do, which is for indigenous, by indigenous. If we do not have the right representation at the table, we will never go forward on our path to truth and reconciliation.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her statement of solidarity, especially in relation to September 30, which many members of the House are aware is the day when survivors in the past have taken the opportunity to talk about the pain and trauma, particularly related to residential schools.

My question is in relation to a comment the member made related to government being too big, and I hope that reference was not made in terms of the protection for indigenous people. As we all know, the right to prior, free and informed consent of indigenous nations to any resource project is a critical step and foundation to indigenous peoples' rights here on this land. Would the member agree that the right to prior, free and informed consent should stand, especially in the face of resource projects?

● (1805)

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, it is really important we have the advice and consultation needed by the people who are responsible. Looking at the government, I have seen time and time again that decisions are made without consulting the people who are affected by them most. If we do not have for indigenous, by indigenous consultation at the table, that representation to make decisions, we will never get a path forward to truth and reconciliation.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. I would like her thoughts.

Government Orders

In Quebec, a commission has already looked into similar issues. There could potentially be some overlap between the work of this council and the work that has already been done by the commission in Quebec.

Is my colleague suggesting that there would be no overlap and that the council would focus on federal issues potentially in Quebec?

[*English*]

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, a little bit was cut out in translation. I am still working on my French, so forgive me.

We are open to having this discussion where the amendments are met, where the truth and reconciliation is met. I do not think there is anyone in this House who does not want a path toward this. I think there are opportunities to have those discussions on what works best and what is most efficient.

What we have seen from the government time and time again is a lack of efficiency, a lot of talk and no action. It is time now to move forward into action and have a plan.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations appointed the interim board, as the member mentioned, and the transitional committee. Now, with Bill C-29, he is responsible to select the directives of the national council. I hear all the time from indigenous communities in Saskatchewan that they do not want to be stakeholders. They want to be shareholders. They want to, in a larger percentage than other Canadians, be involved in the oil and gas industry.

I wonder how the member feels about that being something important to truth and reconciliation and their ability to succeed.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague made great points and she is bang on. Time and time again, we hear, “Trust us. We are capable. Give us a seat at the table. We are not stakeholders. We are shareholders. We want to have autonomy over the decisions that impact us.” Again, I will repeat it: for indigenous, by indigenous. A seat at the table is needed.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, as always, it is an honour to be able to rise in this place to address issues that are so pressing in the lives of Canadians.

If members would indulge me for a moment, before I get into my remarks specifically on Bill C-29, it is great to be able to acknowledge how important the upcoming acknowledgement, and hopefully learning experience for so many Canadians, of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation this coming Friday is. I acknowledge how important it is to acknowledge past wrongs and to chart that path forward, especially as indigenous people and survivors of residential schools, to make sure that they have confidence and they are given the tools needed to succeed in our country, and to make sure that we acknowledge those past wrongs and acknowledge further the fact that those past wrongs have had generational impacts.

There is a need for generational solutions and it is important that we not only talk but that we act to make sure that opportunity is provided for Canada's indigenous peoples, to make sure that there are supports where supports are needed, to make sure that opportu-

nity is provided where opportunity is needed and to ultimately empower those indigenous men and women, young and old, to ensure they have everything required to move forward. Today, I wanted to acknowledge the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and acknowledge just how important that day is for all of us here in this place.

I want to take a moment as a member of Parliament from rural Alberta to talk a bit about how the indigenous way of life and indigenous history are truly a part of the Canadian identity. I could not help but think, as the time for debate on this bill came forward, of some of the locations that I grew up around and, in some cases, heard stories about. In other cases, I have more recently begun to understand stories like those of the Neutral Hills or why my own riding is called Battle River—Crowfoot. There is history associated with Chief Crowfoot and the Battle River and the Cree, Assiniboine and Blackfoot peoples' historical areas along the Battle River. Up until just a few years ago, I had never visited the Dry Island Buffalo Jump Provincial Park or recognized the importance it has on the history of the region that I now have the opportunity to represent.

The reason I bring those things up is that these are not simply places one drives by. It is not simply the Neutral Hills in the distance where I grew up farming. It is the fact that indigenous history is very much a part of the Canadian story and to be proud of that is something that is so very important.

As we address the specifics here of Bill C-29, it is important to lay some of that framework as we talk about how important it is to take seriously the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I am, quite frankly, very proud that it was a Conservative government that initiated the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which gave us the tools required to find truth and to see the process of reconciliation started. The very words of the name of the commission are about finding the truth and seeing that there is reconciliation. It is so vital that we take as seriously today that general call as we do the calls to action in the final report.

I think back often to my attendance at one of the national events that the TRC put forward. I was a university student in the Lower Mainland and we were given the day off school. I cannot say how disappointed I was at how few students attended this national TRC event that happened to be at the PNE right in downtown Vancouver. My university provided busing so that we could attend, so my wife and I attended this event. It was an experience that I will never forget, and I have talked about that in this place before.

● (1810)

We see specifically that Bill C-29 would respond to the TRC calls to action 53 through 56.

Government Orders

I would like to share my support for the fact that we are taking action. I hope the action we take actually provides some results. That is absolutely key, but I do want to share and highlight a few concerns, which I hope will be valuable both in terms of the discussion we have in this place and also as this bill is sent to committee, where it can hopefully be refined to include input from all parties and stakeholders. I love the comment that was made by a questioner earlier to not just treat indigenous people as stakeholders, but to treat them as shareholders. It is a brilliant line. How important it is for there to be ownership in every aspect of what reconciliation is.

That brings me to my first concern, and that is the consultations referred to specifically in call to action 53. I know I have heard from indigenous peoples who have shared their concern that they are not always well represented at the table when it comes to the appointments process or to the policies that are brought forward regarding reconciliation or the host of other concerns, whether it be policing, resource development, issues in Canada's north or rural and remote concerns. There has to be that comprehensive consultation and not simply activism, which in some cases, and this is not to suggest that it is sometimes not well intentioned, can actually hold indigenous peoples back from that empowerment, that reconciliation and that ability to succeed.

I know time is always short when it comes to speeches in this place, so I hope to be able to get through all of the different aspects of it. Regarding call to action 54, there is a lack of clarity in the bill, and I hope when this bill goes to committee that we will find the exact clarity around what the financial provisions related to this bill are. I know there has been money budgeted in past budgets, some of which has gone toward interim processes. We are not exactly sure what the status of every dollar that has been allocated in the past is versus what will be allocated in the future. We need questions answered on that front.

Call to action 55 concerns the reporting mechanism, and this is absolutely key because not only should we be in this place talking about the fulfillment of the calls to action, but we need to make sure that there is a long-term mechanism so that we can see that there is progress being made. That is absolutely vital.

I would simply note, regarding call to action 56, how the calls to action specifically reference the Prime Minister. I am hopeful there will maybe be willingness to change the bill so that it is not simply the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations but the Prime Minister who is given the responsibility, when it comes to those reports.

The last thing indigenous people need is "Ottawa knows best". We have seen the devastating consequences of that through our nation's history. We must engage with first nations at every step of the process. I was very excited to read that, in my home province of Alberta, there are, I believe, 11 first nations that are now shareholders in an energy project with Enbridge, and I know of others as well that are part of that reconciliation path forward. I know that is the case in some renewable projects and that is the case for other indigenous-owned businesses that I have the honour of being able to point to in my constituency.

It is important to make sure we do not allow high ideals to get in the way of making sure indigenous people are at the very core of

both Bill C-29 and everything we do in this place regarding reconciliation.

• (1815)

As my time comes to a close, I would simply say this and repeat the words that my colleague shared earlier that speak to what should be in our hearts. It is to not just speak of indigenous peoples as stakeholders, to not simply seek their advice on paths forward, but to ensure they are truly shareholders in both the reconciliation process and in every aspect of what we are as a nation, both present and going forward.

When I look at indigenous peoples, I see so much potential, so much hope and so much promise. If Bill C-29 moves us in that direction, I am glad to be able to offer that support. However, let us make sure that this also entails the big picture so that indigenous peoples can prosper in this country.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened to the member's speech and I particularly took note of the fact that he took credit for the previous government's truth and reconciliation report. I would remind him that there were protests in the street demanding that the government do that, which finally forced the government to do that.

Nonetheless, I think what is more important is that, of those 94 recommendations, to date, it has only been the Liberal Party that has gone on record to say it would move to implement all of them.

Does the Conservative Party support moving forward and accomplishing all 94 and working with the different jurisdictions to do that? If it does not, which of the 94 does it not support?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I find it interesting that, even in the Liberals' talking points on this bill, everything is post-2015. I attended, as I referenced in my speech, one of the national events while the Liberals were certainly not in power. With regard to the truth side of the TRC that led to the reconciliation report and the calls to action, I am proud it was a Conservative government that led that in this country and made sure there was engagement across our nation.

Specifically, to answer the member's question, I find it interesting how he asked me about all 94 but, just in the previous question to the member earlier, he specifically talked about how it was not his government's responsibility to implement all of them. I think he touches on the important aspect of how this is a comprehensive process that involves an all-of-government, different levels of government, approach to ensure that we achieve meaningful reconciliation.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I never said that.

• (1820)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): If the hon. parliamentary secretary has something to add, he will have to rise and speak during questions and comments.

Government Orders

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, the member is attributing comments to me that I simply did not make. He might be confusing me with another member. I never said that.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I believe that is part of debate, but I would ask the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot to maybe go back and look at the Hansard after the fact to see if that is what the hon. member actually said.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I would simply refer to the remarks that the member made earlier and I believe that should settle the point of order.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): As I have indicated to the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot, he may want to go and look at what the hon. parliamentary secretary said, and I would say the same thing to the hon. parliamentary secretary.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, Neskantaga First Nation is 27 years and counting without clean water. If we go to Neskantaga, they have a clean water plant that has been built. How is it possible, in a country as rich as Canada, that we can get a plant built, through a whole number of contractors who come in, leave and finish the job, but we cannot even get it signed off? That is the reality of what we are talking about.

Webequie First Nation has no fire truck, but had a bunch of terrible fires in the community. The question of reconciliation for people in Treaty No. 9 is the right to be able to make decisions about their territory and to have the funds to do it properly.

Indian Affairs is not broken. It was designed to be broken. It has broken the hopes in communities across our region for 150 years. If that money was transferred to Nishnawbe Aski Nation to look after mental health, to look after infrastructure and to look after education and health, we would see much better outcomes.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague what he thinks about transferring to the treaty territories, so that they can make decisions so that people can have clean water and fire trucks and safe housing.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, it is a shame that there are people in this country who do not have access to clean drinking water. It is further a shame that, in many cases, it is not due to lack of dollars being spent or even effort being expended. That is where meaningful reconciliation is the required path forward to make sure that we treat indigenous peoples as shareholders in every aspect of what reconciliation means and to make sure there is a path forward to ensure that the reserves referenced by the member from northern Ontario can get access to the skills and expertise needed to complete every step of the process required to get clean drinking water to the taps of those houses in that community.

We should all be working day and night to make sure that happens and that it is not a bureaucratic heavy process in Ottawa that is keeping those solutions from being accomplished.

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Northern Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first of all, I would like to acknowledge that Canada's Parliament is located on the unceded and traditional

territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people. We are debating a bill that is very relevant not just to those first nation groups but all first nations, Métis and Inuit in Canada.

Before I get into the context of my speech, I want to point out Bill C-29 would establish the national council for reconciliation. This is in response to the calls to action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report, in particular calls to action numbers 53 and 56. Basically, the national council for reconciliation would be a permanent, independent and indigenous-led organization that would monitor and support the progress of reconciliation in Canada, including the full implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action.

I want to take a few moments to explain how we arrived where we are, because there is some insinuation on the floor of the House that indigenous people did not lead this process and did not make the decisions around what the new legislation would look like and how it would evolve. Nothing could be further from the truth.

As a member of Parliament who represents a large population of survivors of residential schools and as the daughter of a mother who is a survivor of residential school, I do not need to tell anyone how important this piece of legislation is to my family, to my constituents and to many indigenous Canadians in this country. To say this would come to the House of Commons without their full support, their full participation and their co-leading and leading all sections of this piece of legislation would be accusations that are totally false and incorrect.

There are so many things I could talk about as it relates to the TRC. It is something I have been involved with for many years. It is important as well that I walk my colleagues through the work the government has done to get to where we are today. We worked really hard to renew our relationship with indigenous people. One only needs to go back to 2015, when we came into office, to see this. One of the first things we did was to immediately start implementing the calls to action. In fact, we were the only party, and to date I believe still the only party, in Canada that has said we are prepared to implement all 94 recommendations of the TRC.

When we took on the task of designing this legislation, first of all we started engagement with indigenous leaders and communities. We knew they were going to be integral to this process. Every step along the way, they have been engaged, included and leading what has happened here. The process was led by the indigenous leadership of the national council for reconciliation's interim board.

I will explain a bit about the interim board and about the transitional committee that came after that, but both of these were independent bodies. They were made up of first nations, Inuit and Métis members, who all came to the table providing their very best advice and experiences and took into account a very wide range of diverse voices and perspectives from all across Canada.

Government Orders

I also want to acknowledge the monumental work that has been done by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which has really been the foundation for this bill and where we are today in bringing it to the House of Commons.

• (1825)

As many in this chamber will recall, the commission has set forward a pathway of reconciliation to begin the healing necessary in relation to the intergenerational traumas and ongoing impacts caused by the residential school system.

The extensive and historic work of the TRC was pivotal in laying out the groundwork for this legislation, as I said earlier, and the national council for reconciliation was laid out in calls to action numbers 53 and 56. They were two of the 94 that we are on the path of implementing.

In developing the final report, the council took a very inclusive, very indigenous-led approach. It listened to the voices of indigenous people. It heard from survivors of these institutions, as well as from their families and from their communities.

Our government has strived to honour that approach by fully implementing the calls to action and a national council for reconciliation, and by inviting and supporting indigenous leadership throughout the whole process, with its culmination being the development of this proposed legislation.

This process has been led by the truth and reconciliation commissioners, residential school survivors, indigenous people who participated in the TRC process, and everyone who envisioned that an independent, indigenous-led, national oversight body was the way forward.

The commissioners envisioned a national council that would prepare an annual report on the state of reconciliation in which the Government of Canada would respond publicly, outlining its plans to advance reconciliation.

In developing this bill, our government has listened to these diverse voices. Indigenous leaders and community members had the courage to step forward to tell the country about their experiences, how it affected them and how it affected their families throughout their whole lives. Let us not forget that despite the personal and tragic impact this had on them, it is their voices that are guiding us in the right way to help communities, to help future generations of indigenous people, and to help us toward a journey of healing in Canada for all indigenous people. That is remarkable. It is remarkable that those who suffered the most are leading the process of healing today.

After the Truth and Reconciliation Commission fulfilled its mandate, the federal government responded to its calls and established a national council for reconciliation. In doing so, we created an interim board that helped transition to the next steps. It made recommendations on the scope and the mandate of what that council should look like. That was the first step.

Then the federal government appointed the interim board of directors in 2018. That board was comprised of six indigenous leaders who were chosen to represent first nations, Inuit and Métis, in-

cluding a former truth and reconciliation commissioner, Dr. Wilton Littlechild, who is no stranger to indigenous people in Canada.

This independent board was responsible for providing advice to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations on establishing the national council for reconciliation. They were all indigenous voices at that table.

The interim board held its engagement process shortly after that, in April 2018, meeting with various indigenous organizations and non-indigenous stakeholders across the country. As part of the council's mandate, members looked at the legislation, at the scope of the council, and, more broadly, at long-term reconciliation.

The interim board carefully considered all it had heard from its engagements with various indigenous and non-indigenous peoples and organizations, as well as at an engagement event in Ottawa, and it developed a final report. This process included, again, a very diverse group of people, with community members, academics, businesses, arts and health professionals, and other interested parties. Each member of the interim board reached out to additional individuals to ask for their views as well on the establishment of the national council for reconciliation.

• (1830)

The government, in addition to including all these people of indigenous background in various capacities across the country, also reached out to non-indigenous Canadians for their thoughts about creating a council. An online platform was created to capture the views of Canadians on the subject, where people could share their thoughts on the mandate of the future national council for reconciliation and what its first steps should be. I can honestly tell members that the input on that was very positive.

The other step forward was the engagement that took place. That happened directly with the national indigenous organizations. The interim board, which is an indigenous board, reached out to the Assembly of First Nations, the ITK and the Métis National Council to seek their input on the mandate for the council. Including this step in the process meant that indigenous community members, as well as political leaders, had the opportunity to express their perspectives about creating the council. When I say political leaders, I mean indigenous political leaders.

At every step of the way, establishing an indigenous-led approach was valuable, necessary and the practice for this entire process. It was only after the interim board had heard a wide spectrum of indigenous voices that it prepared its final report and incorporated what it had heard in that report.

It presented the report in June 2018, containing recommendations relating to the vision, mission, mandate, structure, membership, funding, reporting and legislation for the national council for reconciliation. It also said that it would be independent, permanent and a non-political body. It would also be a catalyst for innovative thought, dialogue and action.

Government Orders

The interim board also made recommendations about how the government should implement those particular priorities, saying that the government should create a transitional committee to support the next steps. It also said the government should draft the legislation, and that it should be co-drafted with the advice and leadership of the transitional committee members. I heard members mention that today. They did not look kindly on that process, but if they had read the recommendations from the interim report of indigenous people, they would have seen that that was the recommendation to government, to set up the transitional committee.

The interim board also recommended that there be more outreach and engagement, so we went from building on the work of the interim board to the Department of Justice preparing a draft legislative framework that could be used for consultation purposes. I think it is important to make special note of that fact.

We can really see that indigenous communities are at the heart of this proposed legislation. The next step after the interim board was, as it recommended, a transitional committee. That was established in December 2021. The members were appointed by the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, and the committee reviewed the draft legislative framework and considered ways it could improve it to ensure there was a strong and effective council.

The interim board's engagement activities went on from 2018 into the transitional committee, and it then went on to carry out even more engagement with indigenous communities and indigenous peoples. The committee members met with indigenous and non-indigenous experts, including lawyers, data specialists, and financial and reconciliation experts. They gathered feedback and advice in areas such as reconciliation, law, data, organizational finances, information sharing, governance and accountability, and then used it to form their recommendations.

● (1835)

Basically, it was the work that was done all through this process over the last four years that has gotten us to the legislation we see here today. The transitional committee made recommendations on how to strengthen and draft the legislative framework while maintaining the vision, the purpose and the mandate that the council had expressed in the vision that it brought forward.

Today, in the House of Commons, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations has introduced Bill C-29, which is now being debated with the full inclusion and input of indigenous peoples and communities and experts right across Canada. It is being done after extensive engagement with indigenous peoples and organizations, after leaders have been involved in co-developing the legislative process and ensuring that the legislation that is before us here today is at the heart of what indigenous people have been asking for in this country.

Every step of the way, and I cannot say this enough, this has been an indigenous-led process, starting with the TRC recommendations to the bill that members see before them in the House of Commons today. I am confident that this has led to strong legislation that, if passed, will serve indigenous peoples and Canadians across the country very well in the years to come.

I know that the survivors of residential schools are so impacted by the legacy of what has happened in this country. I know that each and every day they look at ways they can build stronger partnerships with each other, with governments and with Canadians. I also know that they are leading a path of healing, and that is a long journey. We can help on the journey, and what we are doing today is helping. We are responding to what they are asking for. We have allowed them to lead the process, co-develop the legislation and be a part of where this goes into the future.

Before I say *meegwetch, nakurmiik, marsi*, I would like to move a motion. Pursuant to Standing Order 26(1), I move:

That the House continue to sit beyond the ordinary hour of daily adjournment for the purpose of considering Bill C-29, An Act to provide for the establishment of a national council for reconciliation.

● (1840)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The question is on the motion. Will members who object to the motion please rise?

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Given that more than five members have risen, the motion is deemed to have been withdrawn.

(Motion withdrawn)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciated listening to what the member had to say, and I understand that the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations appointed the interim board of directors, the transitional committee and now, in Bill C-29, he would be responsible to select the directors of the national council.

I wonder if the member could clarify this for me. In a past bill, as it was being discussed in the House and debated, we found out that the environmental council that was being created had already been established. Could she tell me whether or not individuals have already been appointed prior to the debate on the bill finishing in the House, and how many if that is the case?

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Madam Speaker, first of all, all of the appointments that are done by the minister and council are done in consultation with indigenous groups and leadership in Canada. That is the process we have, and that is the mantra we follow as a government. In terms of the transitional piece, it was the same process that occurred, and as we move into the new reconciliation board, there is ample opportunity for people to be considered even at this stage.

Government Orders

• (1845)

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I would like to thank the member for mentioning frequently that indigenous peoples have been engaged in this whole process. Indigenous peoples have frequently experienced being deprived of their rights and their rights being infringed.

The 94 calls to action frequently talk about the importance of implementing UNDRIP. I wonder if the member could explain why Bill C-29 does not have any mention of implementing UNDRIP.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Nunavut for all the work she has done in pushing for, supporting and advocating for the implementation of both UNDRIP and all recommendations in the TRC report.

This particular process falls within the purview of what we are doing with UNDRIP. As members know, UNDRIP is very important to us. We have accepted it. We are leading a process with indigenous governments and groups across Canada and will ensure that everything we do as a government will fall under the purview of what is expected under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague if indigenous communities are embracing this piece of legislation and if she is comfortable that it is a good way to advance reconciliation.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her support in the work we are doing around the TRC calls to action.

First of all, indigenous people have been part of this process, but more than that, they have led this process. It is because of their insight, views, perspectives, hard work and experiences that we stand here today presenting this legislation before the House of Commons, and we are doing so with their support.

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary and I have had the opportunity to work together on a number of different issues in committee and elsewhere, and I appreciate the approach she brings to this place.

The parliamentary secretary alluded to the final report from the interim board for the national council for reconciliation quite a bit. Earlier in this debate, I asked a member of the government why, considering that the report was completed by June 12, 2018, it has taken so long for the government to get to the point today where we are finally debating Bill C-29.

I am wondering if the parliamentary secretary is able to provide some greater input as to why the government did not act on this sooner, especially considering that we clearly have quite widespread support for this bill in the House today.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Madam Speaker, yes, I have had opportunities to work with my colleague on a number of committees, and I know he is a hard worker and strong supporter of indigenous rights in Canada.

In terms of the timeline from the spring 2018 report to the legislation today, I want to remind members that we went through two

years of COVID, which really slowed down a lot of the work that was being done by the committee itself regarding consultation with indigenous peoples, communities and governments across Canada. That process took a period of time. A lot of it was done virtually, but a lot was done face to face as well. To ensure there was ample time for all indigenous peoples and communities to have the input they wanted in this legislation, that was the time period required.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. In this very fractious House, I noticed, and wanted to make sure she said it because I could be wrong, that the parliamentary secretary said something nice about the member for Kenora. I just want to note that it is on the record and I support it.

• (1850)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is debate, not a point of order.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have the honour of representing the Kwantlen First Nation community in the Fort Langley area of my riding. I have met with them frequently, including with residential school survivors. After the announcement of the discovery of unmarked graves in Kamloops, the pain is fresh for them again.

There is some frustration about the lack of action on identifying and dealing with unmarked graves. I realize that is not the point of the discussion today, but this is about calls to action and there is a lack of action on them.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Madam Speaker, this is an issue that has touched the hearts of all Canadians. We have 91 ongoing projects right now. There is funding available for other communities, groups and first nations that want to do similar work within their communities and regions. The Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations is working with those community groups and organizations.

If you have some people in your riding looking to be involved in this program, we ask that you come talk to me, the minister or the parliamentary secretary.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I remind the hon. parliamentary secretary that she is to address questions and comments through the Speaker and not directly to members.

The hon. parliamentary secretary will have three minutes for questions and comments the next time this matter is before the House.

It being 6:52 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS***[Translation]***FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS ACT**

The House resumed from May 5 consideration of the motion that Bill C-237, An Act to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act and the Canada Health Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House this evening to speak to the bill introduced by my colleague from Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel.

As we know, we are here in the Parliament of Canada, a parliament where members' work usually revolves around national challenges and co-operation between the federal and provincial governments. Every day or nearly every day, our work reflects the fact that we are fortunate to be part of a family of 10 provinces and three territories that comprise this country.

My colleague from Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel has a slightly different vision. He does not see Canadians as members of his family, but rather as neighbours and friends. His bill reflects this reality, and I find it disappointing that this bill is not inclusive and forgets the other regions of Canada. After all, if what he is proposing is good for Quebec, then surely it would also be good for the rest of the regions in Canada.

I personally am convinced that we can hope for the best for our fellow citizens when we all work together and combine the strengths of all the regions of Canada to address the challenges faced by North America as a whole.

Having said that, I understand some of what my colleague is proposing in his bill. This initiative would leave the federal government with no choice but to think carefully, and for purely political reasons, before interfering in any provincial jurisdictions.

I am referring to the arrogance of the Prime Minister who, first of all, still refuses to meet with the provinces to discuss health care funding and, second, is proposing a dental plan without consulting the provinces and without considering that such a program already exists in most provinces.

We on this side of the House cannot understand why the Prime Minister is ignoring Canadians who have sent him a very clear message that they have had enough. We cannot believe that the Prime Minister can be so out of touch with Canadians. We think that delusions of grandeur could be preventing him from seeing the reality all around him.

Considering the challenges facing health care funding, the federal government must do everything in its power to prevent duplication of services and funding. The federal government's revenues are both huge and limited at the same time. Moreover, Canadians already pay enough taxes, even if the Prime Minister does not think so. Millions of Canadians are suffering, but considering what he says and does, he seems convinced that their complaints are exaggerated.

The time for the Prime Minister's insipid speeches is over. It is time to find solutions for health services in Canada. If a province, whether it is Quebec, Alberta or any other province, proposes an idea to provide a health service in a more economical, more innovative way that preserves very good quality of service, the federal government has to show some flexibility and work with the province for the good of the population.

I would like to address another point, the importance of maintaining health care services of the highest quality. We often hear that Canada's health care system is one of the best in the world, but we all know that we can and must improve it. Bill C-237 mentions programs with comparable objectives, but says nothing about the quality of the service. Quebeckers demand better quality of service and, as citizens of our beautiful province, deserve better service.

I do not understand why, in preparing his bill, the Bloc Québécois member did not include details setting out the importance of maintaining quality. I believe him when he says he wants to defend the priorities of Quebec. This is one of the most important priorities and he has left it out. I do not understand that.

With respect to my colleague's bill, in an April 5, 2022, ruling regarding a point of order raised on March 1, the Speaker of the House expressed the view that Bill C-237 must be accompanied by a royal recommendation and declined to put the question at third reading without this recommendation.

• (1855)

A royal recommendation is required for any private member's bill that involves spending, which, according to Speaker, is the case for Bill C-237. If I understand correctly, the member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel seems to believe that his bill does not entail any new expense. If the member really wants members of Parliament to support his bill, he should put some effort into proving the Speaker of the House wrong.

In closing, I would say to my Bloc colleague that, while the Liberals are trying to persuade MPs to vote against this bill, our ultimate goal is to ensure that all the provinces are well served by the federal government. Duplication and unnecessary spending must cease. Our new Conservative leader will put people, their pensions, their paycheques, their homes and their country first.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-237. The NDP supports some aspects of this bill. However, it is surprising to see the extremely negative impact it would have on the universality of our health care system. I will come back to that in a moment. Considering the bill as a whole and all the detrimental effects it would have on the health care systems in Quebec and Canada, we will be voting against it.

I want to talk about the positive aspects of the bill first. The idea of making budget cuts to health care and health transfers was put forward by the Conservatives. It was irresponsible to make those cuts to the health care system, in our view. The only thing the Conservatives seem to want to do is to keep making cuts to public services. The impact these cuts have had on our health care system is being felt in Quebec, British Columbia and everywhere. That has really hurt our health care system.

There was a change of government in 2015. However, the Liberals continued to make cuts. The two traditional parties, the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party, do not understand that when we do not invest money in the system, the system suffers.

The NDP absolutely wants that funding restored, and an NDP government would do that immediately. We would ensure that the health care system receives the funding that Canadians across the country deserve.

As we have already said, the tax haven system that the Conservatives created with the help of the Liberals, and that the Liberals have allowed to carry on with the help of the Conservatives, costs us \$25 billion a year. The government cannot claim that we do not have the resources required to fund the health care system. All we need is for the Liberals and the Conservatives to reduce their assistance to the banking system. All this does is help the big Canadian banks increase their profits.

Naturally, we agree on that aspect of the funding proposed in the bill.

We also agree with the second aspect, which has to do with the provinces' right to opt out of new federal programs it does not like and obtain financial compensation. That is part of the Sherbrooke Declaration, which the NDP has always stood for. We have been crystal clear about our stance on Quebec's right to opt out of new federal programs for years.

That second aspect of the bill was no doubt inspired by the NDP's work in the House of Commons, so of course we are in favour of it.

Let us now talk about the third aspect, which would have such a negative impact on the health care system that we cannot understand why it would be in a bill. Polls indicate that two-thirds of the people who vote for the Bloc Québécois want a national pharmaceutical system. They want that universality, but the Bloc's bill would change the five principles that are the foundation of our public health system.

Let us look at the five principles the Bloc wants Quebec to be exempt from even though the vast majority of Quebecers support these principles. First, the principle of universality. The Bloc Québécois wants to cut that out so it does not apply going forward.

- (1900)

The principle of universality is one of the foundations of our health care system. Everyone agrees that each and every Canadian is entitled to medicare. It seems they want to abolish that principle. I do not know whether it is a misunderstanding or whether the Bloc Québécois wants to privatize our public system.

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The second principle that the Bloc Québécois wants to abolish is the comprehensiveness of the system, which means that all medically necessary services are covered by the public system. This is another one of the foundations of our medicare in Quebec and everywhere else, including British Columbia. They want to get rid of this value.

As my colleagues may know, I have lived in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, in the Eastern Townships, in Montreal and in the Outaouais. In all the years I spent in these various regions of Quebec, I never met anyone who would support the idea of eliminating the comprehensiveness of our public system.

The third principle that the Bloc Québécois wants to abolish is accessibility. It is a basic principle of our Canadian health care system and Quebec's health care system. By wanting to eliminate the accessibility of the system, the Bloc Québécois is once again going against the will of Quebecers.

The fourth principle that the Bloc Québécois wants to abolish is portability. This is a very important foundation of our health care system. As we have already seen, it means that people can go to British Columbia and have access to that province's public health care system.

Yes, some improvements certainly are needed. It is well known that some provinces, including Quebec, have problems with the reimbursement of fees paid in other provinces. There was a case like this recently in British Columbia. The principle of the portability of health care must not be abolished; it must be improved. This means that Quebec and British Columbia must be forced to pay these fees promptly. This is an extremely important part of our system.

The fifth principle that the Bloc Québécois seems to want to abolish is the public administration of our system. Hospitals and health care plans must be administered by a public non-profit organization. This is also a fundamental value. I do not understand why the Bloc Québécois wants to abolish this principle of public administration of the system.

Of course, there is still room for improvement. We fully support an increase in health transfers. Furthermore, the NDP has always advocated for the provinces' right to opt out with full compensation.

However, we cannot support the idea of eliminating these five principles that are the cornerstones of the Quebec and Canadian public health systems. Those of us on this side of the House do not see that in a positive light. The NDP is a progressive party and, unlike other parties, we do not support the privatization of our public health care system. As we all know, the American health care system is private, and it costs far more than the public system. Tens of millions of Americans are being left behind by their health care system.

We must maintain our public health care system and always protect the five principles on which our health care system is based. The NDP will steadfastly and rigorously uphold these principles.

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• (1905)

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will give an introduction to set the record straight because I have heard a lot of things this evening, things that are bordering on a lie. I am not sure whether it is a failure to understand or whether it is deliberate, but I am going to set the record straight.

First, I do not know if the member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord is an unbridled sovereigntist or if he is just pandering. He says he wants to defend Quebec's autonomy but that the federal government should put conditions on the health care system. The purpose of Bill C-237 is not complicated. It is about ensuring that Quebec manages its own health system, without conditions imposed by the federal government.

Second, the member for New Westminster—Burnaby came up with all sorts of unbelievable things. Talk about the bogeyman. I am not sure if he is emulating the Conservative Party or if he really had nothing to say about the bill, but he thinks that the Bloc Québécois wants to privatize Quebec's health care system. That is not it at all. Where did he get that idea? I will explain the bill to him.

This bill is in no way an attempt to withdraw from the universal system. The bill is very simple and states that we want to withdraw from the national objectives of the Canadian health care system because we believe that Quebec is capable of administering and managing its own health care system. We do not need the federal government to tell us what to do, under the pretext that it administers a lot of health care systems in Canada.

The only health care systems that the federal government manages are those of the correctional institutions and National Defence. Aside from that, it is in no position to lecture Quebec. Hospitals in Quebec fly the Quebec flag. Quebec manages its own health care system. The federal government does not manage physicians and knows nothing about that. It is in no position to tell us what to do, what is good or what is not good.

Then, the member for New Westminster—Burnaby tells us that the Bloc Québécois wants to withdraw so that we can privatize the system. Come on. The federal government did not create the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec. The federal government did not implement the Quebec Act Respecting Prescription Drug Insurance. The Government of Quebec did all of that.

I will not stand by while the member for New Westminster—Burnaby spouts that foolishness this evening. He just made claims about something he simply does not understand.

• (1910)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member for New Westminster—Burnaby on a point of order.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I think our colleague could give his speech without insulting everyone. If he has points to make he can do so in an appropriate manner, in compliance with the rules of the House.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I believe the hon. member is raising a matter for debate. In private members' business, there are no questions or comments.

The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques may continue.

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: It is indeed a matter for debate, Madam Speaker. Foolishness refers not to the individual but to their arguments. That said, I suppose that, when someone has nothing to say, they can talk about tax havens and point out that they are nowhere to be found in this bill, which focuses on domestic objectives. If the member would like me to go over and explain the bill to him, I would be pleased to do so. However, he should not be saying that the Bloc Québécois wants to privatize the health care system with Bill C-237. We have heard all sorts of things tonight, but I hope that will stay in the annals of the House of Commons because that is far from being the case. I will get back to my speech because I had prepared one, but when you hear something like that it is hard not to correct the record.

Bill C-237 addresses a situation that has created friction and tension between the federal and the provincial governments ever since the Constitution Act of 1867 was passed. It is nothing new.

I am talking about respect for the division of powers between the two levels of government. Basically, according to the pact that was made at the time, in 1867, between the two levels of government, each respective area of jurisdiction should be equal and sovereign. This arrangement served to ensure that the priorities of the majority Canadian nation were not imposed on the minority Quebec nation. We are a long way from that today, in 2022.

For issues that directly affect people and the way they organize their society, jurisdiction was directly delegated to the provinces. These include things like health care, social programs, education and culture. For issues that are somewhat removed from the people or the internal organization of their society, the respective areas of jurisdiction were centralized directly under the federal government. This means things like monetary policy, international trade, border defence, and so on.

These terms are protected by the ironclad Constitution and the inviolable division of powers. Quebecers accepted that agreement, but as I have said before and will say again, members of the federation are supposed to work together, not impose conditions, which is what we are seeing now. The government is using that to make political gains that undermine jurisdiction. It is taking over our child care system and trying to impose conditions on us. We cannot be sure it will transfer that to us. Next is health care. I bet that before too long there will be big federally funded parks all over the place. The government is going to take away all our power over social programs. That is this federal government's current agenda.

That is why we need to take a very close look at the relationship between both levels of government now, 155 years after the original agreement, the Canadian Constitution, came into effect. Inevitably, we will find that, for the past three generations, the federal government has been violating an agreement that goes back to the birth of the federation. I will explain this in a simple two-step process.

First, the federal government uses its taxing power to raise taxes higher than is required to fulfill its own constitutional responsibilities. In doing so, it also prevents Quebec and the provinces from using this tax room. This is called fiscal imbalance.

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Second, the federal government uses its surplus profits, which it controls, to spend and create programs in areas under Quebec and provincial jurisdiction. In addition to controlling this money, which is normally intended for different areas and jurisdictions, it goes so far as to impose conditions on the transfer of funds. In concrete terms, this means that the federal government, the Canadian government, uses this practice to decide how Quebec society and the other provinces are set up. It also forces the government of Quebec and the provinces to implement the priorities of Canadians rather than the priorities of Quebecers in areas under their own jurisdiction.

As I said, it is supposed to be a collaboration, not simply imposing conditions. In this case, Canada's vision and will are being imposed to the detriment of Quebec's will and vision. Quebec never agreed to become Ottawa's subcontractor. Nowadays, it is clear that Ottawa is interfering in areas of jurisdiction. It pays off politically, by the way.

• (1915)

There is unbridled interference going on in areas such as housing, education, family policy, day care services, the environment and taxation. Interference has become the federal government's hallmark.

The federal government has a strong tendency to use its power to spend money and surreptitiously exploit shared jurisdictions. The Bloc Québécois has had enough, which is why it decided to introduce Bill C-237.

If passed, this bill will give Quebec and the provinces a way to counter this interference, which violates the constitutional agreement on which the country was founded. The original agreement is no longer being respected. Can we get this straightened out? We have no choice. We are being taken for fools. We have no autonomy anymore. We send our money to the federal government, but then it says it will not transfer the money unless we comply with its conditions.

In practical terms, Bill C-237 makes two amendments. I urge my colleagues to listen carefully, because they have been saying all kinds of things about this bill. First, the bill will amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act between the government and the provinces. This will affect all of the provinces, not just Quebec. It will give all provinces the option of withdrawing from a federal program.

Furthermore, in the spirit of compromise, the government will provide matching funds to the province or Quebec, but only if the objectives of the program in question are comparable to those of the federal program. The program in the province or in Quebec does not have to be identical or even similar. It must be comparable. The funds are to be given unconditionally, without criteria and without any other form of interference.

I see that my time is up. I therefore invite the members to give Quebec and each province the freedom to make their own choices, by themselves and for themselves.

• (1920)

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in today's debate on private member's bill, Bill C-237, an act to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act and the Canada Health Act.

As proposed, this bill would do two things. First, it would allow any province to withdraw from federal programs in provincial jurisdiction if comparable programs exist. Second, it would exempt Quebec from the criteria and conditions that must be met in order to receive a full cash contribution through the Canada health transfer.

Before I get into the concerns that the government has with these amendments, let me very quickly provide a little history surrounding the Canada Health Act. The act was passed unanimously in the House of Commons in 1984. It represents a broad consensus among Canadians and their federal, provincial and territorial governments that access to insured health services should be based on medical need and not one's ability to pay. Since then the act has been considered the gold standard of federal spending power being used to set national objectives in the area of provincial jurisdiction. The act, in conjunction with the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act, does so by establishing broad criteria and conditions that provinces and territories must fulfill to receive full cash contributions under the Canada health transfer. Provincial health insurance legislation and regulations, including those of Quebec, mirror and in some cases go beyond the requirements of the Canada Health Act.

That leads me to my first concern regarding the proposed legislation. By accepting this legislation and exempting Quebec from the Canada Health Act's conditions, we would weaken the foundation of Canada's universal health care system. The act establishes the objectives and values underlying universal, single-payer health care. For provinces to receive full health care transfer payments, provincial health insurance programs must be in compliance with five broad principles: universality, portability, comprehensiveness, accessibility and public administration. Provinces have not requested that these conditions be repealed.

Moreover, I would like to remind the hon. member from the Bloc Québécois that since the creation of the Canada Health Act, Quebec has broadly complied with the act's principles. Indeed, the discretionary penalty provisions of the act, which give the government discretion to withhold the Canada health transfer contributions to provinces in contravention with these five principles, have actually never been used. There have been some instances of non-compliance in Quebec and other provinces with respect to extra billing and user charges, where mandatory deductions under the Canada Health Act have been applied.

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It is also important to note that the principle of asymmetric federalism renders the proposed amendments to the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act unnecessary for Quebec. As part of the 2004 health accord, the federal government and the Government of Quebec signed a bilateral agreement on asymmetrical federalism. Under this agreement, Quebec supported the overall objectives and general principles set out by first ministers, while respecting Quebec's desire to exercise its own responsibility in planning, organizing and managing health services. This agreement has continued to shape the federal approach to bilateral agreements with Quebec, notably the 2017 agreement on home and community care and mental health and addictions services and funding.

Importantly, the asymmetric agreements with Quebec in the area of health care have been applied within the parameters of the Canada Health Act principles. For example, the communiqué from the 2004 health accord on asymmetric federalism that respects Quebec's jurisdiction states as one of its preambles, "noting that its commitment with regard to the underlying principles of its public health system—universality, portability, comprehensiveness, accessibility and public administration—coincides with that of all governments in Canada...." Stated differently, the government entered into asymmetrical health agreements with Quebec because the province already adhered to the Canada Health Act principles.

Historically, provinces other than Quebec have recognized the benefits of federal spending power. In 1999, all provinces except Quebec agreed to the social union framework agreement, which recognizes a set of social policy principles and ways to allow the exercise of the federal spending power in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction, provided that a majority of provinces agree.

• (1925)

That agreement recognizes, "The use of the federal spending power...has been essential to the development of Canada's social union." Its continued use is important to ensure access to "essential social programs and services of reasonably comparable quality" for all Canadians, wherever they live or move in Canada, to promote their full and active participation in Canada's social and economic life.

It should also be acknowledged that the federal spending powers during the pandemic have delivered results for Quebecers while continuing to recognize Quebec's unique place within the federation.

The government remains committed to working with the provinces and territories and key stakeholders to advance shared priorities for the health care system and to improve health outcomes for Canadians. One of those commitments, for example, is to ensure that Canadians who require long-term care get the services they deserve. To address this, our government has committed to providing up to \$3 billion to support the provinces and territories in ensuring that standards for care are applied. The Canadian Standards Association and the Health Standards Organization are currently working to finalize national standards for long-term care by late 2022.

To summarize, we believe that Bill C-237 would undermine the government's ability to deliver health care results for Canadians if provinces are allowed to be exempt from the conditions laid out in

the Canada Health Act. We also believe there is no need to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act to allow provinces to withdraw from federal programs in provincial jurisdiction. The federal government has a strong record of establishing agreements that cater to Quebec's specific needs, such as the 2004 agreement on asymmetrical federalism that continues to respect Quebec's jurisdiction and falls within the parameters of the Canada Health Act.

For these reasons, and the others that have been mentioned, I would strongly encourage all members of the House to vote against this bill.

[Translation]

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

There being no further debate, the hon. member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel has five minutes for his right of reply.

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, BQ): Madam Speaker, we are winding up debate at second reading of Bill C-237.

This bill gives the provinces the right to withdraw when the federal government creates a program that should be the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces. I found the term "exclusive" in the Constitution. When we speak of exclusive jurisdictions, we are referring to matters that fall under the authority of either the provinces or the federal government.

The term "exclusive" exempts Quebec from the standards and conditions that the federal government imposes before providing funding for health care. There has been a consensus in Quebec for 50 years on this position, which is the basis for the major constitutional crises that have occurred over the years.

This week's debate is taking place against the backdrop of the election campaign in Quebec. On Monday, Quebecers will go to the polls and will have to make a decision about many things. I am thinking of the health care system, which the pandemic demonstrated was fragile and underfunded. One party says there should be more privatization, another wants to make seniors' homes the priority and yet another is counting on existing public services, home care and long-term care centres.

This has been top of mind during the campaign, and on Monday, Quebecers will vote and decide. Usually, when the public makes a decision, that is the end of it. No matter what choice the Quebec nation makes, Canadians will have to agree because Ottawa is imposing all kinds of conditions. It is imposing its own standards on us and wants us to adopt its priorities.

I am talking about health, but this is true in all sorts of areas, such as housing, education, family policy and taxation. In fact, it is true in almost all areas. That is what it means to be a minority, even though this House recognized that we were a nation by a nearly unanimous vote a few years ago. The Bloc Québécois wants the right to opt out of federal programs in areas that should be the responsibility of Quebec instead of Ottawa because we want to be masters in our own house.

When I introduced Bill C-237, I hoped to advance the autonomy of Quebec. We are currently being led by a minority government. The Bloc Québécois wants Quebec to be a country, but in the meantime, it wants us to be masters in our own house to the extent possible. That is only natural. The Conservative Party campaigned on respecting provincial jurisdictions. The NDP has its Sherbrooke declaration, which supports Quebec's right to opt out. Between the three parties, we can move Bill C-237 forward.

However, I was bitterly disappointed when we were debating this bill. The member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie says that he supports the right to withdraw, but only if Quebecers adhere to the NDP agenda. The Conservative member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington says that she respects provincial jurisdictions, but only if the Liberals agree and grant a royal recommendation. If not, she is against the bill.

I want to point out that the Constitution gives exclusive powers to Quebec and the provinces. This means that the federal government must not interfere. This is set out in the Constitution that English Canada adopted, the Constitution that Quebec never signed. Now a Bloc Québécois member, a separatist MP, is standing up in the House and demanding that the federal government respect the Constitution. The Canadian parties are the ones not respecting it. It is all backwards.

However, it is not too late. Election platforms are not just documents to be used during an election campaign and then thrown away. I am appealing to the NDP and the Conservative Party to keep the promises they made to Quebecers during the election campaign. Let Bill C-237 move on to the next stage. That will give us time to convince the government to grant a royal recommendation.

If Bill C-237 is passed, Ottawa will be free to do as it pleases in areas under its jurisdiction, just as Quebec and the other provinces will be free to act in areas under their jurisdiction.

• (1930)

Everyone would respect everyone else's jurisdictions. The key word is "respect".

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.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel.

Mr. Louis Plamondon: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, October 5, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

Adjournment Proceedings

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

• (1935)

[*English*]

HEALTH

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, after the Liberals finally caught up with our international allies and declared that it is safe for people to get onto planes and trains or return to work in the federal public service without a COVID vaccine, they are still saying that it is unsafe for a person to serve our country in the Canadian Armed Forces.

We know that the Liberals replaced COVID science with political science a long time ago, so it comes as no surprise that they would continue such an unscientific and contradictory mandate. Canada's soldiers, sailors and airmen are the best in the world. Let me say that again: They are the best in the world.

We have watched time and time again as they have answered our country's call and calls for aid from nations around the world. Just this week, we have witnessed them come to the aid of our friends in Atlantic Canada in the aftermath of a hurricane, where we heard grandmothers breathing sighs of relief at the sight of our soldiers rolling into tiny villages to lend a hand.

With Russia on the war path, Canada's armed forces must be prepared to defend our allies and our borders. It is high time for the Prime Minister to drop the last of his politically motivated and divisive COVID mandates and give our brave men and women in uniform their jobs back.

This week we heard that Friday will be the last day for COVID border restrictions, such as the proof of vaccination, quarantine, testing and isolation requirements for people entering Canada, as the government catches up to all of the provinces on following the science. We know that, at the same time, the mandatory use of the ArriveCAN app will cease.

This is important because Canadians have had an incredibly challenging time. We have seen people lose their jobs. We have seen people struggle with the isolation of lockdowns. We have seen people miss monumental events such as welcoming new life and saying goodbye to loved ones.

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At a time when Canadians are facing unprecedented, in many of their lives, cost-of-living increases, the government has collected or issued fines worth over a million dollars to people trying to enter Canada. It is because of the failed ArriveCAN app that it has issued those fines. The government needs to do the right thing, and it needs to do the compassionate thing. It needs to rescind the fines, cancel the collections and refund the payments to Canadians. Frankly, it needs to apologize for the impacts of this failed app on Canadians.

I do not know what the difference is in the science today and the science Saturday that will see these mandates end, but it is high time that they end. We are glad that they are ending. We call on the government to do the right thing and refund those who have been wrongly fined with the ArriveCAN app.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I certainly respect the comments from my colleague, whose riding neighbours my own. I disagree with his assessment of the situation when he characterizes the government as playing politics on this issue. This government has always operated from the position of science and listening to experts, not from the position of listening to politicians rail on for political gain, which unfortunately is what we have seen from this member and, particularly throughout the pandemic, members of the Conservative Party.

The reality of the situation is that at every turn, when decisions have been made, whether it has been to remove requirements for mandates or for the ArriveCAN app, it has always been done with the understanding that it was in the best interest of Canadians.

It is also important to point out that Canadians, and indeed the federal public service, which includes the members of our Canadian Armed Forces, showed up in large numbers to be vaccinated, and by and large, the vast majority of Canadians were on board with the requirements that were set out by the federal government in conjunction with the expert advice that was given to the government to make those decisions. I agree with the member that members of the armed forces are the best in the world. They come into action and respond to requests at times of need. As somebody who represents a riding that has a base at CFB Kingston, I am witness to that on a daily basis when I am in my riding.

It is extremely unfortunate, in my opinion, that this is being characterized by the Conservatives, as it has been doing almost since day one, as an attack on Canadians and as political motivation, when the only objective from the beginning has been to take care of Canadians and protect Canadians so we could get through this pandemic in the best form possible.

If one reflects on where Canada is, at every step of this pandemic, we have always been in a better position, especially when we compare ourselves to our neighbours to the south. Per capita, we had fewer fatalities. We had more people become vaccinated. We had more people respect the requirements imposed upon them by the various levels of government. Now we are finally starting to see us get to the end of this pandemic and come out on the other side, and we are a better country because we were able to do that together.

• (1940)

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, Canadians can be counted on to do the right thing, and they are looking to be able to count on their government to do the right thing. The science is clear that it is time for these mandates to end. It is past time for them to end.

The parliamentary secretary has said that members of our Canadian Forces are equal to our federal public servants, so I am looking for treatment equal to that of our federal public servants so they do not receive any restriction based on their vaccination status to be able to continue to serve our country valiantly, having answered the call and put on that uniform for Canadians. Let them get back to work.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, this government has always used the best advice from experts in the process of making every decision. It has never made decisions based on the political wind, as it sees it. As a matter of fact, quite often it has had to go against the political wind and what perhaps may have been popular opinion, especially as it has been encouraged by the other side of the House.

I am very confident the government will do that. When the time is right, based on that information, the government, I am certain, will make the required decisions in order to ensure things are dealt with in a way that keeps all Canadians safe.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, last November, I copied the ministers of health and foreign affairs on a letter that I wrote to the president of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, which falls under the purview of the Minister of Health, regarding the CIHR's blatant mislabelling of Taiwan as a province of China. I wrote this letter after a Taiwanese scholar doing research in Canada brought to my attention that the CIHR's research application process requires Taiwanese applicants to falsely indicate their nationality as "Taiwan—Province of China", and accordingly requested the president of CIHR to correct this blatant mislabelling. After all, Taiwan is not a province of China. Taiwan consists of a distinct and substantial territory and population, and is governed by a democratic government. Moreover, the People's Republic of China has never controlled, not for one minute, one inch of Taiwanese territory.

Nearly a year after I wrote to the president of CIHR, I have heard nothing from anyone at CIHR, nor from the Minister of Health nor the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Six months after I wrote the letter, I attempted to follow up with the Minister of Health in question period. The minister, incredibly, seemed completely unaware of the issue and offered nothing in the way of substance with his answer, but nonetheless undertook to look into the issue and follow up with me. Months later, there has been no follow-up and the mislabelling continues.

The minister's inaction is completely unacceptable. This is not a new issue. This has been going on for years, and it has been repeatedly brought to the attention of the Liberal government, including by the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office.

Why the inaction? When will the Minister of Health finally get around to directing the CIHR to stop this blatant mislabelling of Taiwan?

Adjournment Proceedings

• (1945)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I apologize to the member if he feels as though his question has not been addressed. Hopefully the comments that I provide tonight will suffice.

Our government recognizes the strengths of Taiwan in matters of science, technology and innovation. The government is also aware of the issue of concern regarding the classification of Taiwan in the Canadian Common CV system used by Canada's federal research funding agencies and administered by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, or CIHR.

Currently, the Canadian Common CV system and CIHR's grant management platform adhere to the International Organization for Standardization country list. This list is recognized by the Government of Canada through Canada's national accreditation body, the Standards Council of Canada. However, the CIHR has had discussions on the matter of concern with key partners, including Global Affairs Canada and other federal stakeholders. As a result, CIHR is now actively implementing the change to Taiwan in its system to ensure ongoing alignment with Canada's foreign policy and government-wide data standards.

We certainly recognize that this is an important concern not only for Taiwanese students and researchers in Canada, but also for many of their colleagues and partners throughout the broader research community and beyond.

As members may know, there are very strong connections between the people of Canada and Taiwan, including in the scientific domain. Indeed, I am very pleased to note that our government engages directly with Taiwan on matters of scientific research collaboration through several mechanisms. For instance, the CIHR collaborates with Taiwan's ministry of science and technology, including through participation in multilateral research consortia. In addition, the CIHR recently worked with the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Ottawa to promote one of these initiatives, the Transcan-3 funding program, to support cancer researchers in Canada and Taiwan.

These collaborative efforts speak to the many invaluable linkages between Canada and Taiwan. Through our government's ongoing engagement with Taiwan in areas that include health research partnership, we look forward to strengthening even further these ties of collaboration.

Let me also emphasize that in the promotion of funding programs and its other engagements, CIHR has referred to and will continue to refer to our partner by the name of "Taiwan" simply. It is my hope that our ongoing partnership with Taiwanese counterparts, driven by our common values and shared priorities, will continue to yield impactful results for our collective health, well-being and prosperity.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, it is encouraging to hear that the CIHR is finally acting and finally working to address this mislabelling issue, but, quite frankly, it has been far too long. The parliamentary secretary cited the ISO. That was CIHR's excuse. Universities and other institutions corrected their mislabelling notwithstanding the ISO, and now evidently the CIHR is correcting

the mislabelling notwithstanding the ISO. Therefore, it constituted nothing more than a bureaucratic excuse.

While I am glad this is finally being addressed, it has been really far too long. The minister's silence and the government's silence have been ongoing for far too long, so I am very disappointed in that—

• (1950)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned, the CIHR has had a constructive discussion with partners on important matters regarding the classification of Taiwan in grant management platforms. As we explore and pursue solutions, we will also continue to strengthen the federal government's co-operation with Taiwan in matters of scientific research and collaboration, based on our shared values and common principles.

Again, I thank the member for bringing forward his concerns and ensuring that they have been brought to the minister's attention. I hope that he finds the answer satisfactory.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am here to express once again the frustrations of people with disabilities as they continue to wait for a Canada disability benefit. We know they face too many challenges that are only increasing with the rising cost of food and the skyrocketing prices of homes and rent. The situation is dire.

The government must act now to get the Canada disability benefit into people's bank accounts. When will the Liberal government make that happen? New Democrats are ready to do the work to make the Canada disability benefit the best it can be for people. To make sure it truly protects persons with disabilities from a life of poverty, we have proposed an amendment to Bill C-22 that would enshrine adequacy and provide protection.

Right now, people in the disability community are hopeful that they will finally be prioritized by the Liberal government. Will the government prioritize their well-being and accept the NDP's ask for adequacy to be enshrined in this legislation? Persons with disabilities are legally entitled to adequacy, and this new benefit must be accountable to a measurement tool that provides it. That accountability is currently missing from Bill C-22.

The government has an obligation to uphold the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and to ensure dignity and full equality for all. This includes necessary income supports. Dire financial circumstances are the reality for too many people with disabilities, and the longer they have to wait for the promised disability benefit, the more they are being abandoned.

Adjournment Proceedings

Since 2015, the Liberals have spoken about the importance of lifting people with disabilities out of poverty, yet their actions do not match those words. It is beyond time for the government to do better and to use the measuring tools available to ensure that any legislation that is meant to end poverty actually reaches that goal.

I am committed to working with the government to make this happen. Bill C-22 has the potential to be the first and only bill in Canada that actually legislates people out of poverty. Let us imagine that: one bill that can almost cut poverty in half with one or two simple sentences.

Will the Liberal government work with the NDP to turn its aspiration statement into a reality and amend the bill in committee to include an amendment for adequacy that would actually make sure persons with disabilities are lifted out of poverty, and will it do so now?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want nothing more, as does the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, than to see Canadians with disabilities receive the new Canada disability benefit as quickly as possible.

We understand that people have concerns about the timing of the benefit. In the spirit of “nothing without us”, we have been working tirelessly alongside the disability community, as well as the provinces and territories, to ensure that every person who receives the Canada disability benefit would be better off because of it.

Let us be clear. We need the disability community's input at every step of the design of the benefit, as I am sure the member would agree. We also need to work with provinces and territories to ensure that there are no clawbacks to other benefits that already exist, as has come up in debate in this House regarding Bill C-22.

Bill C-22 is, as the member indicated, groundbreaking framework legislation. If it becomes law, we would establish regulations that define the benefit amounts, eligibility criteria and other details. Parliament would have the opportunity to review it three years after it comes into effect. I would note that this time frame is actually shorter than the usual parliamentary review. That is because we are committed to ensuring that the Canada disability benefit meets the needs of working-age persons with disabilities.

Just last summer, with funding provided through budget 2021, we launched extensive consultations with the disability community and with national indigenous organizations, as well as with provincial and territorial governments, to seek their input on their experiences and needs.

It is important to understand the Canada disability benefit is part of a continuum of bold, historic actions that our government has taken to advance accessibility and the rights of persons with disabilities. These actions include the Accessible Canada Act, the Canada poverty reduction strategy and the development of the first-ever disability inclusion action plan. Of course the key component to our action plan is the Canada disability benefit, which would help reduce poverty for hundreds of thousands of working-age Canadians with disabilities.

If passed, Bill C-22 would establish guiding principles and objectives for the new benefit. It would also allow the Governor in Council to implement the benefit's design components through regulation. The sooner Bill C-22 passes, the sooner the Canada disability benefit could be implemented. That means we would be able to help the people who need it the most. We know persons with disabilities have been waiting a long time for this. That is why we are working as quickly and efficiently as possible to deliver this historic benefit.

I would also indicate to the member that I know she asked a question specifically about an amendment. She is asking if the government would work with the NDP, or if the Liberal members would work with the NDP, in committee to make these amendments. I do not think it would be appropriate for me to pre-empt the work that those members would do. I look forward to seeing the report that this member and all members of the committee will bring to the House. I am sure that if what she is recommending makes sense and is a good proposal, it would be taken very seriously by the members of the Liberal Party who sit on that committee.

• (1955)

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, tonight I have heard a lot of the same goals: quick, efficient and wanting to bring it in as soon as possible.

I see that there is space next week on the legislative agenda. I think there is an opportunity to have Bill C-22 come back to the House so that we could get it to committee. Will this bill come back for debate next week?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I do not have that in front of me right now.

What I can tell this member is that the House leader's office on this side of the House certainly works with the House leaders' offices on all sides of the House. We have a very good understanding and relationship with the NDP. I would encourage the member to encourage her House leadership to push this forward.

She knows just as well as I do that games unfortunately sometimes happen in this House that prevent legislation from going through. Let us work together to get this to committee so that we can have a meaningful impact.

I know my words might ring hollow because she has heard them many times before. I can assure the member that this side of the House is passionate about moving as quickly as possible to get Bill C-22 passed so that we can get those who need it the most the resources they require.

Adjournment Proceedings

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopt-

ed. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:59 p.m.)

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