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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, October 26, 2022

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*English*]

The Speaker: Before we start, the hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga will lead us in the singing of the national anthem.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

MENTAL HEALTH

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I would like share about a dear friend of mine and a leader in my community, Kari Kokko. Kari was deeply caring and brilliant, and she invested her whole self in the betterment of our community, from social work to community theatre.

Sadly, we recently lost Kari to depression and an anxiety disorder that made the future so bleak for her that she saw no point in going on living. On behalf of our entire community, we extend our condolences to Maggie, John and the extended Kokko family.

Just weeks prior to this, I learned of another young friend, David, who took his own life as well.

Organizations such as the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council are more critical today than ever, so they can support those thinking about suicide, and provide resources for those supporting others and those coping with grief from suicide loss.

Suicide can be prevented, and help is available. We all have a role to play. Let us also keep Kari and David's families in our hearts as we push for increased mental health resources so they might be accessible to anyone who needs them, without wait times, early discharge, discrimination or cost.

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CYNTHIA LAI

Mr. Shaun Chen (Scarborough North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to honour the life of Cynthia Lai, the city councillor for Scarborough North who tragically passed away last Friday afternoon.

Councillor Lai emigrated from Hong Kong in 1972 and built a successful career in real estate sales and management here in Canada. She became the first Chinese-Canadian woman to serve as president of the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board. Elected to Toronto City Council in 2018, Councillor Lai was a voice for the unheard and under-represented. A relentless advocate for the Scarborough subway, she filled every room with energy, positivity and big ideas.

Last Friday, Councillor Lai was on a clear path to re-election in Monday's municipal election when she lost her battle with cancer. On behalf of the people of Scarborough North, I extend my deepest condolences to her family, her husband, C.K. Fung, and their two sons, Derrick and Darren.

Councillor Lai is dearly missed. May she rest in peace.

Mr. Marc Dalton: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government's incompetent, insensitive, voodoo economic management is crushing everyday Canadians. More debt has been added by the Prime Minister than all prime ministers before him combined. The Liberals said that, because interest rates were rock bottom, it was no big deal to print billions—

The Speaker: I am going to interrupt for a moment. We are having a translation problem.

• (1410)

[*Translation*]

SITTING SUSPENDED

The Speaker: It seems the interpretation is working for the two front rows, but not for the back rows. The pages are coming around with new headsets. We will try changing the headsets.

In the meantime, we will suspend the sitting for a few seconds or minutes until we can solve the problem.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 2:11 p.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 2:13 p.m.)

The Speaker: Order. Let us resume statements by members.

*Statements by Members**[English]*

Mr. Marc Dalton: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government's incompetent, insensitive, voodoo economic management is crushing everyday Canadians. More debt has been added by the Prime Minister than—

The Speaker: I am sorry.

[Translation]

There seems to be a problem with the interpretation.

[English]

Could we confirm if it is working? By the looks of it, there is no interpretation in the backbenches, but we have some portable units for members to use.

• (1415)

Does this ever happen to other Speakers, or am I the only one who is a target for technology?

The hon. member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge has the floor.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government's incompetent, insensitive, voodoo economic management is crushing everyday Canadians. More debt has been added by the Prime Minister than all prime ministers before him combined. The Liberals said that, because interest rates were rock bottom, it was no big deal to print billions, which shot up the price of homes, gas, groceries and goods.

Inflation is at a 40-year high. Now they are saying, “Whoopsie, it is time to jack up interest rates.” This will financially stress out new homebuyers who have purchased at inflated prices. Nancy at our local food bank tells me that thousands of people are coming there. They are struggling, and she has not seen this happen like this before.

What will the Liberals do? They are going to triple the carbon tax on home heating and fuel and, for good measure, they will increase EI premiums by 10%. Has Canada ever seen a more out-of-touch government?

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ALLIANCE OF CANADIAN LAND TRUSTS

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to rise this afternoon to highlight the work of community land trusts.

Over the past few days, the Alliance of Canadian Land Trusts, a newly formed umbrella network that advocates for local land trusts at the national level, has been holding a summit here in Ottawa. These community-based organizations are at the forefront of local action on conservation and climate change, with programs such as the land trust conservation fund, part of the much larger natural heritage conservation program.

Our government has invested \$20 million through these local land trusts. This government investment has been more than dou-

bled, and yes, more than tripled. It was actually quadrupled the money it had raised from private funds. This money has supported over 40 organizations and 116 projects, and it has protected over 13,000 hectares of nature reserves since 2009. The return on the \$20 million invested by our government has been phenomenal, due to the work these land trusts have done.

The success of our government and country in meeting our environmental goals, both in emissions reduction and biodiversity protection, depends on all of these local land trusts, boards, volunteers and donors. For that, our government joins with me in thanking the new Alliance of Canadian Land Trusts and its member organizations greatly.

[Translation]

The Speaker: We still seem to be having technical difficulties.

[English]

We do not have interpretation in French, so we have portable units being passed around.

• (1420)

[Translation]

Is everything okay now? I see members giving the thumbs up. Everything seems to be working.

The hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle.

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Mr. Speaker, today I want to talk about the miners in Saint-Rémi-d'Amherst and their families.

Bruno Carrière's documentary film *1948, L'affaire silicose — L'histoire d'une injustice*—

The Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but I am being told that the members on the back benches do not have any interpretation.

[English]

If anyone cannot hear me in one of the official languages, please raise your hand and we will have someone come to you with a unit.

[Translation]

Let us try this again.

The hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle has the floor.

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DOCUMENTARY ON INDUSTRIAL DISEASE

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I want to talk about the miners in Saint-Rémi-d'Amherst and their families.

Bruno Carrière's documentary film *1948, L'affaire silicose — L'histoire d'une injustice* shines a light on the tragedy of the first industrial disease in Quebec in the 1930s and 1940s.

It is thanks to the tireless investigative work of Franco-American journalist Burton LeDoux that we know the extent of the ravages caused by silicosis. This disease caused the death of several dozen miners from Saint-Rémi-d'Amherst, a township that was nicknamed "the village of widows".

This powerful and touching documentary chronicles the years when Quebec workers were victims of hazardous working conditions. To get a better idea of the hardship these families endured, I invite everyone to watch *1948, L'affaire silicose — L'histoire d'une injustice*, one of the first big scandals in Quebec's social history.

* * *

● (1425)

75 YEARS OF CANADA-ITALY RELATIONS

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in this month of October, 2022, Canada is celebrating the 75th anniversary of bilateral relations with Italy. Both countries have common positions on important regional and international issues. We share common values of democracy, liberty, human rights and a rules-based international order.

More than 1.5 million Canadians are of Italian descent. They are part of a dynamic community that participates in every aspect of our bilateral relations: culture, the economy, trade, science and technology. We might say that it is a perfect marriage.

[English]

On behalf of the Canada-Italy Interparliamentary Group, I invite all members to join us tonight from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Speaker's dining room in room 233-S, West Block, for a celebration of this milestone with His Excellency Andrea Ferrari, the ambassador of Italy. Yes, there will be Italian food. I hope to see all members there.

* * *

DIWALI

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after a hiatus of two years, the national Diwali celebration is returning to Parliament Hill today. With the support of our Indo-Canadian friends, community organizations and mandirs from across the country, tonight at 6:30 p.m. I will be delighted to host the 22nd national Diwali celebration at the Sir John A. Macdonald Building. I hope all my colleagues will join us.

The Diwali celebration on Parliament Hill was started by our dear friend the late Hon. Deepak Obhrai. With this inaugural event, Canada became the first western democracy to celebrate Diwali in Parliament, in 1998. We continue this tradition by joining hands across political boundaries to light the Diwali lamp, a gesture that symbolizes the banishment of darkness and the ushering in of light, peace and hope.

Statements by Members

Let the national Diwali celebration be a truly Canadian tradition where South Asian and Indo-Canadians join hands with the rest of Canada to share the message of Diwali: Let there be light.

Happy Diwali, everyone.

* * *

GENDER EQUALITY IN MEDICINE

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, women are misdiagnosed 30% more often than men. This gender gap in medicine stems from the lack of knowledge of women's medical conditions and experiences. That is why I am thrilled that our government just launched the national women's health research initiative, an investment of \$20 million to enhance health outcomes for women and eliminate gaps.

In the past, researchers excluded women from participating in early-phase drug trials in case they would accidentally fall pregnant during the trial, and women were generally left out of medical research because their hormonal cycles would complicate results. This has led to the complete neglect of conditions that primarily affect women, such as ovarian cancer and endometriosis.

Another factor contributing to this gender gap is a lack of trust in women to report on their own health. When doctors cannot explain why a female patient is in pain, she is told that she is under stress, that she suffers from depression or that it is hormonal. This is unacceptable. The women's caucus considers this a top priority and asks women in Canada who agree to please stand up.

The Speaker: The hon. opposition whip is rising on a point of order.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Mr. Speaker, the problems with interpretation seem to be spreading and we have run out of mobile translators, so at the moment, a number of us have no interpretation.

● (1430)

The Speaker: Can all members who do not have interpretation raise their hands? There are portable units coming your way.

Let us try this again. Members should have a portable unit if interpretation is not working at their desks. If they do not have one or if something goes wrong during question period, please raise a hand. We have pages and table officers looking out for any hands that go up. They will go to members with a brand new unit, and then they can get started.

The hon. member for St. John's East.

Statements by Members

• (1435)

YOUTH VENTURES AWARDS

Ms. Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today's youth are tenacious and determined and get the job done. Nowhere was that better displayed than at the recent 25th annual Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Ventures Awards. Youth Ventures Newfoundland and Labrador supports young people in turning their hobbies, interests and passions into profitable ventures. Today's youth ventures are tomorrow's emerging start-ups, thriving small businesses and growing employers. This program instills an entrepreneurial spirit to support a prosperous Newfoundland and Labrador.

The awards ceremony recognized the best ventures from this year. I want to send my sincere congratulations to all the winners, especially venture of the year winner Dawson Greene of Green Head Growers, from Lourdes, and Anna Ryan of Seriously Dough! in Placentia for outstanding venture among those 17 years old and younger.

Youth Ventures is a CBDC program and has helped start over 4,500 businesses. All the participants at the Youth Ventures Awards have so much to be proud of. Our future is in great hands.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians cannot afford this costly NDP-Liberal coalition and that is no more evident than with food.

Here are a few facts. Food inflation in Canada hit its fastest growth in September since August 1981, when the first Trudeau was in office. Food purchased from stores is up 11.4% year over year. Food banks are seeing record demand as prices soar.

The Liberals' triple tax hikes, fertilizer cuts and back-breaking gatekeepers are bankrupting farmers and ranchers and outsourcing food production to other counties, which then requires the burning of fuel to get it back to Canada when we should be growing, raising and preparing it here.

Here is a final fact. A Conservative government under our new leader would repeal these taxes, remove the fertilizer mandates and get the gatekeepers out of the way so we can grow affordable food, feed our people and be the breadbasket of the world.

* * *

POLITICSNOW

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, October marks Women's History Month. In honour of this, I want to highlight the important work being done by PoliticsNOW, an organization in my riding of Sudbury. PoliticsNOW empowers and supports women to become political leaders in communities across northern Ontario. In the last municipal election, PoliticsNOW supported over 46 women by providing training sessions and campaign schools and hosting events for women to connect and learn.

In Ontario's municipal elections held this week, 60 women ran in northern Ontario's nine cities, 26 women were elected to municipal

council and one was the first elected woman mayor in a northern Ontario city since 2014.

Organizations like PoliticsNOW are making an impact on women across the country. I want to acknowledge and congratulate the incredible work being done by Amanda Kingsley Malo and PoliticsNOW to get even more women elected so they have better representation across northern Ontario.

* * *

TAXATION

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, \$6,739 will be the heat bill facing a typical family using oil heat in rural Ontario and rural Atlantic Canada this coming winter. That is frightening.

They have no alternative. There is no natural gas. Electric resistance heating is just as expensive, and heat pumps will not work at -20°C in homes built before the 1980s, whether they are ground source or air source pumps.

[*Translation*]

We asked the government to help them and it refused.

In fact, this is the only G7 government that has increased energy taxes while prices are at an all-time high.

[*English*]

The government is getting away with it because the NDP is letting it. Canadians cannot afford this costly agreement between the NDP and the Liberal Party, and they certainly cannot afford to pay \$6,739 to heat their homes this coming winter.

* * *

• (1440)

HOUSING

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again Canadians have been slammed by another punishing interest rate hike of 0.5%, bringing interest rates to 3.75%, all brought in to combat the inflation caused by this Prime Minister.

Statements by Members

Residents know it has never been more expensive to buy a home in Canada than it has just become under the Liberal government. Housing prices have doubled during the Liberals' seven years in power, with a typical single-family home in my region hovering around a million dollars. Nationwide, the average Canadian now spends 60% of their income on home ownership costs alone. Under the Prime Minister, Toronto has become the number one housing bubble in the world, where it is more expensive to buy a home than in New York, Hong Kong or San Francisco. Vancouver is not far behind, as the sixth highest.

It is not just homeowners who are struggling to make ends meet due to the Liberal inflation. The average rent in Canada is now over \$2,000 a month, a yearly increase of over 15%. This is not sustainable.

We have a plan, as a Conservative government, to take action to address this housing crisis.

* * *

ACCESSIBLE ORAL HEALTH CARE

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the incredible work of Bev Woods and her team at Gift from the Heart. Bev Woods opened her first dental hygiene office in Trenton, Ontario, as a location for her community to receive free care. Dismayed by the fact that many could not access the free services she offered, she founded Gift from the Heart and the flagship outreach mobile community cruiser, a refurbished and repurposed ambulance, to ensure that there were no barriers to accessing oral health care.

[Translation]

Last September, Bev and her team set up a mobile clinic in the town of Pincourt to provide free dental care to seniors, seasonal workers and Ukrainians who have recently arrived in Canada.

They were welcomed and served by dental hygienists Joy Maderazo, Roshni Desai, Martine Daigneault, Sonia Caceres, Sophia Baltzis, Tayyaba Fiaz, Vanessa Bravo and Laura Iorio and also by a team of dedicated volunteers.

[English]

Together, they gave their time and their expertise to brighten the smiles of so many in my community. On behalf of everyone who calls Vaudreuil—Soulanges home, I say, "Thank you."

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer my solidarity with the movement led by young women for human rights in Iran. At great risk to their own safety, people are taking to the streets demanding justice and freedom following the horrific murder of Mahsa Amini. Their courage in the face of horrific state repression is inspiring. Protesters are being tear-gassed, beaten and shot for asserting their rights. This is appalling. The Iranian regime must stop the killing and respect its citizens' right to demonstrate.

Canada has an important role to play in upholding human rights and international law. We must be vocal in supporting an independent investigation into the death of Mahsa Amini, and the federal government must ensure that those fleeing violence in Iran can obtain asylum here.

Women's rights are human rights. I stand with the women in Iran whose rights are under attack, and I will speak out whenever the rights of women and gender-diverse people are threatened. We can never be silent in the face of injustice.

* * *

[Translation]

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF MONTCALM FARM

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 100th anniversary of Montcalm Farm.

For the Montcalms, agriculture is a family affair and above all a passion. In 1922, Joseph Montcalm bought a farm in Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague. His son and daughter-in-law, Roch and Corona, then went to live on the dairy farm. Then brothers Maurice, François and Marc joined the business to expand the farm. Now, the cousins are pursuing the tradition of excellence. A fifth generation is being raised and showing interest in agriculture.

Their secret ingredient is this: By always being ahead of their time, they have prepared for the future.

I am proud to talk about the Quebec agricultural model and, above all, I am proud of the Montcalm family.

Human-scale family farms with farmers involved in their communities would not exist without supply management.

The Montcalms of 1922 would be proud to see the evolution of the family business and the impressive contribution of their large family both on the farm and throughout our region.

Therefore, it is with great joy, but above all with great affection, that I congratulate the Montcalm family.

* * *

● (1445)

[English]

2020 SHOOTINGS IN NOVA SCOTIA

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the great people of Portapique, and indeed all of Nova Scotia, want and deserve answers. The sad and diabolical tragedy that visited our normally idyllic part of the world continues to haunt our thoughts. All Nova Scotians have been failed by the flawed proceedings of the Mass Casualty Commission, from which we all held much hope for answers. The sick and twisted story is further marred by the political interference of the former minister for public safety and the inappropriate dance performed with Commissioner Lucki.

Oral Questions

Nova Scotians deserve respect, not political cover-ups. Phone records were withheld for two and a half years for politically motivated reasons by a former Liberal staffer. Nova Scotians deserve answers, not fiction, not foolishness, not falsified reality and certainly not fabrication.

The former minister for public safety should resign.

* * *

FALLEN PEACE OFFICERS

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week I attended the 40th annual Fallen Peace Officers' Memorial Service in Halifax, honouring Nova Scotian peace officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty. This year, the name of RCMP Constable Heidi Stevenson has been added to the fallen officers monument. Constable Stevenson was a 23-year veteran of the force who tragically lost her life during the Nova Scotia mass shooting in 2020. Watching her husband and children lay a wreath in her name was a sombre reminder of the risk these brave officers take to keep us safe.

Tragically, in recent months, four more officers across Canada have died in the line of duty, so I invite all members in this House to join me in expressing our sincere condolences to the families and loved ones of Constable Andrew Hong of the Toronto Police Service, Constables Morgan Russell and Devon Northrup of the South Simcoe Police Service, and RCMP Constable Shaelyn Yang in Burnaby.

These officers put themselves in harm's way to serve and protect others, and we will remember their sacrifices forever.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are now getting the bill for the Prime Minister's \$500-billion inflationary deficit. Today, interest rates are being raised again. A family that bought a typical home five years ago with a typical mortgage that is now up for renewal will pay \$7,000 more a year.

The Prime Minister said that the government was taking on debt so that Canadians would not have to. Who is going to make the extra mortgage payments?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will answer my colleague's question shortly.

I would like to begin by noting that today marks 40 days since the death of Mahsa Amini. In the wake of this senseless murder, we have seen the incredible courage of Iranian women who are still protesting for change and braving the violence and cruelty of the regime every day.

[English]

As the people of Iran and others around the world gather today and tonight, we hear them and stand with them, and will continue to

hold the Iranian regime to account for its abhorrent, heinous behaviour.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are now getting the bill for the Prime Minister's half trillion dollars of inflationary deficits that first drove up inflation and now drive up interest rates. A typical family who bought a typical home with a typical mortgage five years ago but are now up for renewal are paying \$7,000 more per year.

The Prime Minister said the government was going to take on all this debt so that Canadians would not have to, as if they do not have to pay back government debt. If that were the case though, who is going to pay the extra mortgage payments for these families?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, through the pandemic we made the decision to support Canadian families, to support workers, to support small businesses, to make sure Canadians could hold on and to make sure our economy could hold on through an unprecedented, historic pandemic. At the same time, we were there to support Canadians as the economy got going again, and we are there to support them now with the GST rebate that is going to arrive in the coming weeks and with direct support for dental care and for low-income renters.

The question is this: Why are Conservative politicians not choosing to support Canadians on dental and rental?

• (1450)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister caused this inflation crisis. Even Mark Carney, who will be the successor to the current Liberal leader, is saying that inflation is a homegrown problem. He is right. It is caused by the half trillion dollars of inflationary deficits that have bid up the cost of the goods we buy and the interest we pay.

Today, rates went up another half point, meaning many families will be handing in their keys to the banks, because they will not be able to afford those bills. Has the Prime Minister been briefed by his officials on how many Canadians will lose their homes because of the higher interest rates that his inflationary policies have caused?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, inflation is a worldwide problem right now, but it is a challenge faced by Canadian families, and we will continue to support them through it. That is why we are delivering supports for families right now in a targeted way, doubling the GST credit, which will arrive in the coming weeks in their banks accounts; moving forward on support for dental care and moving forward on support for low-income renters, things that the Conservative Party is continuing not just to vote against but to block; and we will continue to do more.

We will continue to be there for Canadians during the challenging times ahead, because that is what Canadians expect of their government.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what they have come to expect of this government is that it raises the cost of living. The cost of government is driving up the cost of goods and now the cost of interest.

Two hundred billion dollars of the half trillion in deficits had nothing to do with COVID, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, and even that so-called COVID spending included the ArriveCAN app, an app that could have been designed in a weekend for a quarter of a million dollars but cost \$54 million. The government claims that \$1.2 million of that went to a company called ThinkOn. That company says it did not get that money. Who did?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the appropriate ministers are looking into this and making sure that the mistake that was made by public servants in sharing information is followed up on.

At the same time, it is important to remember that we did a lot of things in an unprecedented way during an unprecedented pandemic, including delivering CERB cheques within weeks of people having to stay home from jobs in ways that were unthinkable only a few months before. We were there to support small businesses with record supports, so that we could come roaring back as an economy immediately after. Yes, we stepped up in a very rapid way to support Canadians, and Canadians know that is what got us through this pandemic.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister cannot tell us who got the \$1.2 million. He blames public servants for the mistake. Surely in the week since he learned of this misappropriation he could have found out where the money went, but he has not.

That is not the only example. There was also the \$400,000 trip to London, for which there was a \$6,000 suite for one night. It is just another example of the massive Liberal waste that has contributed to the inflationary deficits we now face.

If he cannot tell us which company got the money, can he at least tell us who got the \$6,000 a night room?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Canadians know we had a large delegation, including a number of previous prime ministers and former governors general in London for—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I have to interrupt the right hon. Prime Minister. The hon. Leader of the Opposition asked a question. I am sure he wants to hear the answer. I am going to ask everyone to calm down so we can hear the answer.

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

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, to mark the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Canada had a large delegation that went to London to the funeral, including a number of former prime ministers and former governors general. We stayed in the same hotel.

Having a strong Canadian presence there as one of the top realm countries was expected of us, and it was important to see all Canadians so well represented together at the funeral.

* * *

• (1455)

[*Translation*]

PENSIONS

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, some laws and initiatives with budget implications require a royal recommendation before they can be adopted in the House. It is a symbolic gesture, but it is in the rules.

My question relates to the budget. Inflation makes seniors very vulnerable, especially those the government discriminates against, the ones aged 65 to 75, particularly if they depend on government assistance. As such, and as the need for an economic update becomes increasingly urgent, will the government reconsider its position and increase old age security to a level that will enable seniors to cope?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the good news is that seniors are now living much longer and healthier lives than they did decades or generations ago.

That is a good thing, but it means that too many seniors run out of pension and savings before they die. We recognize that, starting at the age of 75, seniors have greater needs, and that costs more. That is why we have chosen to increase old age security for all seniors 75 and up. Our goal is to provide an appropriate level of support to those in greater need.

*Oral Questions***HEALTH**

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the Prime Minister to go back and listen to his answer later.

This question also has a budgetary dimension, so perhaps we need to pretend to have the assent of our friend Charles, who does not need any assistance, although he is quite old.

As the Prime Minister knows, hospital emergency rooms are overflowing. The most dreaded season in terms of health care challenges is upon us. We are facing another wave of COVID-19. The health care system is crumbling because of funding problems.

In order to avoid lengthy debates, wasted time and jurisdictional squabbles, and for the good of Quebecers and Canadians, will the Prime Minister reverse his position and transfer the money for health care with no strings attached?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canada Health Act exists to ensure that Canadians across this country have equal access to quality health care across Canada. The federal government's role is to ensure that all Canadians have a good health care system.

The provinces, in turn, are responsible for the health care systems, and the federal government is very happy to partner with the provinces to fund these services. We are in talks with the provinces to deliver the results and services that Canadians, including Quebecers, expect.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today the Bank of Canada raised interest rates again.

Managing inflation is not just the Bank of Canada's responsibility. The Liberals share that responsibility as well. Many economists are predicting a recession. People expect us to prepare for the future.

When will the government stop hiding behind the Bank of Canada and show some leadership?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what our government is doing. We are remaining responsible within the fiscal framework to maintain our capacity to respond if economic conditions worsen, but we are also there with targeted assistance for those who need it.

Whether it is the 11 million households that will receive a GST rebate cheque in the coming weeks, whether it is direct assistance to families for dental care, or whether it is help for low-income renters, we are helping Canadians get through the difficult months ahead.

[*English*]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's own former economic adviser has raised concerns of increased household costs because of interest rates going up. He says an average family with a new mortgage, before today's new increase, could see an increase of \$11,000 in extra costs to their annu-

al budget. Most families do not have the ability to absorb that kind of hit.

When will the government help families that are reeling with the shock of increasing interest rates?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know how much families are concerned both with rising prices right now and with the spectre of increasing interest rates that are going to continue to put pressure on their mortgages and their savings. This is why we are taking action right now, in a targeted way, to ensure that we are supporting millions of households, millions of families, with GST rebates, with help for dental care and with help for low-income renters. We are going to continue to make sure we have the capacity to respond if the economic situation worsens for Canadians over the coming months.

● (1500)

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, record inflation is a choice for the Liberals, after causing it with the \$500 billion of inflationary deficit, much of which has nothing to do with COVID. They blame everything and everyone else. The Bank of Canada governor says that inflation is homegrown. Another past governor says it is domestic too. Now struggling Canadians are facing yet another rate hike that makes a bad situation worse. The Prime Minister is not letting up. He is raising taxes and, worse, he is still spending.

Canadians know how we got here. They just want to know how he could be so irresponsible.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, record inflation is hitting families around the globe, but that is cold comfort to Canadians who are struggling as well, which is why we are stepping up to directly support them with a GST rebate, with direct help for low-income renters and with dental care.

My question, and Canadians' question, to be quite frank, is this: Why are Conservative politicians continuing to stand against dental care for Canadian kids and stand against support for low-income families?

These are things that would help people tangibly in the months to come, but the Conservatives are just not supporting them. They are actually actively trying to block them.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister will have plenty of opportunity to ask questions in the future, but he does not get it.

Liberals told Canadians that interest rates would stay low. They told Canadians we would have deflation not inflation, and it would be temporary. They spent half a trillion dollars, which is more than every Prime Minister in the history of this country combined. They flooded the market with cheap cash and said not to worry about it. Now the Bank of Canada is cleaning up their mess by raising rates.

Will the Prime Minister finally pull his weight around here and stop fuelling the fire that he himself has lit?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it takes a special kind of Conservative politician to talk about initiatives like the CERB and the CEBA as flooding the market with cheap cash.

We are there to support Canadians in a direct way, as we had their backs during the pandemic, as we continue to have their backs right now with the high cost of living. We are always going to be there to support Canadians.

Why are Conservative politicians not stepping up to support Canadians on rental and dental care? That is the question Canadians are asking now.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's disastrous inflationary policies and reckless spending on the backs of Canadians is sending more families into homeless shelters and food banks. It is up 30%. The Prime Minister's climate-zealot ideology is keeping billions of dollars of investment in our responsible Canadian energy sector in the ground, increasing home heating costs 50% to 100%, and making more families freeze in the dark.

Will the Prime Minister take responsibility for his inflationary problems that caused the Bank of Canada's interest rate hikes because of just—

The Speaker: The hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am having a hard time following the particular logic that the Conservatives are putting forward today. They are saying the reason people are struggling is that we were there to help them in record amounts during the pandemic. We were there to keep food on the table for families struggling from having lost their jobs because of the pandemic. We were there to keep small businesses open, and restaurants and neighbourhood stores open, through the pandemic. We were there with supports because otherwise money was not coming in. We invested in the Canadian economy to get through these difficult times and Conservatives say we should not have done any of that.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us look at real, responsible allies of ours, like Japan, Switzerland, Taiwan and Hong Kong, that took the right steps and kept inflation under 3%. They did not print boatloads of money that was valueless and make sure their citizens got put further into debt. Canada now has the highest interest rate in the entire G7, pushing more families to food banks and homeless shelters. Like we said before, the more the Prime Minister spends, the higher interest rates and the higher “Justinflation” goes.

Will the Prime Minister take responsibility for Justinflation causing higher Bank of Canada interest rate hikes, yes or no?

Oral Questions

• (1505)

The Speaker: I just want to remind hon. members that you cannot do indirectly what you cannot do directly. It is nice to play with words, but it was a little obvious there.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have worked closely with allies over the past number of months and number of years to ensure that we are increasing opportunities for citizens, that we are increasing resilience in our supply chains and that we are working together.

Global inflation is hitting all of our allies, whether it be the United States, the U.K., France or Germany. All our major partners are facing these challenges. Canadians are doing slightly better than folks in those countries, but that is cold comfort to too many Canadians who are struggling. That is why we are stepping up with direct help and more help with a return on the GST credit that will land in Canadians' bank accounts in the coming weeks, and with dental and rental supports, which, inexplicably, Conservatives continue to oppose.

* * *

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we all remember when the Minister of Finance said that she could afford to increase the debt to record levels because the interest rates were so low. Now that she is vying for the Prime Minister's job, she is changing her tune and warning Canadians of the dangers of rising inflation and the fact that her government has to tighten its belt. In the meantime, millions of Canadians cannot make ends meet.

Can the Prime Minister confirm that he will cancel the carbon tax?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers and all Canadians know full well that climate change is a reality we need to face. They also know that we need to take this opportunity to grow our economy by making a greener shift. That is exactly what we are doing by putting a price on pollution. It is no longer free to pollute anywhere in the country. The Conservatives want to go back to those days, but we know that we need to move forward. We need to be there to put a price on pollution and put money back in Canadians' pockets, and that is exactly what we are doing.

Oral Questions

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is clear to Quebecers and Canadians is that the Bank of Canada's key interest rate has just increased for the sixth time. Now it sits at 3.75%. This will have an impact on mortgages, car loans and the money Canadians need to borrow to live decently. Inflation, accelerated by the Liberals' unprecedented spending, is eating into Canadians' wages, purchasing power and pensions. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister is turning a deaf ear and will not commit to reversing tax hikes.

Will he do that?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Conservatives continue to talk about cutting services that Canadians rely on, such as EI and pensions, we will be there to help vulnerable Canadians and invest in the middle class, and we will continue to fight climate change. We know that investing in the fight against climate change is the best way to build a robust economy with opportunities for everyone in the coming years. That is exactly what we will continue to do. The Conservatives may encourage us to cut services for Canadians, but we are not going to do that.

* * *

DENTAL CARE

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government's dental cheque scheme is supposed to provide relief for families facing the rising cost of living. That is the title of this bill: the cost of living relief act.

However, if the Prime Minister really wanted to help families, he could have increased family allowances, and all families would have benefited.

Instead, he came up with a cheque scheme that does not help all families, that discriminates against Quebec families and that forces parents to navigate CRA bureaucracy. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has confirmed that a child in Quebec is half as likely to be eligible.

What will the Prime Minister do to stop this discrimination?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that too many families cannot afford the dental care they need. The dental benefit will be available to all eligible Quebec families, including those who are covered by a public insurance plan. If eligible families have expenses that are not covered by their existing provincial plan, they will have access to the benefit.

We will continue to work to make life more affordable for everyone.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the worst part is that a dental cheque discriminates against Quebecers, who already pay taxes in Quebec to cover the cost of dental care for children.

The bottom line is that Quebecers have 23% of the children but will get 13% of this federal money. That means about half of the children in Quebec will not be covered by the NDP-Liberals' poor excuse for a program.

Basically, Quebecers pay taxes to cover their children's dental care. This new program means they will also be covering dental care for children in other provinces thanks to the NDP and the Liberals.

How can the Prime Minister justify that?

• (1510)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we chose to make sure that every family in this country can afford dental care for their children. That includes families in Quebec, who will have access to this benefit.

We know this is something that should transcend political considerations, but, unfortunately, the Conservatives, and apparently the Bloc, are opposed to providing dental care to children who cannot otherwise afford it.

We will be here to help children and families in these difficult times.

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[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government continues with wasteful spending. There is WE Charity, storytellers for the Prime Minister, the infrastructure bank, fridges for Loblaws, cheques to Mastercard, the arrive "scam" app and expensive hotels, just to name a few. Hard-working Canadians who send their money to Ottawa are not being respected. Canadians cannot afford this costly coalition.

Will the Liberals end their inflationary spending?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the member for Kelowna—Lake Country were really concerned about hard-working Canadians, she would drop her opposition to supporting families with dental care for their kids. She would stop her opposition to sending a \$500 cheque to the lowest-income renters across the country, who need help making ends meet right now.

The Conservative Party continues to talk about trying to be there for people, but when it comes time to stand up and vote to help them, not only are its members voting against it, but they are doing everything they can to kill our dental and rental bill. Shame on them. When will they do the right thing and support low-income and middle-class Canadians?

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, interest rates are up again, and the Bank of Canada says more raises are coming. Now the bank says that inflation reflects Canadian domestic factors, not the global factors the government keeps blaming. The government said interest rates will remain low, and then it went on a spending spree. It said it was irresponsible not to spend. It said there would be no inflation and then it said inflation would just be temporary. Now inflation is out of control and Canadians are paying more.

Will the Prime Minister finally admit his spending has made life unaffordable for Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during this unprecedented pandemic, all parties worked together to deliver the kinds of supports Canadians needed, whether it was CERB, whether it was the CEBA account for small businesses or whether it was support for seniors or support for students. We continued to step up. This government led the way, but we had the support of members across the aisle for many of these initiatives.

Now the members across the aisle are saying we should not have been there for Canadians, that we should not have spent that money supporting Canadians with the CERB and the CEBA. I ask Canadians to think back over the past couple of years and imagine what it would have been like had we not been there to support them.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the problem is that the Prime Minister spent \$200 million more than Canadians needed to get through the pandemic. He did not mention that.

We are getting used to the Prime Minister not answering questions. He hedges, deflects questions, and gives answers that are not related to the questions he is being asked. Citizens keep asking me whether the Prime Minister will answer a question one day.

I have a simple one for him today. Can he tell us who slept in that infamous \$6,000 room in London?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Conservative Party is busy attacking the government and, apparently, our presence at Her Majesty the Queen's funeral, we will continue to be there to deliver real results for Canadians with a GST rebate cheque that will go into the bank accounts of 11 million Canadians in the coming weeks, with dental care assistance and help for low-income renters. The Conservatives are opposed to those last two initiatives.

Why are the Conservatives not there for Canadians?

• (1515)

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wonder how he can say that and also justify staying in a \$6,000 room. Not many Canadians can afford to stay in a room that costs \$6,000.

I misspoke earlier. It was not \$200 million more that was spent during the pandemic but that had nothing to do with the pandemic. It was \$200 billion. That is the reality. When will the Prime Minister stop blaming everyone else and start taking responsibility for his incompetence?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we all worked together to ensure that Canadians had the support they needed to get through the pandemic. From creating the Canada emergency response benefit to helping employers, small businesses and seniors, we all worked together, and our government provided a tremendous amount of help to get Canadians through those tough times.

Now that our economy is back in full swing, we can see that many Canadians are still having a tough time. That is why we are

providing help for dental care and help for renters, but the Conservatives are against that.

Oral Questions

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[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, indigenous children have been torn from their families, communities and cultural practices for decades. Yesterday, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal reaffirmed our knowledge that the government continues to wilfully discriminate against indigenous children. The government must listen to advocates and make sure every child affected is eligible for compensation and leaves no one behind.

Will the government find solutions outside of the courts so that children do not have to wait any longer?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, exactly what we did was work directly with indigenous peoples, first nations and other indigenous peoples, to ensure that we were moving forward on supporting the people who needed it and on getting that compensation to those people who had been harmed by the practices of governments past.

We are continuing to stand with the AFN and Trout and Moushoom to make sure that we are working to deliver compensation to these kids as quickly as possible. We know that they deserve compensation. We want to be there for them, as we have always said we would be.

* * *

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, oil companies are getting rich off the backs of Canadians but the Liberals keep handing them billions of dollars in public money. These same companies are fuelling the climate crisis. A new report from the International Institute on Sustainable Development confirms that paying big oil to reduce their emissions is a bad investment. These handouts mean less investment in climate solutions that support workers.

When will the government stop subsidizing big oil and start making them pay what they owe?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there has been a long-standing disagreement between the Liberal Party on this side and the NDP on that side about the use of investing, for example, in CCUS technology to ensure that we can decarbonize our oil and gas production, so that we can continue to deliver the energy that the world needs while we go through this energy transition at lower emission levels.

That is why we are working closely with industry on decarbonization measures. That is why we put a price on pollution, to give a clear price incentive for companies to reduce their carbon emissions. This is the kind of work that we are doing, because we know that we need to be there for workers and build a strong future—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Brampton South.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, handguns have ripped our communities apart. We have seen this firsthand in Brampton and in the greater Toronto area. The Toronto Danforth shooting, the Quebec City mosque attack and the Edmonton shooting all involved senseless handgun violence that claimed loved ones too soon. While Conservatives are trying to make assault weapons legal again, the Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety are taking swift action to protect Canadians.

Could the right hon. Prime Minister please share with the House how the handgun freeze will protect all Canadian communities?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Brampton South for her hard work and advocacy on this matter.

We are taking the strongest action in a generation to keep communities safe from gun violence, including a national freeze on handguns, because it is time to get handguns off the streets, out of abusive homes and out of the hands of criminals.

We will never apologize for acting with urgency to protect Canadians from gun violence. We will let the Conservative Party explain for itself why it believes that weapons meant for the battlefield should remain in our neighbourhoods.

• (1520)

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the audio file Commissioner Lucki states, “the Minister wants to speak with me...once again, I dropped the ball.”

It goes on: “I have apologized to the Minister; I’m waiting for the Prime Minister to call me so I can apologize”.

The former minister of public safety needs to stop the deception, fiction, fabrication and disinformation. He needs to respect Nova Scotians and resign for his actions and political interference in the investigations of the deaths of 22 Nova Scotians and an unborn child.

Will the Prime Minister accept the resignation of this minister?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as always, our thoughts are with the families as they continue to

grieve, and my efforts are focused squarely, as they have been since day one, on supporting them.

As the commissioner and the minister have clearly stated, the decision on what information is released and when is that of the police alone, and that was fully respected.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with this Liberal RCMP political interference scandal, the minister continues to avoid accountability by using very specific legal words concerning ministerial directives to the RCMP. We are not asking about legal directives. We are asking about political interference.

Did the minister, his chief of staff or anyone from his office discuss the forthcoming Liberal gun control legislation with the RCMP commissioner or her staff between the dates of the Nova Scotia mass murder and the April 28 press conference? Did they politicize the deaths of 22 people, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect their government to respond quickly and effectively to crises, and answer their questions, but it is interesting to see how Conservative politicians are changing their tune. I will remind the member that her colleagues from Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes and West Nova asked on at least three occasions, between May 20 and May 28, 2020, when all of this information would finally be made transparent and public.

I am focused on supporting the families affected by this tragedy and taking action to ensure that it never happens again.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, new evidence of this cover-up is coming out every day. We just learned that the RCMP director of media relations, who also happens to be a former Liberal staffer, is being investigated for covering up the audio recording that is at the centre of this entire scandal. That same audio recording has the commissioner directly contradicting the minister. There are lies here.

Who is getting fired, the minister, the commissioner or both?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as all Canadians know, when an emergency arises, accurate and timely information is crucial.

As the commissioner stated:

Keeping the government informed through timely and accurate information sharing is not interference. It's standard procedure, and these situational updates are provided without compromising the operational integrity of an investigation.

Canadians rightfully have questions about the public communications that occurred during and after our country's most devastating mass casualty. That is why it is a focus of our inquiry.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the former emergency preparedness minister politicized the criminal inquiry into the largest mass killing in Canada's history. There is no use denying it, the evidence is there. It is serious. He put pressure on the RCMP commissioner to disclose sensitive information so he could advance the Liberal agenda, although he was advised that it could hurt the investigation.

Today, I have the following question for the Prime Minister: When will he fire him?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, our thoughts are with the families who are still grieving. We are focusing our efforts on the assistance to give them.

The commissioner and the minister have reiterated many times that it is up to the police to decide what information is to be disclosed and when. This principle was fully respected in this situation and in all other situations.

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at the Rouleau commission, three police forces confirmed that the Emergencies Act was never needed to end the truckers' occupation in Ottawa.

The RCMP, the Ontario Provincial Police and the Ottawa Police Service all told us they did not need it. The RCMP even warned the feds, hours before they invoked the act, that they had not yet exhausted all available tools.

Can the Prime Minister explain why he invoked the Emergencies Act against the RCMP's advice?

• (1525)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, invoking the Emergencies Act is not a minor affair. It is a big deal.

When the act is invoked, a public inquiry must take place in order to provide an update and clarify everything that happened, all the decisions that were made and the justifications for why it was done.

That is why this public inquiry has been launched. I look forward to being there to share my thoughts on this so that Canadians can understand why it was necessary and so that they can understand that it was done in a responsible manner.

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I too am looking forward to the Prime Minister's testimony.

Today, Inspector Robert Bernier of the Ottawa police confirmed that it was not the emergency measures that helped end the siege. The police operation was developed the day before, on February 13, by police officers who, at the time, were unaware of the federal government's intentions. Mr. Bernier confirmed that police forces carried out the operation as planned regardless of the emergency measures, because they already had all the necessary powers to act.

Oral Questions

Once again, can the Prime Minister explain why he invoked the Emergencies Act if there was no need for it? Was he just trying to follow in his father's footsteps?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that no Canadian will be truly surprised to learn that those who opposed the use of the Emergencies Act at the time are still opposed today. Those of us who believed it was necessary still believe that.

That is why a public inquiry was launched. It will clarify all the reasons and justifications so that Canadians can be assured, through a non-partisan and impartial process, that it was the right thing to do, that it was done in a limited and proportionate way, and that it worked to end the illegal occupation.

* * *

[*English*]

TAXATION

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are completely out of touch with the economic crisis that Canadians are facing because of their reckless spending.

Interest rates went up again today. The cost of groceries is at a 40-year high, forcing too many Canadian families to use a food bank. It is becoming a luxury to heat a home in this country. On top of that, the Liberals will be raising the carbon tax, making everything more expensive.

Will the Liberals cancel their plan to raise the carbon tax?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives continue to point out that we were there in too large a measure for small businesses, for families and for workers who struggled through this pandemic. We disagree with them on that, because we saw our economy recover faster than just about any of our allied countries. On top of that, the Conservatives continue to say they are concerned about the issues facing Canadians in their day-to-day lives, and yet they continue not just to stand against but to attempt to block our help for Canadians on dental care and support for low-income renters.

Why do the Conservatives continue to stand against support for Canadians?

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Mr. Speaker, \$200 billion had nothing to do with COVID. It did not actually help Canadians through COVID.

Canadians cannot afford this Liberal-NDP coalition. It is actually making everything more expensive for Canadians. That is why interest rates went up today. I am going to ask again, will the Liberals give Canadians a break and cancel their planned tax hikes?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives can continue to talk about cuts to EI, continue to talk about cuts to pensions and continue to talk about making pollution free again. The reality is we are not only going to continue to be there to support Canadians through these difficult times, but we are also going to stand against the Conservatives' opposition to our plan to support Canadians with dental care, to support low-income renters with direct help as we move forward into the winter.

We know that Canadians need help now. Canadians are also wondering why the Conservatives are continuing to stand against support for Canadians who need it.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we are not against families. We are for families. Let us talk about those folks. Let us talk about those ordinary Canadians who are working hard to make ends meet, those folks who are raising their kids, those folks who are trying to pay their bills, and those folks who are driving their children to hockey games, etc. These are the folks who watched their heating bill double over the last year. These are the folks who are going to watch their heating bill go up by another 30% this winter. These are the folks many of whom cannot afford the \$100 extra a month that is going to be.

Will the Prime Minister exercise some compassion and take away his plan to triple—

• (1530)

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Lethbridge was talking about being there for folks raising families. That is exactly one of the things we are focused on right now in delivering support for families that cannot afford to send their kids to the dentist. We know there are far too many Canadians looking at the various bills they are facing and knowing they are not going to be able to send their kids to the dentist this year. That is wrong. That is why we are moving forward with \$1,300 in support over the next two years, so that all families can send their kids to the dentist.

Why do Conservatives, who want to support families, stand—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Laval—Les Îles.

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[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians deserve a healthy environment and safe communities.

Since the Canadian Environmental Protection Act was last reformed 20 years ago, chemicals have come to play an increasingly bigger part in our daily lives and our economy.

To keep everyone safe, Canada needs an environmental protection act that addresses the problems of the 21st century with the help of modern science.

Can the Prime Minister provide us with an update on Bill S-5?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Laval—Les Îles for his question and his hard work.

The right to a healthy environment recognizes that all Canadians deserve safe communities and healthy environments. We have committed to passing a law that codifies these principles, and we firmly intend to deliver on that commitment.

I hope that the Conservative Party will stop trying to delay this bill, as it has been doing for the past few weeks, and allow us to refer it to a committee as soon as possible so it can be passed sooner than later.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the budgets of Canadian families are taking a big hit.

Interest rates are going up, the price of groceries is going up, the price of home heating is going up, the price of gas is going up. In short, the price of everything we consume is going up.

Does the Prime Minister realize that the last thing Canadians need is for him to raise taxes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is why we are not raising taxes. We are here to help families. We are here to help them with dental care and make investments to assist low-income renters. The member opposite is strongly opposed to these initiatives.

We are asking the Conservative Party to stop blocking the passage of the bill on dental care and rental assistance so that we can help families across the country as quickly as possible.

[*English*]

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only help the Liberals are offering Canadians is the triple threat: they have tripled the debt; they are tripling the carbon tax, and in less than two years, they have tripled interest rates. This is a threat that Canadians cannot afford. Soup is up 30%. Bread and potatoes are up 17%. Margarine is up 38%. These are not luxury items from a Liberal cocktail party. These are staples Canadians rely on every single day.

How many Canadian families are going to have to rely on food banks before the Prime Minister cancels his plans to triple the taxes on fuel, food and home heating?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the average family of four in this country in the jurisdictions where the carbon tax backstop applies receive more money from the climate action incentive than they pay on average in the price on pollution.

Oral Questions

We are moving forward in a way that both fights climate change and supports the families that need it, like how we are moving forward on supports for low-income renters and for families that cannot pay for their kids to go to the dentist, but Conservative politicians are standing against support for dental care and support for low-income rentals. Why?

• (1535)

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Prime Minister has become too comfortable with the luxuries he has not earned. He does not understand the burdens that are on every Canadian, burdens that the Liberals are tripling by tripling the carbon tax, tripling the debt and now tripling the interest rates.

Will the Prime Minister end his planned tax hikes on food, fuel and home heating, or is he yearning for the days of his father when Canadians who could not afford their mortgage were dropping their house keys off at the bank before taking their families to the food bank?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is much misinformation floating around out there and that is why we are happy to put things very clearly for Canadians, despite the approach that the members of the opposition are taking. Let us consider how families in the communities of the opposition front benches benefit from our climate action rebates.

A family of four in the opposition leader's riding has received over \$550 this year alone. They have received over \$620 in the deputy finance critic's riding and over \$800 so far this year in the member opposite's riding. We are there to support families even as we fight climate change.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the situation in Afghanistan remains heartbreaking to this day. Afghan women and interpreters helped our country for years and they have been targeted by the Taliban since it took over in Afghanistan over a year ago. It goes without saying that it is our duty to help them get to safety.

Can the Prime Minister inform this House on the progress that has been made so far toward this government's commitment to resettle at least 40,000 Afghan refugees by the end of next year?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Guelph for his tireless work and advocacy for his constituents.

I am pleased to say that today we will be welcoming two more planes with Afghan nationals fleeing the Taliban regime. With those arrivals, we have now resettled over 23,000 Afghans. We are excited for those arriving today to begin their new lives here. We will continue our work until we have resettled at least 40,000 Afghans.

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HEALTH

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in July, Sunshine House received Health Canada funding to run a mobile

overdose prevention site providing peer-led support to people who use drugs, but it has hit a bureaucratic wall. The people at Sunshine House have been told they need an exemption to run the site.

Winnipeg Centre has an overdose crisis. Last week, five people died due to a toxic drug supply. People need help and the government delays are costing lives. Will the Prime Minister act to ensure this overdose prevention site can start its critical life-saving work now?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a government that has always put evidence and data at the centre of everything we do to move forward. We know harm reduction and safe consumption sites work. That is why over the past seven years we have seen the opening of countless numbers of sites across the country, but we know there is more to do.

That is why we are moving forward with a program with British Columbia to ensure safer drug supplies. That is why we are moving forward in cities across the country, including the member opposite's city, to ensure we are getting the support for people who are facing such terrible challenges in epidemics and deaths. We are going to continue to be there hand in hand with local municipalities.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians care about human rights. We stand up for human rights, whether it is for the Uighur Muslims in the People's Republic of China and whether it is the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar and around the world. We must also stand up for Palestinian human rights. We must make it very clear that as a staunch friend of Israel we also call for human rights to be respected for the people of Palestine.

There are two important UN resolutions coming up. I want to ask the Prime Minister, will Canada consider please voting for the motion to respect what is happening, to help Palestinian refugees and to take action on Israeli settlements?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is a steadfast friend and ally of Israel and a friend to the Palestinian people. We are firmly committed to a two-state solution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. We continue to firmly support the goal of a comprehensive just and lasting peace in the Middle East, including the creation of a Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with Israel.

*Business of Supply***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

● (1540)

*[English]***BUSINESS OF SUPPLY****OPPOSITION MOTION—TIES BETWEEN THE CANADIAN STATE AND THE MONARCHY**

The House resumed from October 25 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3:40 p.m., pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the member for Be-
loeil—Chambly relating to the business of supply.

[Translation]

Call in the members.

● (1610)

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

*(Division No. 199)***YEAS**

Members

Angus	Ashton
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergeron	Bérubé
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Boulerice	Brunelle-Duceppe
Chabot	Champoux
Collins (Victoria)	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Fortin	Garon
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gill	Green
Idlout	Kwan
Larouche	Lemire
Lightbound	Michaud
Morrice	Normandin
Pauzé	Plamondon
Rayes	Savard-Tremblay
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Ste-Marie	Thériault
Therrien	Trudel
Vignola	Villemure— 44

NAYS

Members

Abouttaif	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Alghabra	Ali
Allison	Anand
Anandasangaree	Arnold
Arseneault	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barron
Battiste	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Benzen	Bergen
Berthold	Bezan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Blaney
Block	Boissonnault

Bradford	Bragdon
Brassard	Brière
Brock	Calkins
Cannings	Caputo
Carr	Carrie
Casey	Chagger
Chambers	Champagne
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Chong
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Dalton	Damoff
Dancho	Davidson
Deltell	d'Entremont
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Epp	Erskine-Smith
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Fergus
Ferreri	Fillmore
Findlay	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Gallant
Garneau	Garrison
Généreux	Genuis
Gerretsen	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gould	Gourde
Gray	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hallan
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Hoback
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Ien
Jaczek	Joly
Jones	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Kelly
Khalid	Khera
Kitchen	Kmiec
Koutrakis	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Kusmierczyk
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lantsman	Lapointe
Lattanzio	Lauzon
Lawrence	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	MacKenzie
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire
Martel	May (Cambridge)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McDonald (Avalon)
McQuinty	McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLean
Melillo	Mendès
Mendicino	Miao
Miller	Moore

Private Members' Business

Morantz	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	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Roberts
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Ruff	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Schiefke	Schmale
Seeback	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Shields	Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Small	Sorbara
Soroka	Steinley
Stewart	St-Onge
Strahl	Stubbs
Sudds	Tassi
Thomas	Thompson
Tolmie	Trudeau
Turnbull	Uppal
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Van Popta
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vecchio	Vidal
Viersen	Virani
Vis	Vuong
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Weiler	Williams
Williamson	Yip
Zahid	Zarrillo
Zimmer	Zuberi — 266

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

REUNITING FAMILIES ACT

The House resumed from October 24 consideration of the motion that Bill C-242, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (temporary resident visas for parents and grandparents), 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 C-242 under Private Members' Business.

● (1620)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 200*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	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
Benzen	Bergen
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Block	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Bragdon	Brassard
Brière	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Cannings	Caputo
Carr	Carrie
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Chahal
Chambers	Champagne
Champoux	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Chong	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Dalton	Damoff
Dancho	Davidson
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	d'Entremont
Desbiens	Desilets
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Epp
Erskine-Smith	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Fergus	Ferreri
Fillmore	Findlay
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Gallant
Garneau	Garon
Garrison	Gaudreau
Gazan	Généreux
Genuis	Gerretsen

Private Members' Business

Gill
 Godin
 Gould
 Gray
 Guilbeault
 Hallan
 Hardie
 Hoback
 Housefather
 Hussen
 Iacono
 Ien
 Johns
 Jones
 Julian
 Kelloway
 Khalid
 Kitchen
 Koutrakis
 Kramp-Neuman
 Kusie
 Kwan
 Lambropoulos
 Lamoureux
 Lapointe
 Lattanzio
 Lawrence
 Lebouthillier
 Lemire
 Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
 Lightbound
 Lobb
 Longfield
 MacAulay (Cardigan)
 MacKenzie
 Maguire
 Martinez Ferrada
 Mathysen
 May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
 McCauley (Edmonton West)
 McGuinty
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 McLeod
 Melillo
 Mendicino
 Michaud
 Moore
 Morrice
 Morrissey
 Murray
 Naqvi
 Ng
 Normandin
 Oliphant
 O'Toole
 Paul-Hus
 Perkins
 Plamondon
 Powlowski
 Rayes
 Reid
 Richards
 Robillard
 Rogers
 Ruff
 Sajjan
 Samson
 Savard-Tremblay
 Scheer
 Schmale
 Serré
 Shanahan
 Shipley

Gladu
 Goodridge
 Gourde
 Green
 Hajdu
 Hanley
 Hepfner
 Holland
 Hughes
 Hutchings
 Idlout
 Jaczek
 Joly
 Jowhari
 Kayabaga
 Kelly
 Khera
 Kmiec
 Kram
 Kurek
 Kusmierczyk
 Lalonde
 Lametti
 Lantsman
 Larouche
 Lauzon
 LeBlanc
 Lehoux
 Lewis (Essex)
 Liepert
 Lloyd
 Long
 Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
 MacGregor
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Martel
 Masse
 May (Cambridge)
 Mazier
 McDonald (Avalon)
 McKay
 McLean
 McPherson
 Mendès
 Miao
 Miller
 Morantz
 Morrison
 Motz
 Muys
 Nater
 Noormohamed
 O'Connell
 O'Regan
 Patzer
 Pauzé
 Petitpas Taylor
 Poilievre
 Qualtrough
 Redekopp
 Rempel Garner
 Roberts
 Rodriguez
 Romanado
 Sahota
 Saks
 Sarai
 Scarpaleggia
 Schiefke
 Seeback
 Sgro
 Shields
 Sidhu (Brampton East)

Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Sinclair-Desgagné
 Small
 Steinley
 Stewart
 Strahl
 Suds
 Taylor Roy
 Therrien
 Thompson
 Trudeau
 Turnbull
 Valdez
 van Koeverden
 Vandal
 Vecchio
 Viersen
 Villemure
 Vis
 Wagantall
 Waugh
 Weiler
 Williamson
 Zahid
 Zimmer— 319

Simard
 Singh
 Soroka
 Ste-Marie
 St-Onge
 Stubbs
 Tassi
 Thériault
 Thomas
 Tolmie
 Trudel
 Uppal
 Van Bynen
 Van Popta
 Vandenbeld
 Vidal
 Vignola
 Virani
 Vuong
 Warkentin
 Webber
 Williams
 Yip
 Zarrillo

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: 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 North Okanagan—Shuswap, The Economy; the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot, Access to Information; the hon. member for Brantford—Brant, The Economy.

• (1625)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, in light of what happened today, in particular prior to question period, I hope you would find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion: That, the time provided for Government Orders today be extended by 30 minutes.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: There is no agreement.

I wish to inform the House that, because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 27 minutes.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Government Orders is extended because of the vote, not because of extenuating circumstances. It is an automatic change.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

[Translation]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the following reports of the Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, or APF, respecting its participation in the meetings of the APF Education, Communication and Cultural Affairs Committee, the APF Young Parliamentarians Network and the APF Network of Parliamentarian Women in Papeete, French Polynesia, from April 19 to 22, 2022; in the Working Group on Reforming the APF Constitution and in the meeting of the APF Political Committee in Quebec City, Canada, from May 12 to 15, 2022; in the 9th edition of the Francophone Parliament of Youth in Tirana, Albania, from July 25 to 31, 2022; and —

The Deputy Speaker: Order. There is still a technical problem with the system.

[English]

We will send another wireless system over to the member so he can access the translation.

[Translation]

The parliamentary secretary may continue.

Mr. Francis Drouin: Mr. Speaker, I got to the 9th Edition of the Francophone Parliament of Youth in Tirana, Albania, from July 25 to 31, 2022; the 37th Session of the America Region of the APF and Conference of Branch Chairs in Edmonton, Alberta, from July 18 to 22, 2022; the Bureau Meeting and 47th Annual Session of the “Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie”, or APF, in Kigali, Rwanda, from July 5 to 9, 2022; and finally, the Symposium of the APF on Contested Democracies in Luxembourg, Luxembourg, September 15 and 16, 2022.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 21st report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts entitled “Just Transition to a Low-Carbon Economy”.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

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

* * *

● (1630)

CANADA STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ACT

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-301, An Act to amend the Canada Student Financial Assistance Act, the Canada Student Loans Act and the Apprentice Loans Act (interest on student loans).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to introduce my private member's bill, which seeks to eliminate interest on Canada student loans and Canada apprentice loans.

This bill will assist Canadian students trying to obtain a post-secondary education and their families with the high cost of education. Especially during high interest rates, high inflation and soaring food costs, removing the interest on these loans will lessen their financial burden and provide students with the opportunity to obtain good-paying jobs in the future.

Anything that reduces financial barriers to education and creates a better taxpayer will reap dividends for our nation. There is no better investment for our country than Canada's youth.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

VACCINE MANDATES

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of residents of British Columbia who are frustrated with the mandatory vaccination requirements that were in place at Canada Post.

These residents are asking the federal government to investigate Canada Post's treatment of employees who refused to attest their personal vaccination status and demand that Canada Post compensate affected employees for monetary loss pertaining to leave without pay or employment termination.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, citizens and residents of Canada are drawing the attention of the House of Commons to the following: The Liberal Party of Canada promised in its 2021 platform to deny the charitable status of organizations that have convictions about abortion, which the Liberal Party views as dishonest. This may jeopardize, they say, the charitable status of many other institutions, such as hospitals, churches, schools, homeless shelters and other charitable organizations which do amazing work in Canada. They do not agree with the Liberal Party on this matter for reasons of conscience.

Routine Proceedings

Many Canadians depend on and benefit from charitable work done by such organizations, and the government has previously used a values test, through the summer jobs program, denying funding to organizations not willing to endorse the political positions of the governing party.

They therefore call on the government to recognize that all Canadians have a right under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to freedom of expression without discrimination. They also call on the government to protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules that are politically and ideologically neutral, without discrimination on the basis of political or religious values and without the imposition of another values test.

OLD-GROWTH FORESTS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to present a petition. It is rather long, so I will try to summarize it, as required by our Standing Orders.

It relates to the really high value and importance of old-growth forests for Canada, particularly in the context of indigenous values, indigenous exercise of rights under treaties and the indigenous role in fighting the climate crisis.

Petitioners are calling for the Government of Canada to act to protect the last unprotected, intact old-growth forests on southern Vancouver Island, specifically referencing Fairy Creek. They call on the government to work with provinces and first nations to immediately halt logging of endangered old-growth ecosystems, move to high-value forest initiatives in partnership with first nations, preferring value added and the harvesting of second and third-growth forests.

The petitioners specifically also call for banning the use of whole trees for wood pellets, in what is described as a fairly fraudulent climate action because it does not reduce emissions of carbon, but it does remove forest. They also call for banning the export of raw logs, whole logs, from Canada, to instead make sure they reach Canadian mills to create Canadian jobs.

• (1635)

[*Translation*]

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table in the House a petition signed by many people regarding an issue that is of concern to many Canadians, and that is the increased international trafficking in human organs removed from victims without consent. I think it is critical that the House take these Canadians' concerns seriously. The undersigned are calling on Parliament to move quickly on the proposed legislation to amend the Criminal Code of Canada and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act to prohibit Canadians from travelling abroad to acquire human organs removed without consent or as a result of a financial transaction. More importantly, they are calling on Parliament to render inadmissible to Canada any and all permanent residents or foreign nationals who have participated in this trafficking of human organs.

[*English*]

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting four petitions today.

The first one is a petition on behalf of Canadians who are concerned that certain charities could be targeted based on their views and forced into a values test. The petitioners note that the Liberals have promised to deny charitable status to groups with views they call dishonest. They say it could jeopardize the charitable status of hospitals, houses of worship, schools, homeless shelters and other organizations. They also note that the Liberals previously used a values test to discriminate against groups applying for the Canada summer jobs grant.

The petitioners ask the House of Commons protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis without discrimination on the basis of political or religious views and without imposing another values test. They also ask for an affirmation of their freedom of expression as Canadians.

VACCINE MANDATES

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, another petition I have is from constituents and Canadians across the country who want a permanent end to the vaccine and COVID mandates. Right now, the government has only suspended some of the mandates. The petitioners note that countries around the world have removed their vaccine mandates and restrictions, and they call upon the government and the Minister of Transport to end all federally regulated COVID-19 vaccine mandates and restrictions.

AGE VERIFICATION SOFTWARE

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my third petition calls for the passing of last Parliament's Bill S-203, which in this Parliament is now Bill S-210. The petitioners are concerned about how easy it is for young people to access sexually explicit material online, including violent and degrading explicit material. They comment on how this access is an important public health and public safety concern. Petitioners note that a significant portion of commercially accessed sexually explicit material has no age verification software. Moreover, the age verification software can ascertain the age of users without breaching their privacy rights.

Petitioners note that many serious harms associated with sexually explicit material include the development of addiction and the development of attitudes favourable to sexual violence and harassment of women. As such, these petitioners call on the House of Commons to pass legislation protecting young people.

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are suffering from inflation and the Liberals' carbon tax. In my final petition, petitioners say the carbon tax drives up the cost of everyday essentials, including gas, groceries and heating, and makes life very expensive for Canadians. The Bank of Canada said the carbon tax has increased the impact of inflation. Also, the carbon tax is an added expense to Canadian businesses and creates economic disadvantages compared to other nations.

The petitioners call for an end to the carbon tax. They want the government to control inflation and reduce its spending. Finally, they want to see pipelines and other projects approved, especially LNG projects; and pipelines getting clean ethical Canadian energy to tidewater; and international markets to displace the fuel provided by the authoritarian regimes and dictators.

● (1640)

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions to present today.

The first petition is in support of Bill S-223. The folks who have signed this petition, who are from across Canada, are concerned about international forced organ harvesting that happens around the world.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to ensure that Canadians cannot go abroad to get organs that have been forced harvested around the world, and also to ensure that financial transactions that happen are rendered inadmissible in Canada to all permanent residents and foreign nationals who have participated in this. It is kind of a sanction.

FALUN GONG

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition is in a similar vein. Petitioners from across Canada are calling on the Government of Canada to eradicate the use of forced organ harvesting against practitioners of Falun Gong. There is an estimated 60,000 to 100,000 transplants that have happened in Chinese hospitals since 2000, and hundreds of Falun Gong practitioners have been murdered for their organs over the last 15 years.

The petitioners recognize that both the U.S. House of Representatives and the European Parliament have passed resolutions condemning this and calling for an end to the Chinese state-sanctioned, systematic organ harvesting for prisoners of conscience, including Falun Gong. They note that, in 2015, Canada's international human rights committee unanimously adopted a similar motion.

Since May 2015, the petitioners note that Chinese citizens have filed criminal complaints against the former Communist Party leader who orchestrated the persecution of the Falun Gong. They are

Routine Proceedings

calling on the Government of Canada to establish measures to stop the Chinese mass murder of innocent people for their organs, including but not limited to introducing Canadian legislation to ban organ tourism, criminalize those involved and take every opportunity to call for an end to this terrible act of persecution against the Falun Gong.

AGE VERIFICATION SOFTWARE

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition is from folks from across Canada who are concerned about the ease of access for young people to sexually explicit material. There is significant concern that sexually explicit material is being targeted toward children, giving porn companies full access to children.

The petitioners are calling on the government to ensure that sexually explicit material for commercial purposes be mandated to have effective age verification methods. They say that the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child states that children should be free from sexual harassment, violence and pornography use as well. They also note that prolonged pornography use leads to an increase in sexual harassment and sexual violence, particularly against young women.

The petitioners are calling for an online verification requirement. This is a recommendation made by stakeholders during a 2017 study before the Standing Committee on Health. They are calling for the Government of Canada to quickly adopt Bill S-210, the protecting young persons from exposure to pornography act.

VACCINE MANDATES

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition comes from Canadians from across Canada who would like a review conducted by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization, which found no information regarding the transmission of COVID on airplanes. They also note that WestJet's chief medical officer, Tammy McKnight, noted that there were no known cases on board Canadian aircraft. They note as well that an International Air Transport Association study found that out of 1.2 billion air traffic passengers, there were only 44 cases of COVID-19 reported on in-flight transmission. Countries around the world have removed their vaccine mandates and restrictions.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to abolish vaccine mandates rather than just suspending them, and abolish all COVID vaccine mandates and restrictions.

● (1645)

FIREARMS

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the final petition comes from Canadians from across Canada who are concerned about the health and safety of firearms owners and users in this country.

Government Orders

Highly damaging noise levels have repeatedly reached the ears of firearms users despite traditional hearing protections. Section 7 of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms recognizes an individual's right to health and safety. The use of a sound moderator is the only universally recognized health and safety device, but it is criminally prohibited in Canada. We are the only one of the G7 countries that fails to recognize the health and safety benefits of the use of sound moderators by hunters and sports shooters. As affirmed in the Bedford v. Canada case, one cannot be prevented from taking reasonable steps to improve their personal safety.

The petition also states that sound moderators reduce noise pollution and noise complaints within communities close to shooting ranges, in rural and farming communities and in areas for recreational activities where hunting, sport shooting and target shooting are legal. The use of sound moderators significantly increases the humane husbandry of game animals, livestock and pets as hunting companions. Hearing damage is a significant loss to the quality of life. This public health issue is costing taxpayers millions and millions of dollars.

* * *

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 would ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Repentigny on a point of order.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to interrupt the discussion. The interpreter is indicating that since we do not have access to the usual interpretation system, when there is too much noise or too many conversations, she has a hard time hearing the member speaking and interpreting their comments.

Accordingly, the House needs to be quieter than usual.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for sharing that message from the interpreters. Often when there are problems it is hard to find solutions. The current solution is to try to stay quiet during members' speeches.

I thank the hon. member for her intervention.

* * *

[English]

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

JUDGES ACT

BILL C-9—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

That, in relation to Bill C-9, An Act to amend the Judges Act, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of the said Bill; and

That, 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the day allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of the said Bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this Order, and, in turn, every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the Bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period.

I invite hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise in their places or use the "raise hand" function so the Chair has some idea of the number of members who wish to participate in the question period.

The hon. member for Fundy Royal.

• (1650)

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the irony today, as we are now debating Bill C-9, is that we see the government invoking closure when this legislation could have already been in place. Had we not had an unnecessary pandemic election, it most certainly would have been in place.

While the minister is here, I want to ask a question with respect to our justice system and the recent Supreme Court ruling dealing with consecutive periods of parole ineligibility. There are many victims and their families who have spoken out about the need to respond to the ruling that values each and every life that is taken when there is a case of mass murder in Canada. These cases are rare, but they do happen. The families of victims have said they do not want to go through the burden and retraumatization that is involved with parole hearings.

Sharlene Bosma appeared at our justice committee and spoke eloquently about how she was grateful that her daughter would not have to attend parole hearings to keep her father's killer behind bars, where he belongs, having killed three individuals.

I would ask the minister if he has consulted with the families of victims on a possible government response to this very unfortunate ruling.

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Fundy Royal, and my critic, for his question. It is an important one.

Obviously, our hearts go out to the Bosmas, to the victims of the Quebec City mosque massacre and others who have been impacted by this ruling by the Supreme Court.

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I remind the hon. member that, as the Attorney General, we defended the previous legislation in front of the Supreme Court, allowing judges the discretion to have consecutive sentences and building our argument on that. That argument was rejected. It is not that the sentencing was changed; these people are still serving consecutive sentences, but what the court has added is that there is a possibility of parole at various points in time.

I would remind the House that eligibility for parole is not the same as parole. A life sentence is a long time, and a parole hearing, yes, is still there. I know that has a negative impact on the families if they choose to come and testify again. It was a nine to nothing decision, which was a serious statement by the Supreme Court of Canada.

We will work with victims to support them. We have recently appointed a new ombudsperson to help, although the office remained open during the period of time we were searching to fill that role, and I think we can move forward in supporting victims, but recognizing the very clear ruling of the Supreme Court.

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, very recently, the Canadian Judicial Council implored this House to pass the Bill C-9 amendments to the Judges Act. I wonder if the minister could outline the need for this act, the urgency, and why there is a delay in its passage, given that we have had a number of days of debate on this bill.

Hon. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague, the parliamentary secretary, for all the work that he does in helping to support not only me in my role as Minister of Justice, but also all colleagues through the justice committee and his interactions with colleagues, which I think colleagues on the other side of the House will unanimously say is positive.

This bill is about judges' maintaining their independence but also maintaining the ability to discipline themselves in cases where the behaviour of a judge will bring the administration of justice into disrepute. The legislation itself was 50 years old. It was taken on by the Canadian Judicial Council, the council of all the chief justices of federally appointed courts across Canada, and reformed. A process was created that was not only fair in terms of hearing all sides, but also streamlined in terms of its appeal routes.

We have seen very recently a case in which a judge fought tooth and nail and sought judicial review at every step of the way, costing a lot of money and a lot of time. Then, before the House had the opportunity to censure that judge, he resigned with his pension.

Therefore, we have a more streamlined process, a fair process and one with clear routes of appeal. It is designed by justices who, quite frankly, were fed up that their reputation was being brought into disrepute, so we have a better system, a less costly system and a fairer system. For that reason, it is important. It was in front of the Senate in the previous Parliament. Senators made some minor changes to the bill, technical changes that are very acceptable and have now taken their place in the new iteration of the bill.

It is long overdue. The justices want it. The Canadian Judicial Council asked us again this fall to get it going, so here we are.

• (1655)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am restricting my comments right now to the issue of time allocation. I will oppose time allocation in every instance, unless the circumstances are truly exigent. I first served in this place when Stephen Harper's government had a majority and, for the first time in parliamentary history, closure motions such as this became routine. We lamented it at the time. At the time, we, including the Liberal third party members and the New Democrats, all lamented and opposed the fact that, when I counted it up, there had been more closure motions in the previous 40 days than in the previous 40 years. We kept counting them up and seeing how egregious this was. I will oppose closure motions except in a case in which we see that Canadians are desperate for financial help and we are slowing something down.

This bill is very much needed. With respect to the case that was just referred to by the hon. justice minister, the judge was someone who, two weeks before being appointed to the bench, was caught on video buying cocaine. This is not someone we want on the bench, but the current state of the rights of a judge to keep going through appeals lasts a long time. I agree that it is egregious. The bill should be passed, but not at the cost of our democracy.

Hon. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her passion and her principle. It is a principle I agree with.

There comes a time when there is not the level of co-operation needed in the House on a variety of different bills, and in order to better serve Canadians we need to set limits on debate. When debate becomes just repeating the same thing over and over again on a variety of different bills, when the opposition is opposing simply to oppose rather than to be constructive, then we are here, using time allocation as a mechanism. I do not like it either. On the other hand, I see the need to get this bill done. The chief justice has come out publicly, as have other chief justices.

We saw the time and costs that were involved in the case the hon. member referred to. The bill is something that all or most of us will agree on and that we ought to pass quickly. I implore our colleagues to do just that.

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

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I want to pick up on what my colleague from Fundy Royal asked the hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General. He was talking about the decision with respect to parole ineligibility and whether that should be consecutive or concurrent at 25 years. The Minister of Justice, from what I could surmise, was essentially saying that the government is not going to be introducing legislation to respond to that court decision. That is disappointing.

Would the Minister of Justice then support legislation to perhaps extend the time between parole hearings? This is something people like Ms. Bosma have talked about as victimizing or revictimizing them in the process. Will the Minister of Justice support extending the period between parole hearings from two years for those serving life in prison to, perhaps, five years?

• (1700)

Hon. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his work on the justice committee and on justice issues generally. I recognize the sincere place from which this question comes.

I have always said publicly that I am never closed to a good idea. That being said, the margin for manoeuvre in a nine to nothing Supreme Court of Canada decision, which is very clear, is pretty minimal. There are a lot of needles that would have to be threaded in order for that kind of proposition to be possible.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to reflect on the issue of the need for time allocation. Earlier today, for example, I tried to get unanimous consent to have an additional 30 minutes. We have seen the government approach the opposition to be able to have literally hours and hours and hours of debate, and it has been rejected.

Where we have found ourselves is that unless we are prepared to bring in time allocation, if the opposition does not want to pass legislation, it just has to put up speakers indefinitely and, in other words, give no indication that it will actually pass the legislation.

Unfortunately, at times, without using the tool of time allocation, legislation would not pass. That is what we have been seeing over the last number of years. I am wondering if my colleague could provide his thoughts in that respect.

Hon. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, I am not always privy to the same information the House leaders or parliamentary secretaries to the House leaders are privy to.

What I can say is that in my previous life I was a university professor, and we had debates around the table in a variety of different contexts, whether it be the classroom or a seminar or a faculty council. We often would say to each other, do not repeat what someone has said. We should add what we have to say, add what is new, add what is different and give a gloss, but if we are just agreeing with someone, we should just say we agree with X or Y.

We do not do that often enough in the House. The phenomenon that the hon. member points to is real, with people getting up and repeating the same, often pre-written speeches over and over again. That leads us to a point at which we are not serving Canadians anymore. We are not adding. That is not a debate, in any sense of the word. That is just talking, and it is talking meaninglessly, in a sense. I am not saying the words are not meaningful, but someone

else has already said it and it has already been recorded into the Hansard.

We are here today because that has happened far too often. All sides are guilty of it but, in particular, in this case, the opposition often uses this as a tactic simply to slow things down for the purpose of slowing things down.

It is frustrating. It is frustrating for Canadians. It is frustrating for judges, who would like to be able to get their house in order in terms of their own discipline, but are having to wait longer than they should for a bill that ought to be fairly straightforward.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, time and time again, we have seen the government mismanage the legislative agenda and then impose time allocation, citing urgency. It waited almost a year before it reintroduced this piece of legislation into Parliament.

I just wonder why the government is so intent on limiting scrutiny of its legislation and giving parliamentarians the chance to honestly debate something so important.

Hon. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, for the record, on this bill, we actually introduced it in the Senate, as we had done in the previous Parliament, because we thought that was an appropriate place in order to manage our time efficiently. However, we had a ruling from the Speaker that it had to be introduced here because of the financial impact it might have. That explains the delay: We tried to introduce it in the other place before we introduced it here.

That being said, we use both houses as best we can, and as a minister I certainly try to use both houses and get legislation through as fast as I can. I do my best to make sure I have dialogue with my colleagues across the way, so we get legislation through more quickly, and I think my colleagues across the way have responded positively on a number of different occasions. We have come together in the House precisely to pass legislation in the criminal law sphere that is important to Canadians.

As a minister, I am doing my best to work with the opposition. Some days we run out of time.

• (1705)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since we are talking about amendments to the Judges Act, I want to comment on and put on the record the number of people who have given me feedback on the appointment of exceptional judges over the past couple of years. I want to congratulate the minister on his hard work to make sure our bench represents the breadth of Canada. It is something that has been noticed across Canada.

On that point, as we have new judges who are appointed, it will be important to have the Judges Act modernized to reflect the general consensus that has been built among the judiciary, including the Canadian Judicial Council. I am wondering if the minister could comment on that.

Hon. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, the quality and diversity of appointments is an important part of the picture, and this piece of legislation is an important part of the picture, because it reinforces the principle of judicial independence. It reinforces the principle of judicial responsibility in the management and maintenance of high standards, which helps the administration of justice and the confidence Canadians have in the justice system.

I would also add that we have added, as a government, based on a private member's bill from Rona Ambrose, former member of Parliament and former interim leader of the Conservative Party, measures to better train judges at the outset, so they will be better judges when cases come before them.

When we put all that together, we are putting together a justice system that not only reflects the diversity of Canada but also reflects the quality and the competence of Canadians and gives us better justice.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to challenge the fact that we are doing this today. The minister mentioned that people stand up and repeat and repeat and repeat. It is really important to me to have the opportunity to represent my constituents in this place and speak on issues that are important to me and to them, regardless of who else has spoken on them already. Quite often in this House, different people are in the room at different times, and it is an opportunity to continue that conversation.

As well, this rush the government seems to find itself in so often is because of mismanagement of its programs. An example would be its decision on COVID wage support. It came up with a percentage. We worked hard to convince the government this was not going to be effective enough, and we had to turn around and come back to this place and go through the motions again because of a change there.

On providing loans through the banks, it did not include the credit unions as a means of doing that, and it took time for our constituents and the credit unions to bring that to the forefront. That is why we needed to continue: to ensure things were being handled in certain ways. That is our responsibility in this place.

I am just wondering what the minister's views would be on the fact that these are things the opposition needs to have the opportunity to do.

Hon. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, again, I appreciate the very sincere place whence the question comes. When those kinds of suggestions are being made, whether it is here in this House or in committee, when that kind of constructive dialogue that makes legislation better is the subject matter of debate, I am all for it.

However, when debate is done and procedural shenanigans are added simply for the purpose of slowing down the passage of legislation, when it is no longer the case that bettering the bill or furthering debate is the point of the exercise, then it is time to have a vote

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and move on. We are not serving Canadians by just putting sand in the machinery, by putting sand in the cogs. We are serving Canadians when we are trying to better pieces of legislation and when we are playing our various roles as parliamentarians.

I agree with the hon. member if that is the sentiment, but far too often that is not the sentiment from the other side. It is merely shut-down tactics to try to slow or stop the government from moving forward.

• (1710)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, it is a rare opportunity for me to speak to this kind of motion and follow up on something the minister said.

I think we all agree that we would like to see the smoother operation of this place. I have had the honour of working in and around Parliament Hill for a number of decades. We used to have more co-operation among the House leaders. We used to have better scheduling of debates so that bills that had virtually unanimous support, like Bill C-9, did not need to have repetitive speeches.

I put to the hon. member, as I have before in this place, the solution is not closure motions, but to fully use the rules of Westminster parliamentary democracy and not allow the reading of speeches, which will then have a very salutary effect on the number of members who are prepared to stand up and speak to an issue. They would have to know it well enough to speak without reading a written speech and especially not a written speech prepared by somebody else.

I urge the hon. minister and all members of the front bench of the government to strongly consider working with the Speaker and other House leaders to find ways for this place to work better through co-operation and respect for our rules.

Hon. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, I share the member's sentiment. In fact, she has inspired me to try to use speaking notes less over the course of my career here. I am not perfect, but I do my best to speak without the aid of notes when I can and to give my own thoughts when I can. It is something more difficult when the matter is a technical one, and I have to rely on some of the legal expertise that exists either in my department or in my ministry. However, I think she is correct.

I want to reflect on something. When I was a graduate student in the U.K., I often went to see parliamentary debates, particular in the House of Lords, of all places, in the U.K. The quality of debate was simply so much better. It was, in large measure, because of what the hon. member spoke about. There was very little speaking from notes.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, we often get caught up in what is taking place inside the chamber. Outside the chamber, we could talk about the Canadian Judicial Council. There is an expectation outside the House of Commons. This legislation is something that the council is quite anxious to see pass.

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We talked about stakeholders. All we are really looking at is trying to get it out of the second reading stage. There is still going to be a lot more dialogue on this. There is no doubt a lot of the stakeholders are wondering why, when it looks like there is a fairly wide spectrum of support for the legislation, we do not get it to committee stage, at the very least, as quickly as possible.

Hon. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, I agree with that point. I want to list some of the groups that were consulted by the Canadian Judicial Council, like the Canadian Bar Association, the Federation of Law Societies and the Council of Canadian Law Deans.

The member is absolutely right. This will go to committee. All sides will be able to bring witnesses to see if anything was missed. I hope it will be done fairly expeditiously because I think there is a high level of general agreement on this bill.

It is something that judges, in particular, feel needs to pass quickly. They have explored us to do it. They came out in September in a press release and said they wanted us to pass this quickly. When one member of the judiciary gets criticized for behaviour that is not becoming of a judge and it brings the system of justice into disrepute, they all feel it. It is important that they exercise this responsibility and create a better system to better manage themselves and hold themselves to the highest standard. It is important for us to react to that and to change something that was originally enacted 50 years ago. Reform to it is long overdue.

• (1715)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious the minister is looking for another party to support closure. He is not going to get it from us. Historically, the NDP has been opposed to closure.

Which party does he expect to vote with his party in order to get this through?

Hon. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, I usually leave those sorts of things to our House leaders to discuss among themselves. I am here today because this bill needs to get through. We need to get it to committee so that, if there are other improvements that can be made, they can be made.

As I said, we had the absolutely horrific case of a judge who was caught purchasing cocaine a couple of weeks before he was to be sworn in. Then when the time came that the judges took action against him, he used every single lateral procedural move he could, extended the case out over a period of years and cost the taxpayers a whole lot of money. What we are trying to do is make the system not only more just and fair but also more efficient, so that it does not bring the whole system of justice into disrepute.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for standing up in defence of law and order in the House. We can think of what the minister has done in terms of jury reform and in terms of diversity on jury panels, as well as supporting judges so that they can do their work effectively. The country relies on the House of Commons to provide guidance and direction so that our law and order system is effective. When we delay things, it really has consequences.

I know the minister has talked about the consequences, but how important is it for us, as parliamentarians, regardless of the party, to support law and order in our country?

Hon. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, again, I salute the sincere place that question comes from.

It is important we do our best. I have already mentioned there has been a large degree of agreement on a lot of the things we have brought forward on the justice agenda, from the Conservative Party, from the NDP, from the Bloc Québécois and from the Greens, and I am proud of that. One of the most formative experiences in my life was clerking for a judge at the Supreme Court of Canada, Justice Peter Cory. He remains one of my touchstones every day, in terms of how I conduct myself and what I aspire to.

I think that is the kind of inspiration that should push all of us, I hope, toward passing this kind of legislation. People will tell us that Justice Cory was the most ethical human being who ever walked this earth, and I agree with that. If this legislation, in any way, shape or form, helps us to have more Peter Corys out there, then I think the world would be a better place.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I happen to be one of the members who was cut off from speaking on this bill. It happened to me the other day with a programming motion as well, so I am little perturbed, because I had a question regarding an article in the Vancouver Sun today that I wanted to discuss in my debate. The residents of Vancouver feel their streets are becoming lawless and that repeat offenders are having a major impact on property crime in the province of British Columbia.

In fact, at the recent breakfast town hall hosted by the chief of the Abbotsford police, they talked about the problem dealing with repeat offenders. I hope the justice minister might be able to comment on that and the need to address repeat offenders. Hopefully something can be done to keep our streets and communities safe in B.C., because people do not feel that way right now.

Hon. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, I was at a justice ministers FPT last week. Minister Rankin from British Columbia brought this issue forward. All the justice ministers agreed we would immediately put that to a committee to look at the question of repeat offenders and what we could do. That is on the record. We said that publicly.

I appreciate the seriousness of the question and the seriousness of the situation. I will work with people in this House and also my provincial and territorial counterparts in order to hopefully find a better way forward.

• (1720)

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion that is now before the House.

The question is on the motion. May I dispense?

An hon. member: No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

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

The hon. member for Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner.

Mr. Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, we request a recorded vote.

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1805)

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

(*Division No. 201*)

YEAS

Members

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

Lametti
Lapointe
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mendicino
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
Oliphant
Petitpas Taylor
Qualtrough
Rogers
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Schiefke
Sgro
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Singh
St-Onge
Tassi
Thompson
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Virani
Yip
Zarrillo

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Lamoureux
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Morrice
Murray
Ng
O'Connell
O'Regan
Powlowski
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sorbara
Sudds
Taylor Roy
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van Koevorden
Vandenbeld
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Members

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

Private Members' Business

Kitchen	Kmicic
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Lantsman	Larouche
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lemire	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
MacKenzie	Maguire
Martel	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Michaud	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Normandin
O'Toole	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Perkins	Plamondon
Poilievre	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Ruff
Savard-Tremblay	Scheer
Schmale	Seeback
Shields	Shipley
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Small	Soroka
Steinley	Ste-Marie
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Thériault
Therrien	Thomas
Tolmie	Trudel
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Viersen	Vignola
Villemure	Vis
Vuong	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williams
Williamson	Zimmer — 144

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It being 6:05 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

UIGHURS AND OTHER TURKIC MUSLIMS

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.) moved:

That, given the motion adopted unanimously by the House on February 22, 2021, recognizing that a genocide is currently being carried out by the People's Republic of China against Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims, in the opinion of the House, the government should:

- recognize that Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims that have fled to third countries face pressure and intimidation by the Chinese state to return to China, where they face the serious risk of mass arbitrary detention, mass arbitrary separation of children from their parents, forced sterilization, forced labour, torture and other atrocities;
- recognize that many of these third countries face continued diplomatic and economic pressure from the People's Republic of China to detain and deport Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims leaving them without a safe haven in the world;

(c) urgently leverage Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program to expedite the entry of 10,000 Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in need of protection, over two years starting in 2024 into Canada; and

(d) table in the House, within 120 sitting days following the adoption of this motion, a report on how the refugee resettlement plan will be implemented.

He said: Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to be here in the House with all members today. I would like to acknowledge that we are gathered on Algonquin territory.

[*English*]

Today is an important day. We will be discussing an important program that is within Motion No. 62, a motion to welcome 10,000 Uighur who are facing genocide within China right now, at this moment in time.

This motion calls for the Government of Canada to resettle 10,000 Uighur as of 2024 from third countries. Why third countries? It is because we cannot welcome, unfortunately, Uighur who are currently undergoing the genocide within China, but we can provide safe haven for vulnerable Uighur within third countries. These third countries primarily include countries from north Africa and the Arab world, but not exclusively. There are several other countries where Uighur people are living and are present.

We have heard a lot of testimony from survivors at committees and at the Subcommittee on International Human Rights. In the past we have heard horrifying nightmare stories of people being abused in unspeakable ways, of women being violated and men too. We heard about forced labour. There are over a million people currently in forced labour camps. We heard about children, numbering in the hundreds of thousands, being separated from their families when they should be in the care of their moms and dads.

We know that 20% of the world's cotton is produced in China, likely tainted by forced labour. We know that 35% of tomato products are also tainted by forced labour because they come from the Xinjiang Uighur autonomous region. We know that 45% of polyurethane, which is the base material for solar panels, as the world tries to go green, is also tainted by forced labour. This is wholly and entirely unacceptable. This is something that we, as a country and as a human family, must stand up against.

We had a motion from the benches opposite in February 2021 that called on the House to recognize that a genocide is in fact occurring. Thankfully the House voted unanimously and spoke with one voice on that matter. Not a single person voted against it. We unanimously voted to recognize that a genocide is in fact occurring toward the Uighur people.

This issue is not a partisan issue. For those who make it such, shame on them. They know who they are. This is an issue about people who are dying, who are being violated and who are being mistreated. We said after World War II that this would not happen again. After Bosnia and Yugoslavia, we also reconfirmed that intent. After what happened in Rwanda, we did the same, and with the Rohingya again. Now we know, a genocide is occurring.

What are we going to do? We heard the reports. We know the reports. Many of us have read the reports, over 50 pages long, from Michelle Bachelet, the former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. She said that these allegations of the Uighur people are well-founded, and they also may amount to international crimes, including crimes against humanity. These are high crimes in international law, as is genocide.

The international community, in 2005, said that these types of international crimes must be prevented. Therefore, each and every country has a responsibility to protect when we see crimes against humanity occurring, or the threat of them occurring. When we see genocide occurring or the threat of genocide occurring, we, as a human family, as a collective of countries and as Canada, all have a responsibility to protect.

• (1810)

Our responsibility is engaged and we must act. One way in which we can answer this is by voting for this program to welcome 10,000 Uighurs here in Canada. We have a proud tradition in our country of welcoming refugees and asylum seekers. This is a proud Canadian tradition.

This program will not halt the genocide. It will put a slight dent in it. This program will not answer our obligation, the responsibility, to protect. It will in part answer it. This is something that speaks to our tradition. This is something that we can do, should do, must do.

In the past, we have welcomed many different people who have been fleeing for their lives from genocides, from crimes against humanity. Recently, we can think of Yazidis, Syrians and Afghans. We can think of Hongkongers. We created some special pathways. We can do this again, now, today.

I will share some facts about the Uighur people. Who are they? We hear the term but we do not know who they are.

Like all people, they are a proud people. They live in the western part of China, what they have traditionally called East Turkestan, what we know in international law as Xinjiang Uighur autonomous region.

Xinjiang has a particular meaning. It means “new frontier” in the tongue of the majority of people within China. It is approximately, as I mentioned, one-sixth the land mass of China. It also has many vast deserts and mountains. It historically has been part of the ancient Silk Road trade route that connected China, that allowed for trade to occur to Europe and the Middle East. That trade route is being revived, but with a modern update, with highways and the free flow of goods.

That is why the supply chain issue is a big question. The current belt and road initiative runs through Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

As I mentioned earlier, 20% of the world's cotton is produced there. Eighty per cent of China's cotton actually comes from the region. I will repeat that for all of us who buy cotton. Eighty per cent of Chinese cotton comes from Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, as does 35% of tomato products, pasta and pizza.

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I love pasta and pizza. Contrary to first impressions, I am actually one-quarter Italian and one-quarter Sicilian. I joke sometimes that my colour comes from my Sicilian side. It is a bad joke, but I say it sometimes.

We know that approximately 45% of the base materials for solar panels come from that region also. Minerals, such as gold, silver and zinc come from there. It is very mineral-rich.

There has been atomic testing also in the region since the 1960s. In addition to all of the horrors that we heard, these things are occurring.

These horrors are real, so real, as I mentioned, that the former high commissioner of human rights, Michelle Bachelet, said that these allegations are well-founded.

Thankfully, in addition to my motion, we had a preview this week in the House when we were discussing and then voted to concur in the immigration committee's report, which called for immigration. That report unfortunately, or fortunately, did not specify something. That report that we all unanimously concurred in this week said that we should create special immigration measures for Uighur people and other Turkic minorities, but we did not specify what those measures should be.

This motion does exactly that. It completes what happened earlier this week, when we said, “Let us do this.” This motion says how. This motion is precise. It is specific. It is time-bound. It is what we need.

• (1815)

In addition to this, we thankfully have a number of initiatives in the House, and I would like to see them all pass and made into law.

First is Bill S-211, which is on forced labour. It is a very important bill. Thankfully, our foreign affairs minister has said that we support it. She said that in August, when replying to Michelle Bachelet's report that there may be crimes against humanity occurring within the region, so already our foreign affairs minister has said such. This initiative started in the Senate and now is in the House. It is actually heading to committee.

We also have a second initiative on organ harvesting: Bill S-223, which is also an important piece of legislation. Organ harvesting does occur within Xinjiang Uighur autonomous region, but not exclusively there. We know that Falun Gong, or Falun Dafa, practitioners have been subject to this in the past. It is well documented.

These are a number of the initiatives that are in progress and happening right now. They are initiatives that we should all be supporting.

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Our government has done a handful of things. We have implemented Magnitsky sanctions against four individuals and one entity that are active and responsible for these crimes. This was done in advance of the genocide motion of February 2021. We also have a number of advisory opinions for companies operating within Xinjiang Uighur autonomous region. As an advocate, I would like always to see that strengthened, and that must be strengthened through Bill S-211.

I would like to highlight something. While we are speaking squarely about the crimes against humanity and genocide occurring within China, we need to be careful not to fall into unconscious bias about Asians and Chinese people. That is very important, as we advocate clearly and unambiguously, to not to fall into that. At the end, I personally have, on this issue, no qualms, if and when the government in China were to stop doing what it is doing, I personally would not speak on this issue, but only if and when China does stop doing what it is doing. However, until then, all of us, including myself, must speak on this issue.

I would like to impress upon the House how we united behind my motion. I want to share something. My seconder is Rachel Bendayan, a colleague of mine in the benches.

• (1820)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We cannot use names in the House, as the member knows.

Mr. Sameer Zuberi: Madam Speaker, I offer my apologies.

My seconder is the member for Outremont.

I would also like to highlight that we have members from every party endorsing this motion by jointly seconding. From the benches opposite, we have the former leader of the Conservative Party, the member for Durham; a friend and colleague of mine who is very active on the Uighur file, the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan; and the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. We also have the House leader of the Green Party; the immigration critic from the Bloc Québécois; the immigration critic from the NDP; the foreign affairs critic from the NDP; and another member from the Bloc, the member for Montarville. From my own party, the former foreign affairs minister has jointly seconded this motion, along with other former ministers, such as a former immigration minister, so there is broad support throughout the House.

I ask that we stay united and put aside partisanship in seeing this motion pass.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Pierrefonds—Dollard for the motion he has brought forward in Parliament today. It is a good motion. Indeed, the Conservative Party of Canada stood with a unanimous consent motion, and we also put forward another opposition motion in the House of Commons, on this very subject.

The member opposite spoke frequently about not making this a partisan issue, so I would like to ask him a very concrete question on some of those votes and even on the concurrence motion we voted on this week, where there was an abstention from the government members of the Liberal Party. What can we do to convince

the Government of Canada to stand with Parliament in opposing the Uighur genocide taking place in China right now?

Mr. Sameer Zuberi: Madam Speaker, this is an important question. We are politicians. We know conversation and dialogue are important in what we are doing, so that is what I am doing. I am personally having robust conversations, and I encourage the member to do so as well.

When we do so, let us do so in order to win people, to open up people's hearts, so they can see the merits of what we are pleading. If we approach things with that in mind, to allow people to come and join us, I expect they will. I am confident, though, that this will happen with hopefully all of us.

• (1825)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my friend from Pierrefonds—Dollard on his speech. We know that he is very committed. Many people in the House have been working on the Uighur file for a very long time.

It is unfortunate that when we say that Parliament has spoken with one voice, that is not entirely true. My Conservative friend just raised the issue. When we voted on the Conservative motion, with the Bloc's friendly amendment, the executive and the Prime Minister abstained.

It is very difficult for us to fight a problem if we cannot name it. We have to call a spade a spade. When it is genocide, we must call it genocide. Genocide is no small matter. There is all kinds of evidence. The Subcommittee on International Human Rights made that known.

My question is simple. I understand that we must speak with one voice, but when will we speak with one voice in this Parliament?

Mr. Sameer Zuberi: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the Bloc Québécois member for his question.

I hope we will speak with one voice. I do not yet know if that will happen, but I hope it will.

For now, I think we are on the right track. Twenty members of Parliament supported this motion, and that includes members from across all parties in the House. I hope that we will continue in this direction until the end.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Pierrefonds—Dollard for his motion, his speech and his commitment to the Uighur issue, which is also very important to New Democrats.

We certainly support this move. We need to stand up for human rights and speak out against the genocide that the Uighurs are being subjected to, their treatment and forced labour.

If Parliament is speaking with one voice, or almost one voice, what would my colleague like to see the government do now?

Mr. Sameer Zuberi: Madam Speaker, I tabled this motion in the hope that the government would support it.

[English]

I always have the hope and the belief it will happen. As somebody who was an activist in the past, I believe everything is possible with effort.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the sponsor of this motion and everybody who is joining us for this debate. I know there are many people present in the precinct and following along online.

I have the honour of being the co-chair, along with my friend, the mover of this motion, of the parliamentary friendship group for Uighurs. That is one of many reasons that I am proud to speak in support of Motion No. 62 and express the support of the Conservative Party for this motion. I expect that when it comes to a vote, we will be able to speak united and with one voice.

I think there is a critically important role for the official opposition, which is to support the government in the areas we agree with and challenge the government when there are gaps in the response.

This issue is deeply personal for me. It is not hard to tell that I am not of Uighur background myself, but my grandmother was a Holocaust survivor. She was a Jewish child who grew up in Germany and hid out, and many of her family members were killed. I was raised with an awareness of the grievous injustice that had been visited upon her extended family. She was in a position, as a vulnerable child and a member of a persecuted minority, where she was not able to speak out about her own situation, but she survived the war because people who had a voice and had an opportunity to speak had the courage to speak out against what was happening, the injustices that were happening.

I have a big portrait on the wall in my office of Blessed Clemens von Galen, who was the bishop of the Munster area of Germany where she was. He was a bold, fearless critic of the Nazis, someone who had a position of privilege within that society and used his position to speak out against injustice.

A couple of years ago, my sister and I took a trip to Berlin. We were looking at the sites of deportation. What strikes Canadians when they go to Europe is how much closer everything is together. We are used to wide open spaces. We saw the streets through which Jews were brought to a train station and where they were being sent away, and what struck me was the apartment buildings that are close by where people, everyday Germans, would have been living. They would have been able to look down and see their former neighbours and people from their community being pushed and herded away to their deaths.

When I was there with my sister, we talked about this, and I wondered what these people were thinking, the ones who could see what was going on. Perhaps they had a mix of perspectives and knew it was wrong but were afraid in some way of the consequences of speaking out for truth and justice. What were they thinking? Why did they not do more?

At the end of the Second World War, we made a promise to my grandmother's generation of "never again". Never again would we allow people to be slaughtered because of their ethnic or religious background. We would do everything possible to make genocide a

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crime and stop it everywhere. However, in the seven years I have spent as a member of Parliament, we have recognized and responded to not one but multiple cases of ongoing genocide. It is clear that we have failed to deliver on the promise we made to my grandmother's generation.

I think about those apartment buildings and the people who could see the injustice happening in front of them. Today, we have satellite imagery. We do not need to be in apartment buildings directly above what is happening. We can see the photographs. We can look at the numbers and see the precipitous drop in birth rates as a result of forced abortion, forced sterilization and systemic sexual violence targeting the Uighur community.

I owe it to my grandmother and to those like her to use the voice I have now to speak out against contemporary injustices, recognize the failure to live up to that promise of "never again" and do all we can to respond.

The first step should be a recognition of the crime of genocide, because in the history of jurisprudence following the Second World War, we tried to establish this crime of genocide and establish a responsibility to protect. Individual nations that are a party to the genocide convention have an obligation. It is not just an obligation where there is conclusive proof of genocide, but an obligation when there is evidence that genocide may be occurring.

● (1830)

Those obligations exist for individual states who are parties to that convention. Those obligations do not depend on whether some international body determines it to be a genocide. Those obligations are for individual states who are signatories to the genocide convention. Canada is a signatory, so Canada has obligations. We have a responsibility to act to protect when we see a genocide happening or when there is evidence to suggest that there may be a genocide happening.

This testimony was clearly given by former justice minister Irwin Cotler at the Subcommittee on International Human Rights when we studied this question. He made clear in his testimony that not one but all five of the possible conditions of the genocide convention have likely been transgressed in the case of Uighurs. The evidence was clear then, and the evidence is more clear now than it was then. When this Parliament first voted on the question of genocide recognition, it was before some of the new information that has come out since and various other tribunals that have made all the more clear the situation we are in.

The problem is that, since nations have recognized that they have an obligation to respond to genocide and that they have an obligation to protect in the case of genocide, those same nations have become reluctant to acknowledge that a genocide is taking place, because when they acknowledge that a genocide is happening, then they are legally obliged to act. However, whether or not they are willing to admit that they know, they do know because the evidence is clear. To paraphrase William Wilberforce, we may choose to look away, but in the face of the evidence, we may never again say that we did not know.

Private Members' Business

The evidence has been there, yet again this week we had a motion before the House on genocide recognition. Everyone who voted, voted in favour of genocide recognition, but the cabinet still abstained. This is extremely important because, if the government had voted in favour of that motion, it would be recognizing the legal obligations it has under the genocide convention, but it still failed to do that. I salute members of all parties who have been prepared to take that step nonetheless, but it would be that much more impactful if the cabinet, if the Government of Canada, was prepared to take that step.

The House of Commons, by the way, has led in the world. We were the first democratic legislature in the world to recognize the Uighur genocide, and many other legislatures followed. Ironically, while our legislature has led, the government has not yet taken that step.

Nonetheless, there are still so many more things that we can do and we need to do. Now we are seeing myriad private member's motions and bills coming from various parties that respond to the recognition that at least individual members have, if not the government, that a genocide is taking place. We have Motion No. 62, which seeks to advance targeted immigration measures to support Uighurs. We have various pieces of legislation, such as Bill S-211 and Bill S-204, that seek to address forced labour. We have proposals, such as Bill C-281, which would strengthen our sanctions regime and allow parliamentary committees to nominate individuals for sanction.

We see this flurry of activity now from members of Parliament and senators using the power that we have as parliamentarians to respond to this recognition of genocide, but the ultimate power rests in the hands of the government. It is the government that has to act, even in the case of the motion before us, which is a non-binding motion that makes a recommendation to the government. It is an important tool to encourage the government to act.

Of course, the government did not have to wait for Motion No. 62, and it does not need to wait for it now. The motion contains a timeline that is fairly generous to the government, fair enough, but I would challenge the government to take up its responsibility. Individual members of Parliament are doing what we can to be a voice for the voiceless to recognize the reality, and the government must as well.

I believe that every single member of this cabinet who has looked at the evidence knows that a genocide is happening and knows that they have an obligation. It will be to their eternal shame if they do not act on that knowledge as soon as possible.

• (1835)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, my friend from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan gave an excellent speech, and I want to commend him for it. It is always a pleasure to work with him, particularly on the file that we are discussing this evening.

I think I am kicking this off by being transpartisan. Just last week, I was saying that we have different ideas in the House. It is not always easy working with my colleagues from other parties, but

I am not in the habit of playing partisan games. I even think that, most of the time, being transpartisan helps me to do my job properly. In politics, there are issues where partisanship has no place. Obviously, human rights issues fall into that category.

It will therefore come as no surprise to anyone when I say that, like my Bloc Québécois colleagues, I support Motion No. 62, which seeks to protect the Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims from China by resettling them in Canada. I know that many of my friends from the Uighur community are in the gallery this evening. I want to sincerely welcome them.

On October 21, 2020, the House of Commons Subcommittee on International Human Rights issued a statement in which it said:

The Subcommittee unequivocally condemns the persecution of Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang by the Government of China. Based on the evidence put forward during the Subcommittee hearings, both in 2018 and 2020, the Subcommittee is persuaded that the actions of the Chinese Communist Party constitute genocide as laid out in the *Genocide Convention*.

In a way, Motion No. 62 is a continuation of past positions taken by the House. It contains four demands that I will sum up for those who are watching us: the recognition that Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims from China have emigrated to escape repression and intimidation by the Chinese state; the recognition that many third countries face pressure from China to deport those it refers to as “critics”; the need to welcome refugees over a period of two years starting in 2024; and the need for the government to table a report with a detailed plan within 120 sitting days following the adoption of the motion.

That is the motion. I just want to reiterate this. Motion No. 62 states that Parliament determined that China's treatment of Uighurs is genocide, but, as mentioned earlier, the council of ministers cravenly abstained during the vote on the previous motion. As I speak here in the House, close to two million Uighurs and Turkic Muslims are being held in concentration camps that Chinese authorities odiously refer to as “vocational training centres”.

Mass rapes and numerous acts of torture are being committed in these camps. Women are being forcibly sterilized, adults and children are being kidnapped, and surveillance camera systems are being combined with artificial intelligence software to track Uighurs around the globe. A full-fledged campaign of cultural erasure is also being waged, including the indoctrination of prisoners and the suppression of all Uighur cultural expression.

The facts are disturbing. Parliamentarians of all parties are aware of them. I do not know how the House will vote on my colleague's motion, but one thing is certain: Nobody can plead ignorance. In fact, next to turning a blind eye, ignorance is the greatest ally of totalitarian regimes. Let us not be ignorant. Let us not be blind.

Private Members' Business

At this very moment, the most awful crime that a government can perpetrate against its own citizens is taking place: genocide. The Bloc Québécois has been at the forefront of denouncing the genocide against the Uighurs, notably by amending the February 2021 motion to force the government to demand that the Olympic Games be moved out of China. The government settled for a diplomatic boycott that had no effect.

In response to this proposal and that of the Bloc Québécois, some people told us that we should not mix politics and sport. Our response was that when we are confronted with a genocide, it is no longer a question of politics. It is a question of human rights, a question of crimes against humanity. I made that effort so that justice could be done. We did it so that justice could be done. We did it for the Uighurs, so that the crimes of China's regime would not be unjustly rewarded with the prestige of hosting the world's best athletes in its capital city.

• (1840)

Much like the 1936 Berlin Games, history will unfortunately remember the Beijing Olympic Winter Games as the games of shame. As both a member of Parliament and as a human being, I simply cannot accept the status quo.

My colleague's motion calls on the Government of Canada to welcome 10,000 Uighur and other Turkic Muslim refugees from China over a two-year period beginning in 2024. As I said earlier, the Bloc Québécois supports the motion.

Nevertheless, part of me still believes that this is a bit arbitrary. Why is the number of refugees set at 10,000? What bothers me about this number is that the Uighur advocacy groups that I speak with every day are saying that this is not enough, that we should take in many more.

The Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship has once again applied a double standard to this situation. This is probably the result of political rather than humanitarian decisions. I cannot say for sure, which is why federal immigration programs need to be thoroughly reviewed to ensure that they are fair going forward when it comes to welcoming refugees.

I want to point out that Motion No. 62 calls on the government to table in the House, within 120 sitting days following its adoption, a report on how the refugee resettlement plan will be implemented. That is a good thing, because we know the Liberal government has a tendency to ignore motions from the House of Commons.

The government must respond quickly to make sure that the plan does not end up gathering dust on a shelf, like many immigration and refugee files do. Requiring the government to table a report is necessary and even essential, but it seems to me that 120 sitting days is much too long for members of the Uighur community to wait. The government needs to respond much more quickly than that.

At the risk of repeating myself, I want to close with a reminder. I often have the opportunity to rise in the House to speak to motions proposed by all of the parties, and I think that we are all on the same side when it comes to providing assistance, and rightly so. I would remind members that a genocide is taking place as I stand

before the House today. As parliamentarians, we must work for the common good without any partisanship, and that is especially true when it comes to human rights issues. It is with that in mind that I support my colleague's motion, but I am mainly supporting it because I stand for the principles of justice, and it is high time that justice prevailed for my Uighur friends.

• (1845)

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank all of my colleagues who are standing in the House tonight defending the Uighur people. I agree with many of my colleagues when they say this is an issue that is beyond partisan politics. This is not an issue that we should be bickering about. This is an issue that all parliamentarians must come together for.

I was elected in 2019 and the very first committee I was put on was the international human rights subcommittee. I was put on that committee, I believe, because I have done work in international human rights for most of my career. One of the very first studies we undertook within that committee was to look at what was happening to the Uighur people, to the people in Xinjiang. It was very difficult testimony. I have said that in this House before. It was among the most difficult things I have heard, the stories of torture, of rape, of forced sterilization; of surveillance. The horrific testimony that we heard from people who had escaped was almost impossible to hear.

I have mentioned in this place before that for me, my job was to bear witness. My job was to hear that testimony. I did not have to endure what we have asked the Uighur people to endure. I was elected in 2019, so I am a relatively new parliamentarian, but I have to say that it has been three years. I have been a member for three years and I have not seen the action that we need to see to protect the Uighur people. We have not seen action by the government that would make me think it is taking this genocide seriously, that it is acting with the urgency that is required.

There are many people in this place right now that have loved ones who are still in concentration camps, that they may not know where they are, that they know have been tortured, that they know have had to endure horrific experiences. To those people, as a parliamentarian in Canada, I have to say I am sorry. I am sorry that we have let them down, that we have not done everything we can to stop the genocide that we all have agreed is happening to their people. I am sorry that we have not been strong enough, that we have not done what we needed to do.

We did declare this a genocide. This Parliament did say that this is a genocide and we do have obligations when we recognize that; every one of us. We all look at the horrific genocides that have happened in history. We said never again; never will we put the lives of people at risk this way; never will we turn a blind eye to the death of a people, and yet for three years we have been doing that. For longer than three years we have been doing that.

Private Members' Business

I am extremely proud to support the motion that has been brought forward by my colleague from Pierrefonds—Dollard. I am very happy that I have been able to work with him at the international human rights subcommittee. I am very happy that I have been able to work with members from all parties on this important work.

I am extremely proud of my colleague for the work that he has done and what he has brought forward. Of course I am concerned about the fact that when we have votes in the House, cabinet does not participate. Of course I am concerned that this is a motion. We know that a motion is not binding. We know that a motion is not legislation. It is not protecting Uighurs the way we need to. I understand this may be what he felt he was able to achieve at this point with the government, but it is not enough. It is not near enough. This does not go far enough to protect the people. As parliamentarians, as people who believe in human rights, as people who believe in human dignity, it does not go as far as we need it to go.

I will say that in terms of the immigration issues that this motion brings forward, bringing 10,000 people to Canada who are fleeing violence, of course I support that. I do not understand and never will understand why every single persecuted group in the world is not given the unlimited number that certain persecuted groups in the world are given.

● (1850)

I will never understand why it is unlimited Ukrainians, and I am a hundred per cent in support of unlimited Ukrainians coming to Canada to flee persecution from the Russian war in their country. However, I do not understand why it is not unlimited people coming from other countries as well. I do not understand how we can put that value in place, how we can say that for some it is unlimited and for some we have a 10,000 limit. I do not understand it.

The other piece that we really need to talk about here tonight is that this motion calls for allowing 10,000 Uighurs fleeing violence to come to Canada, but we are not doing enough to make sure that the Uighurs in concentration camps, the Uighurs in China, can actually come to Canada. They are being held in concentration camps and tortured in China, and many of them are unable to get to safety.

As a member of the international community, we also have a very big obligation to be doing what we can to ensure that the government in China is being held to account. Canada used to be a diplomatic powerhouse. We are not a giant powerhouse. We are not a massive economy or whatnot. However, we used to be seen as a convenor, a clear diplomat, a leader in terms of diplomacy. We used to have an ability to bring countries together, to bring groups forward to work together and to bring action.

Unfortunately, I do not feel like Canada has the ability to do that anymore. I feel like we have undermined our ability to do that, that we have in fact put trade at the top of all our relationships to the detriment of our relationships with regard to diplomacy, to the detriment of our relationships with development. We do not have relationships anymore that we can use to push things forward.

A perfect example for me is that the human rights council was going to have a debate on the Uighur genocide. They really did need to get the votes from countries around the world to participate.

China has a massive power, and it used that massive power to cajole, bully, force and make other countries vote on its side. It used all these different tricks and tools. As a country, we do not have the ability to push back on that any longer. That is a mistake. That is a place we have failed to be able to protect the Uighur people.

I would like to see us invest in diplomacy. I would like to see us invest in building those relationships so we can bring our allies and other democracies together, and so that as a common voice we are standing up for the Uighur people. As a common voice we have more ability to put pressure on the Chinese government to ensure that it is stopping the genocide against the Uighur people.

The support from multilateral institutions is key to making sure those institutions have unfettered access. That is a key thing that Canada can do to make sure we are able to report adequately on what is happening in China and invest in support for human rights activists.

The incredible human rights activists who are part of the Uighur population, who are standing up for Uighurs around the world, have raised their voices for years to get support, and Canada could play an important role in protecting them while they fight for their people, while they fight for the people in their communities.

Finally, I have to say that as a Parliament, as a government, as a country, we must all stand and be very unified in condemning what is happening in China against the Uighur people. That includes our cabinet. That includes the government. That includes every member of the House of Commons. We need to stand together, condemn what is happening there and raise our voices to say, "No, we are not putting trade ahead of human lives. No, we are not going to say that money is more important than people. Not this time. Not anymore."

● (1855)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is with an immense sense of responsibility that I rise in the House to speak to a motion that I am sponsoring as the seconder.

I would like to take my colleagues back to 2009. Many things were happening in 2009. The world was still in the grips of the great financial crisis, Barack Obama had just been elected and the people of Iran were holding massive protests against the Islamic regime. Some things change while others do not.

I want to take my colleagues to the city of Urumqi, capital of the Uighur autonomous region of Xinjiang, also known as East Turkestan.

On July 5, 2009, a peaceful protest turned violent after the police used force to subdue the protesters. The riots lasted several weeks. These events were the impetus for the Chinese government to launch a broad campaign of expulsions, detention and torture against its Uighur citizens under the guise of combatting terrorism.

Private Members' Business

Since then, the repression has intensified considerably. The Chinese government has imprisoned millions of Uighurs, most of them over the past five years. We have seen terrifying images of internment camps built for the sole purpose of suppressing the identity of the Uighur people.

The so-called “Xinjiang papers”, published in 2019 by The New York Times, detailed China's policies of surveillance and control of Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang. Those who are not imprisoned find themselves under ever more intense surveillance. Forced labour and forced sterilizations are two of the main tools used to oppress the local population and erase their identity.

In keeping with its modus operandi of using coercive diplomacy, the Chinese government is exerting immense pressure on countries around the world to turn a blind eye to these grave violations in Xinjiang, and I am sorry to say that it is paying off.

Earlier this month, the UN Human Rights Council refused to open a debate on China's human rights violations in the region. Seventeen countries were on the right side of history, while 19 countries gave in to Chinese blackmail.

This comes a few months after China put considerable pressure on the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to bury a report on China's human rights abuses. Although it was announced in September 2021 that the report was being finalized, it was only released on August 31, 2022, in the final minutes of the commissioner's tenure. It is widely speculated that the final report was watered down under pressure from China.

[English]

In a rules-based system, the United Nations should be a place where light is shone on these issues, and I find myself wondering how the international community or Canadians can trust the United Nations when, just last year, Iran was elected to the United Nations top legislative body on women's rights. There are no words.

Canada does value the international rules-based order, but Canada also has a long history of standing for what is right, even when it is uncomfortable or difficult. On this issue, there is no grey area. I am certainly heartened by the cross-partisan agreement on this issue. In February of last year, as we have said in the House, we recognized China's actions in Xinjiang as genocide. Just yesterday, the House once again voted unanimously to recognize this genocide and call for more action to protect Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims in third countries who find themselves exposed to the risk of deportation back to China.

• (1900)

The motion before us today, brought by my colleague and friend, the hon. member for Pierrefonds—Dollard, which I proudly seconded this evening, builds on this action by calling for the admission into Canada of 10,000 Uighur and Turkic Muslims in need of protection.

This is about standing for what is right. It is also about sending a clear message to China and all authoritarian regimes around the world that Canada will not be intimidated, that Canada will continue to stand for its values no matter the consequences.

As long as China continues to violate the human rights of its people, as long as it continues to threaten Taiwan, to repress Hong Kong, as long as it continues to intimidate and harass people not only in its country, but also here on Canadian soil, and as long as it continues to empower regimes like Russia and Iran, we here in this House must continue to call China out and work with our allies to respond effectively.

With the time that I have remaining, I would like to speak on a more personal level to the reasons why I feel so strongly about this motion and about speaking up.

As a young Jewish teenager in Montreal in the 1990s, I had the privilege of meeting many Holocaust survivors. I remember those conversations vividly.

On one occasion, a woman addressed a group of us to recount her harrowing experience in concentration camps. There are pieces of her story that I hear to this day when I close my eyes at night, such as how she would keep little crusts of bread in the folds of her ragged clothes so that at night when there was a child crying she could give the child something. At the end of her presentation, I remember asking her very innocently what I could do, me, a 15-year-old girl who was deeply touched by her story. She looked at me and said, “It is up to you and your generation to make sure that this never happens again.”

On another occasion, I remember walking up on stage to meet a Holocaust survivor. He had just told his story. I do not have the strength to recount it here, but I remember feeling that I had to go up to him to get closer to him and touch his hand to see that he was made of the same flesh and bones as I was. I had to know that he was real. Again, the only thing I could think of at the time to say to this Holocaust survivor was to ask him what I could do. He looked at me with a piercing glance and said, “I need to know that you will speak up. I need to know before I die that my suffering was not in vain. I need to know that “never again” means something to you.” I looked at him and gave him, and many Holocaust survivors, my commitment that I would stand up and ensure that “never again” would mean something, and I do so today in this House.

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a privilege and a pleasure to be able to rise in this House to speak on behalf of the constituents of Regina—Wascana.

There have been many times when I have risen in this House to speak, but I would have to say there have been few on an issue as important and as serious as this one, the issue of freedom for the Uighur people, or for any people, for that matter, but in this particular case, we are talking about the Uighurs and their right to live their lives as they so choose free of government oppression.

Adjournment Proceedings

I often think that in this country we take freedom for granted and we tend to think that freedom is free. For someone like myself, who was born and raised in this country, I have a unique perspective in that I have not been on the front lines, so to speak, of a genocide, a holocaust or a war, but I think that we Canadians can learn from people from other parts of the world who have not been so privileged or so lucky and who have earned their freedom—

• (1905)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The member will have time remaining when the matter is next before the House.

The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, I originally posed the question of whether any of the spend-DP-Liberals thought about monetary policy a few weeks ago because the Prime Minister had already admitted he does not spend much time thinking about it. He also thought that budgets balance themselves, inflation was transitory and it was okay to borrow \$400 billion because interest rates were low.

A few things have changed in those few weeks since I first posed the question. The Liberal-NDP coalition government has been driving up the cost of living. The more the Prime Minister spends, the more things are costing, and it is not just inflation that we are dealing with now, it is people's lives because they are having to consider monetary policy and make a choice between buying groceries or heating their homes. They are having to make the choice between putting fuel in their vehicles to go to work, or not.

Interest rates are rising faster than they have in decades. People and families are at risk of losing their homes because they cannot make increasing mortgage payments. It is to the point that over one-half of Canadians are cutting back on groceries to cope with rising prices because of the thing elite Liberals think is just inflation. This means there are situations like the one I heard about just this morning. It came from Lyle, who said that he was shopping yesterday and the elderly person in front of him had to put four apples back as she could not afford them. He said that the increase in carbon taxes are driving up the costs of everything from home heating to food, and that the current government is completely out of touch with Canadians. That is what Lyle said.

All this need not be. If the government had been prudent and responsible and considered monetary policy, it would have done things like not wasted \$54 million on a punitive ArriveCAN scam and scrapped the \$35-billion Infrastructure Bank. Let us not forget the WE scandal, the millions to Loblaws for refrigerators and so much more wasteful spending.

On top of that, had Liberals not squandered an extra \$200 billion in spending not related to COVID, Canadians would not be feeling the pain they are now, but the government chooses not to pay attention to monetary policy, so now Canadians are receiving the bill for that massive \$500-billion deficit. They are seeing typical mortgages go up by \$7,000 a year and having to pay so much more attention to their household monetary policy just to put food on the table and keep the heat on. On top of all this, the Liberal-NDP coalition is planning to triple the carbon tax, further increasing and inflating the cost of gas, groceries and home heating, just as we approach winter in Canada, when heating is not a luxury but a necessity.

I am sure I am probably going to hear an excuse from the other side about where I am going on this, and we are going to hear back from the government saying that inflation is a global phenomenon. The governor of the Bank of Canada now says that inflation is homegrown. It was grown by the Prime Minister and his cabinet's lack of consideration of economic policy.

• (1910)

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would be happy to discuss monetary policy with my friend from the interior at any time, but his speech actually focused more on fiscal policy, as did his original question. I want everyone who is listening to know that our government is working to build an economy that works for everyone and is focused on tackling affordability.

We have done this while lowering Canada's debt-to-GDP ratio, increasing wages, maintaining Canada's AAA credit rating and maintaining our debt servicing cost at 1% of GDP, almost six times lower than it was in the 1990s.

In the member's original question, which led to this late show, he cited \$2.13 per litre for gas in his riding. Indeed, it has been as high as \$2.40 in metro Vancouver.

This is an increase of more than a dollar per litre over the last three years. It is putting a tremendous burden on Canadian families. However, we also need to acknowledge that the price on pollution in British Columbia has increased by only two cents during the last three years.

It was nine cents in 2019 and is 11¢ today. That means 98% of that increase has nothing to do with pricing pollution. It is the result of global inflation.

The Conservative Party of Canada readily ignores these facts and therefore ignores 98% of the problem. It also ignores the real cost of climate change. In B.C., we have seen fires devastate communities and spread smoke throughout our summers. We have floods and droughts that have already caused billions of dollars in damage, yet the Conservative Party of Canada continues to call on our government to stop fighting climate change and to mortgage our future.

It does that when it asks us to stop fighting climate change. It does that when it asks us to stop funding seniors' pensions. It does that when it asks us to raise the retirement age from 65 to 67. It does that by trying to eliminate the CBC and by trying to stop kids from getting the dental care and education they need. It does that by obstructing assistance for impoverished renters who need it the most.

I do not know if there is such a thing as an economic ostrich, but if there was, it would be a tremendous mascot for the Conservative Party, as it continues to suggest irresponsible economic policies as if its members were committed to keeping their collective heads in the sand. In contrast, our government has put together a plan that makes life more affordable and builds an economy that works for everyone.

In jurisdictions where the federal government has a price on pollution, and B.C., by the way, is not one of those jurisdictions, a rebate is provided through the climate action incentive, which actually makes life more affordable for eight out of 10 Canadian families.

We are also doubling the GST credit for six months, which will provide hundreds of dollars to 11 million families who need it the most and more than 50% of our seniors.

I compliment the member opposite for supporting this measure. I think it is important that we continue to work together to make life more affordable, but we need to do it in a way that is open, honest and transparent.

Let us not use the worst economic shock since the Second World War to gain political points. Canada has a great opportunity in front of it. We have the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. Our inflation rate is significantly lower than those of the U.S., Europe and the OECD. We produce a tremendous amount of food and energy, the two commodities that are facing extraordinary price pressures from around the globe.

Our best times are in front of us, but we can get there only if we continue to work together to make life better for all Canadians.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the response from the parliamentary secretary, but he is, unfortunately, very much like the rest of his Liberal colleagues.

He spoke about Conservatives ignoring certain facts, but the fact is that the government is ignoring Canadians, not realizing where the challenges are for people who cannot afford to put food on the table and cannot afford to put fuel in their vehicle to drive to work. They cannot afford the expensive, out-of-control spending the government has done for the past seven years.

The member also spoke about openness, honesty and transparency. I remember, back in 2015, the campaign when the Prime Minister spoke about sunshine being the best disinfectant. This govern-

Adjournment Proceedings

ment has covered up everything from the WE scandal to the SNC-Lavalin issue. Openness and transparency are not something the government should be noting.

• (1915)

Mr. Terry Beech: Madam Speaker, again, I am happy to talk about monetary and fiscal policy any time. I note that the member wanted to change the channel a bit there.

We have developed an affordability plan that makes life more affordable for Canadians. It gets money to people who need it the most, when they need it the most. Canadians from coast to coast can count on us to continue to support them through this period of global elevated inflation.

With Bill C-31, we are proposing to create the Canada dental benefit for families with annual incomes under \$90,000. This is literally a piece of legislation that is going to enable children who could not afford to get their teeth fixed to get them fixed. We know good oral hygiene and good dental health lead to better overall health and better productivity. Those investments not only are fair and the right thing to do for those children, but will actually help us grow our economy in the future. This bill also proposes a one-time top-up to the Canada housing benefit program, to those renters—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The time is up.

The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, as always, it is an honour to rise in this place. A number of months ago, I had the opportunity to ask a question about access to information in Canada, and it is directly related to a study that is ongoing before the ethics committee. The simple and only way that one can accurately describe the Liberal record on access to information is one of failure, full stop.

A comment was made the other day that bears repeating in this place: Everything under the current Liberal government is broken. I hear daily from constituents about the cost of living that is unmanageable. We have a host of new government programs that are being created almost weekly to fix a problem that the government and the Prime Minister, and their flawed ideology created.

The reality is that Canadians are hurting. It seems everything is broken, whether that be passports, ethics and accountability, or any host of other things that we can point to, including Canada's reputation on the world stage.

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It leads me to the inevitable conclusion that the Liberals are good at one thing and that is politics. When it comes to governing, to serving Canadians and to doing what is in the best interests of our country, they have shown time and again that they are terrible at governing. The consequence of that is no more clear than it is in the access to information system. Starting in the 2015 campaign, the now Prime Minister tweeted out that it was time for a government without a new scandal every day. It is unbelievable how many new scandals seem to be piling up on that Prime Minister's plate.

When it comes to the promises the Liberals made about sunshine being the best disinfectant, they have created a culture of secrecy. We heard, more times at the ethics committee today than I would be able to reference in the time permitted here, that there is this culture of secrecy, even when the Liberals claim to have fixed it. They are good at politics, but they have failed on delivering, because they brought in what they said were solutions to all the problems through Bill C-58 in the 42nd Parliament. However, the experts agree that it simply made the situation worse. Again, the Liberals are great at politics, and we hear that each and every day through catchphrases, slogans and an incredible ability to turn the issues of the day into something that is not their fault.

For seven years it has been these Liberals stewarding this country. I suggest, on every metric I can think of, that our country is in a worse spot today than it was seven years ago. What is worse is that they often take credit for the good management that took place prior to that. It is the height of hypocrisy when we see the arrogance with which so many issues are approached and all the ways that our country and Canadians are hurting.

When it comes to the access to information system, the culture of secrecy has to stop because Canadians are losing faith in the institutions of government, which is at the very foundation of what a modern democracy needs to have.

• (1920)

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member for Battle River—Crowfoot is referring to the information requested in the previous Parliament about the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg.

Our government respects the role that parliamentarians play in holding the government to account. However, our government must also respect the laws that Parliament has passed when it responds to orders for the production of papers, especially when the records include classified information. When disclosing information to Parliament, the government is guided by its statutory obligations to keep some information confidential under statutes like the Privacy Act, the Security of Information Act and the Canada Evidence Act. Our government always seeks to balance these interests so that parliamentarians are provided information to hold the government to account.

The original request for documents from the National Microbiology Laboratory was first raised at the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations on March 31, 2021. At that time, PHAC played a lead role in the government's response to the pandemic. PHAC worked diligently to produce the requested records and submitted them to the special committee on April 20, 2021.

The records were redacted because they included information that PHAC was bound by statute to keep confidential. This included national security information that would have been injurious to Canada's reputation if it was disclosed. However, the special committee was not satisfied and reported the matter to the House.

Despite the government's opposition, the House adopted a Conservative opposition day motion on June 2, 2021, to order the production of the unredacted documents within two days. Our government explored options to balance the right of parliamentarians to access information with its duty to protect classified information.

PHAC provided the redacted documents to the law clerk's office on the timeline set out by the order. At the same time, the Minister of Health referred the matter to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, or NSICOP. The unredacted documents were submitted to that committee. Our government believes that this committee is the appropriate mechanism to allow parliamentarians to review unredacted documents while protecting national security information.

The NSICOP has members from both the House and the Senate and a broad mandate to review national security and intelligence activities. Members hold top secret security clearance, swear an oath or solemn affirmation not to disclose confidential information and are permanently bound to secrecy under the Security of Information Act. With these safeguards, committee members are able to receive classified briefings and materials. However, opposition parties did not support this approach in the last Parliament.

In the current Parliament, our government remains committed to working collaboratively with opposition parties. On December 2, 2021, the government House leader proposed the creation of an ad hoc committee to allow parliamentarians to scrutinize confidential national security documents. The government based its proposal on the approach the former government proposed, and the House agreed to, in 2010 to give access to information about Afghan detainees.

Members of the ad hoc committee are required to undergo security screening and agree to confidentiality undertakings. A panel of arbiters will mediate questions where the disclosure of confidential national security documents would jeopardize Canada's interests. The New Democratic Party has agreed to participate in the ad hoc committee to review the information that the member for Battle River—Crowfoot is referring to. I urge the member and his party to reconsider their participation.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I do find interesting the culture of secrecy that has permeated every aspect of virtually everything the government does. We see that no more clearer than in the case of the Winnipeg microbiology lab and, in part, what seems like an unlimited willingness of the Prime Minister to go to any length necessary to endeavour to cover up his actions, including but not limited to prorogation, calling an election that he promised not to call and using every mechanism imaginable to cover up the actions that he and his government are responsible for.

When it comes to the true facts of the matter, I would simply suggest that the member and other members of the government try to look at the trust that Canadians need to have in their institutions—

• (1925)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Madam Speaker, the government has proposed reasonable options to the House.

The NSICOP and the ad hoc committee would allow the members to scrutinize confidential national security and intelligence information in a venue where the appropriate safeguards are in place to ensure the information is not publicly disclosed. Both options worked.

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A similar ad hoc committee was established by the previous government in 2010 to allow parliamentarians to access classified information about Afghan detainees. This is what Speaker Milliken was referring to when he urged members, in 2010, to find a compromise between complying with an order of the House and protecting classified information from public disclosure.

The committee is another mechanism that responds to Speaker Milliken's appeal to the House. Since 2017, parliamentarians from both Houses have worked across party lines to examine and report on national security and intelligence activities. Members undergo the appropriate security measures to ensure that classified information is not disclosed.

Again, I heard the member—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
The hon. member for Brantford—Brant not being present to raise during the Adjournment Proceedings the matter for which notice had been given, the notice is deemed withdrawn.

It being 7:27 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:27 p.m.)

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